MEDIA RELEASE

Thermal Congress 2027 to Take Place in Spa, Belgium, as European Historic Thermal Towns Association and European Spas Association Join Forces

International Congress on Thermal Tourism, Health & Natural Remedies returns on June 8-10, 2027, with the support of UN Tourism

The European Historic Thermal Towns Association (EHTTA) and the European Spas Association (ESPA) are joining forces to organise the 2027 edition of the International Congress on Thermal Tourism, Health & Natural Remedies. The congress will take place from **June 8 to 10, 2027, in the Belgian town of Spa**, hosted by the Municipality of Spa and the Wallonia Region. As in previous years, the event is held with the support of UN Tourism.

The organisers expect around **250 participants and experts from around the globe**. Panels and presentations will take place over **two conference days, 9-10 June 2027**.

Ahead of the official opening and welcome reception on the evening of **June 8, a high-quality B2B Workshop** will bring together carefully selected international buyers, including health travel advisors, patient organizations, medical tourism facilitators, with thermal destinations from Europe. The workshop is designed as a focused and efficient business environment to be connected with qualified health and medical buyers and explore concrete partnership opportunities.

A highlight will be the **ESPA Innovation Awards Gala on the evening of 9 June**, celebrating excellence, innovation and best practices in the spa, health and wellbeing sector.

“We have continuously developed our Thermal Congress over the past years and are very thankful for the support we receive as an Affiliate Member of UN Tourism,” says Riccardo Mortandello, President of EHTTA. “Spa towns and thermal destinations around the globe seek opportunities to exchange experiences when it comes to protecting their waters and heritage, while also addressing the need to invest in their infrastructure and promotion. Our partnership with European Spas brings an additional level of quality and new topics to the Congress, demonstrating that we are stronger together.”

“Europe has an extraordinary network of medical spas and health destinations built around natural remedies, thermal and mineral waters, healing climates and evidence-based prevention. The challenge today is to position it as part of the

solution to ageing populations, rising healthcare costs, workforce wellbeing, and regional resilience. This Congress will discuss how health destinations can contribute to a healthier, more sustainable and competitive Europe." ESPA President Siyka Katsarova.

Why Spa?

The choice of Spa is highly symbolic. The town gave its name to the word “spa” worldwide and remains one of Europe’s most recognised health destinations.

Health and sport tourism are closely linked through prevention and rehabilitation, and Spa, with its famous Francorchamps racetrack and Formula 1 Grand Prix, is a fitting setting. The town is also one of the Great Spa Towns of Europe World Heritage Site, with a long history of healing springs where people have sought health for centuries. The town’s name is carried across borders thanks to its bottled water SPA which can be found all over Europe.

The 2027 Congress aims to position thermal destinations and medical spas not only as tourism assets, but as strategic contributors to public health, active ageing, longevity, climate adaptation, rural development, and regional competitiveness. Bringing together international stakeholders from health, tourism, science, and policy, the event will provide a platform for shaping the future role of health destinations in Europe and beyond.

Nicolas Tefnin, Mayor of the City of Spa, explains: “Hosting this Congress is a chance for Spa to share its experience as a historic thermal town and to learn from other thermal destinations. Our mineral springs, our thermal facilities and the landscape around us remain at the heart of who we are. As one of the eleven Great Spa Towns of Europe inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, Spa is the right place to discuss how thermal destinations can evolve while protecting their water resources and heritage.
Together with Chaudfontaine, and through the Belgian Thermal Federation, we champion thermalism in Belgium, across Europe, and now on the global stage. This Congress brings that commitment to life through international dialogue on the future of thermal destinations.

Information and Registration

The registration for conference tickets as well as the B2B Workshop is expected to open before the end of the year 2026.

More details will be announced on social media and on www.thethermalcongress.com in due course.

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