

ORGANIZZAZIONE MONDIALE
DEL THERMALISMO
ORGANISATION MONDIALE
DU THERMALISME
WELT ORGANISATION
DES THERMALISMUS
ORGANISACION MUNDIAL
DEL THERMALISMO



WORLD HYDROTHERMAL
ORGANIZATION
ВСЕМИРНАЯ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯ
ТЕРМАЛИЗМА
المنظمة العالمية
لمنتجات المياه المعدنية
世界温泉療法機関



MERRY

CHRISTMAS 2014 - HAPPY NEW YEAR 2015

Dear Colleagues,

this newsletter is being published at the end of 2014. This was an intense and challenging year for our organization.

First of all we concentrated on the implementation of the UE Directive 24/2011 on patients's rights in cross-border traditional and thermal healthcare; then we participated in two meetings in Spain and Greece and we called up the OMTh Managing Committee elected on the General Assembly held on 14th June 2014 in Cuntis, Spain.

Thanks to further negotiations we managed to create the ALATH - Latino American Thermal Association - and we were able to sign a MoU with CHSYF – Chinese Hot Spring Yangsheng Federation - a leading Chinese thermal association including spas, physicians, university professors and scientists. With all these achievements OMTh developed into an important point of reference for any future initiatives and projects in all geographical areas.

The OMTh Managing Committed held its first meeting on 23rd-24th October 2014 in Levico Terme, Italy, approving a final document in which OMTh undertakes to offer all its support to concrete projects in Europe, particularly regarding the relationship to the EU, and in Latin America, China, North Africa - Morocco and Azerbaijan, as well.

All these initiatives - maybe utopias - will require the outstanding commitment of all of you in order to be fulfilled and this will be possible only with your cooperation.

Let me thank all of you for your efforts! We would like to wish all of you, on behalf of our Committees, as well a very Merry Christmas and a happy Year 2015 to all of you and your families.

Andres Campos

SITH President

Ennio Gori

OMTh President



EUROPE - ITALY

On 22nd March 2014 in Montecatini Terme a Scientific Congress was held in order to showcase the opportunities for thermalism offered by the integrated Health and Social Plan of Tuscany for the period 2014 - 2019. During the round table, Mr. Gori has explained all the opportunities provided by the EU Directive 24/2011 on cross-border healthcare, highlighting the special role of OMTh and confirming our willingness to cooperate with Tuscany in order to achieve all the priority objectives for an appropriate development of the spa and wellness services included in the provisions of current Regional Plan.

EUREGIO

The Working Group has held its meeting on 6th May 2014 at the EURAC headquarters in Bolzano. On this occasion they discussed the organization of their next meeting, held on 25th October 2014 in Merano, according to the principle of fair rotation between the EUREGIO Members. The theme of the conference was “Innovative Concepts for Thermalism”.

Mr. Gori expressed the necessity to underline the peculiarity of thermalism in Euregio as a cross-border region. This aspect is extremely important to OMTh and represents a model for all cross-border regions, not only in Europe.

The **Meeting in Merano** was held as scheduled in the presence of the Healthcare Councillors of the three Provinces. The conclusions of the conference were made by Dr. Carlo Stefenelli, OMTh-Vicepresident.

European Contest - We participated to the competition organized by the EU Commission, D.G. for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion for the promotion of the European Health Insurance Card across all EU countries. This is a contest calling for a storyboard and accompanying synopsis on the European Health Insurance Card related to travel and summer holidays. The video proposal had to be easy to understand in order to let everyone know about the services offered by the EU legislation regarding acute and chronic thermal pathologies.

Our colleagues Dr. Antonio Galassi and Dr. Adelmo Corsini created a storyboard and sent it on 12th August 2014.

The story tells about the Way of Saint James, the Vie Romee and the Via Francigena, taken by European pilgrims and sinners since the year 1000 ac.

A historical parallel was made between the old Shell of Saint James (as pilgrimage certification) and the current European Health Insurance Card. At that time presenting the shell was enough for getting medical aid and hospitalization. Today it's the same with the European Health Insurance Card.

Some well-known spa centres are located along the most important ways at that time, as well as along the most important routes today: Cuntis, Vichy, Baden Baden, Levico, Montecatini, ecc. In the past they provided reception and hospitality to travelers and pilgrims and today in these locations thermal therapies are offered to all EU citizens thanks to the EU Directive 24/2011.

Even if the Shell of Saint James is an old concept, it can be effectively compared to the modern European Health Insurance Card, allowing all EU citizens access to healthcare services in all EU countries, both for patients with unexpected acute and with chronic diseases. Winners have yet to be announced.

11th World Day of Hydrotherapy – 41st International SITH Congress – “Thermalism in the Second Millennium” 13th-14th June 2014 – Cuntis, Spain.

The congress, held in collaboration with SITH at Termas de Cuntis has proven to be particularly relevant. It included speeches and 6 round tables with speaking guests from Europe and Latin America.

The meeting was attended by a large number of participants thus confirming the great interest for conferences combining scientific information and professional relevance.

The ceremony for the 7th Marcial Campos Thermal Research Award - organized by OMtH - SITH and ISMH - held on 13th June at 8.00 p.m. was extremely relevant.



The ceremony was chaired by the OMTh President, Dr. Gori and the SITH President, Dr. Campos.

The prize-awarded project is the research “Vetriol’s (Trentino) thermal water inhibits the negative effect of interleukin – 1B on nitric oxide production and apoptosis in human osteoarthritic chondrocyte”, carried out by a team directed by Dr. Antonella Fioravanti.

For the next edition the award amount will be increased and once again it will be open to all scientific sectors that could contribute to thermal research.

On 14th June at 8.00 p.m. the OMTh General Assembly was held, in order to appoint its managerial bodies for the period 2014 - 2018.

GREECE

“Prospects of thermalism and spa tourism in in different parts of Europe, within the framework of the EU Healthcare Directive” - 9th-10th-11th October 2014, Edipsos.



The meeting was organized by OMTh and the Association of Greek Thermalism Businesses. Among the speakers there was Reinhard Petry, as ESPA (European Spa Association) representative. OMTH President Gori and OMTH Advisor, Dr. Bernacchi participated in the conference delivering a speech and in the final round table, as well.

The meeting was a great success: it was held in the presence

of a representative of the Tourism Ministry, all the local authorities and it was attended by an attentive and large number of participants. A closer cooperation with the OMTh was required and the opportunity of an OMTh representation in Edipsos was highlighted, as well.

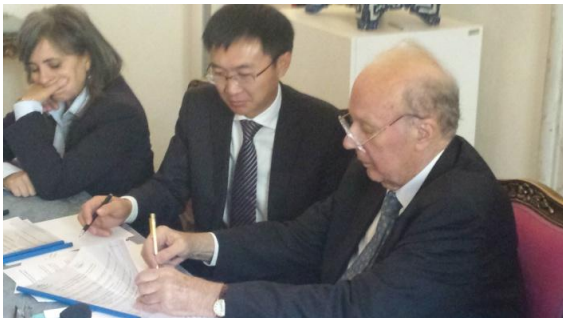
OMTh MANAGING COMMITTEE on 23rd October 2014 in LEVICO TERME

The OMTh Managing Committee, elected by the General Assembly on 14th June in Cuntis (Spain)



during the 41st SITH International Congress and of the XI World Day of Hydrotherapy, was held on 23rd October 2014 in the OMTH headquarters, in Levico Terme. All its members from Europe, Latin America, China and Morocco were present.

On that occasion they outlined the guidelines for the current OMTh initiatives in Europe, China and Latin America, in order to create a thermalism model fulfilling the expectations of the spa sector. The Committee focused on the necessity of new financial resources from EU, together with the already existing ones, in order to overcome the practical implementation of EU Directive 24/2011 and to enable some more supporting tools for the development and the growth of the spa and health industry.



A Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the CHSYF – Chinese Hot Spring Yangsheng Federation - paving the way for relevant initiatives and relationships within the thermal system of that immense country.

Regarding Latin America, where OMTh has built a longstanding presence, the **ALATH - Latino American Thermal Association** - was created, **headquartered in Firmat, in the Santa Fè Province, Argentina.** The most important bodies of the association were appointed, as well: Dr. Fabio Lazzerini - Brazil - (as President), Dr. Hugo Ficosecco - Argentina (as Vice-president) and Doctor Lisbo Justo - Colombia (as Director).

Great attention was given to the relationships with Azerbaijan and Morocco, the latter being considered as the referring country for the development of the whole North Africa region.

The Managing Committee highlighted the necessity of developing scientific research and of



identifying any possible initiative to enhance and promote it, in close cooperation with ISMH - International Society of Medical Hydrology and Climatology. Like this it will be possible to enhance further cooperation and exchange initiatives with the scientific community, which is essential for the future development of the spa and health industry.

After the extensive and in-depth debate, the Managing Committee approved, upon President's request, the final

document acting unanimously. In this documents OMTh established the specific operational guidelines to be implemented next year.

The final document was illustrated during a press conference held on 24th October at 10.30 a.m. in Trento, in the Conference Hall “Sala Aurora” in the headquarters of the Provincial Council of the autonomous Province of Trento, in the presence of Mr. Bruno Dorigatti, President of the Council of the Province Trento. He honoured us with his presence and he expressed his appreciation for the commitment of OMTh.

On that occasion a Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the CHSYF – Chinese Hot Spring Yangsheng Federation. The event has been widely reported in the local press.

To sum up we can say that the OMTh Managing Committee has outlined specific guidelines for its future work in Europe, Latin America, China, North Africa - Morocco, Azerbaijan, with the aim to achieve concrete and innovative results.

CROATIA

9th-12th October 2014 – 4th Balcan Spa Summit (BSS) in Tuhelj

The OMTH President had been invited but has not been able to participate, because he was at the Meeting in Edipsos, Greece. Therefore OMTh has been represented by its Advisor Iztok Altbauer. In his speech he highlighted OMTh role for the further development of thermalism in Croatia.

SLOVENIA

23th-25th October 2014 – 6th SPA-CE WORKSHOP

It was the only professional symposium in the spa and wellness sector in the Central European region.

As the Workshop took place in the same days of the OMTh Managing Committee’s meeting, our organization was represented by its Advisor, Iztok Altbauer.

BULGARIA

23rd - 26th October 2014 - Velingrad – Hotel SPA Sveti Spas

Bulgarian National Conference of Balneology.

As the Workshop took place in the same days of the OMTh Managing Committee’s meeting, our organization was represented by its Honorary President, Dr. Zeki Karagülle (also ISMH President), who was invited to make a keynote speech on current trends in balneological research.

ASIA - AZERBAIJAN

OMTH is committed to promote a closer cooperation with the most important actors in the spa and health industry of Azerbaijan. After the first contacts, further steps forward have been taken in order to start a twinning project between the Municipality of Levico Terme and the thermal centres in Azerbaijan.

We expressed our willingness to guarantee the successful outcome of the negotiations and to meet the most important stakeholders of the spa and health industry as well as the Azerbaijan authorities responsible for the development of the spa and health industry in their country. Our main purpose is to start common initiatives and to establish excellent research projects and networks.

LATIN AMERICA

BRAZIL

Last year OMTh carried out intense activities under the guidance of its Vice-president Fabio Lazzerini, Scientific Director of SBT (Brazilian Society of thermalism).

On 14th July 2014 the Technical Cooperation Agreement (CET-Water) was signed (Centre for interdisciplinary studies for the promotion of the “Water and Health” project”).



interdisciplinary studies for the promotion of the “Water and Health” project”).

Together with OMTh, this project involves the Brazilian Ministry of the Environment (MMA), the Brazilian National Water Agency (ANA), the University of Brasilia (UnB), the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC) and the

World Wildlife Fund (WWF).

The working group is establishing the program for the World Water Meeting due to be held in 2016 in Brasilia.

- In Brazil thermalism is included in the so-called CAM, Complementary and Alternative Medicine. Many initiatives regarding social tourism and crenotherapy were submitted to the Brazilian Ministry of Health.
- OMTh has officially participated to Termatalia, the international Tourism Trade Fair at Termas de Rio Hondo, Argentina. This is the largest Exhibition of thermal tourism, health and wellness in Spain and Latin America and it is held every year either in Spain or in Latin America, according to the principle of fair rotation. OMTh has participated together with Grupo Aguas de Sao Pedro and Brazilian Thermalism.

All these activities confirm the validity of the constitution of the ALATh - Latino American Thermal Association - established within the OMTh Managing Committee.

- On 29th October 2014 Vice-president Lazzerini participated in a meeting in Ourense - Galicia, Spain and on that occasion the city submitted its application to host Termatalia 2016.
- OMTh also participated in the seminar held on 20th March 2014 in Brasilia in order to celebrate the World Water Day.
- Preparatory work for the 4th Thermal Meeting Brazil scheduled in Spring 2015 in Aguas de Lindoia started.

FAR EAST - PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA



After a series of preparatory meetings between Chinese stakeholders of the spa and thermal industry and our Advisor Dr. Francesco Bernacchi, a successful dialogue with the most important thermal associations in that country started.

OMTh established official relationships with the CHSYF – Chinese Hot Spring Yangsheng Federation.

These activities open closer cooperation prospects allowing China to develop a modern thermal network due to overcome the current “Hot springs tourism” and replacing it by a modern therapeutic and medical thermalism also respecting the values of traditional Chinese Medicine. Thanks to these initiatives we will be able to start a fruitful dialogue with the most important thermal centres in that country, promoting prestigious and effective relationships and exchange of expertise.

ITALY - LEVICO TERME

THE ARSENICAL-FERRUGINOUS WATER AT TERME DI LEVICO

In the period between the second half of the 18th century and the first half of the 19th century an intense thermal activity developed in the “Mitteleuropa”, based on the therapeutic qualities of several springs whose water was collected in the tanks located around the local thermal stations. In these locations many prestigious buildings were built, providing all comforts to their guests.

Under the guidance of famous hydrologists, the thermal stations (German “Kurort”) developed into a popular health resort for wealthy people going there to take their hydrotherapy treatments, with consistent health benefits. We can say that together with the treatment of the different pathologies - particularly rheumatic and dermatological diseases - this was the first model of modern “wellness”, i.e. a “status of wellbeing”.

The thermal centres in Baden, Gastein and Ischl attracted not only members of the Habsburg Family, but also Mozart, Schubert and Beethoven and became a model for similar centres due to be



built where thermal water springs were found.

In Levico, at that time an important and well-known spa centre in Austria-Hungary, two mineral water springs were available in the Mount Fronte, a mountain overlying Levico Terme in the north part of the town. The first spring source comes out of the ground in the San Domenico Cavern and it has a naturally high content of arsenic and iron (“strong water”) and the second spring source is

located in the Odra Cavern and it is characterized by the presence of several electrolytes but has a poor arsenic content (“light water”).

In the 19th century Levico was a village with a prevalently agricultural-pastoral economy. In the second half of the century a serious economic crisis hit the region bringing about a strong emigration: the number of the inhabitants reduced from 6250 in 1869 to 5651 in 1880. In this

depressed economic context, the detection of the therapeutic qualities of the local thermal water enhanced the development of an important “health tourism”.

The first doctors studying the applications of the thermal water from Levico were the famous hygienist G.B. Soresina from Milan and a Head Doctor De Cristoforis, from Milan as well. In 1869 they observed some inexplicable healings (scabies, arthritis, rheumatism) after an empirical application of water, i.e. drinking water and taking advantage of balneotherapy. After their discoveries a first primitive spa centre was built in Vetriol, close to the spring sources with an increasing number of patients using thermal water insomuch that in 1833 the record level of 3000 baths was reached.

In Austria-Hungary the medical-scientific community increasingly focused its attention on the spa's in Levico. In 1857 the central government in Vienna charged Dr. Preiss - a well-known physician - with a research on the arsenical - ferruginous water. This study led to the following conclusions: “The arsenical-ferruginous water in Vetriol are among the most rare ones and have a great therapeutic value”.

Encouraged by the positive outcome of the research, the local entrepreneurs created on 11th March 1860 the Società Balneare di Levico (the shareholders of the company were the Municipality and some private citizens) that was granted with the right of exploitation of the spring sources. In the same year the company purchased a large plot of land in the west part of the town, where the imposing thermal establishment was built. The construction took just one year to be completed and was carried out together with the construction of a pinewood aqueduct carrying the mineral water from Vetriol to Levico. The company also carried out the bottling of the water, that was marketed in Europe and America: in 1891 as many as 199.200 bottles with “strong water” and 133.500 bottles with “light water” were sold.

In 1894 the Habsburg emperor issued a special decree elevating Levico to city status (German “Stadtgemeinde”), as acknowledgment of the increased importance due to the development of thermalism and to the consequent international health tourism. A significant boost of the spa town of Levico was impressed by the Berlin entrepreneur Giulio Adriano Pollacsek who came into the town aiming to manage the thermal activities. After one year of negotiations the Municipality of Levico entrusted the management of the whole thermal compendium to the company led by Mr. Pollacsek. He engaged himself to pay a year rent of 21.000 florins (the local Società Balneare only paid 142 florins per year!!) for a period of 40 years starting from 1st January 1900. Furthermore he promised an investment of 200.000 florins in 3 years for the construction of new prestigious thermal hotels, as the present **Imperial Grand Hotel** with its large surrounding park (ca. 20 hectares). The hotel and its park would have been connected with a majestic beech-lined boulevard to the railway station of the new built Valsugana Railway, connecting the Mitteleuropa to the Adriatic Sea.



The events of the 20th century would have led to consistent thermal activities, even during the two World Wars in the first half of the century. At the end of the war, the spas and the springs became first property of the Regione Trentino Alto Adige and then property of the Provincia Autonoma of Trento. The Provincia managed the spas, the grand hotel, and the bottling factory of the natural water (not thermal) until January 1996, the year in which the management of the entire compendium was entrusted to private as per Provincial Law.

The therapeutic peculiarity of “strong water” seems to be prevalently due to its arsenical content and to its antioxidant and anti-inflammatory action; iron has a therapeutic effect only on iron-deficient anaemia. The oral route of administration, that used to be a common practice in the past, does not exist any longer, also after the rules laying down a maximum threshold level for the arsenical content in the drinking cures (hydropinic).

Arsenic is toxic if administered for a long period at high doses, but if it is administered in the right dose (pharmacological dose), it can stop the oxidative processes, with a strong anti-inflammatory effect. Arsenic also affects the cytochrome-oxidase stimulation, changing the metabolism and stimulating anabolic reactions: for this reason the thermal water of Levico has a great effect for the treatment of hyperthyroidism (Graves-Basedow disease) antagonising the thyroid hormone effectively.

Studies show that the arsenical-ferroginous water of Levico proves to be clinically effective if administered (with different methods, such as balneotherapy, aerosol, irrigations, mud therapy) in the treatment of several diseases like anxiety disorders (particularly calming cardiac erethism, because of its sedative action on nervous system), rheumatic and dermatological diseases, gynecological problems and ENT disorders. This because of its strong anti-inflammatory action after on site application on the skin and on mucous membranes.

Upon initiative of the Scientific Committee of the Levico and Vetriol Spas a number of trials have been carried out. These studies have been published in international reviews with “impact factor”, in order to prove the clinical efficacy of thermal water in several diseases.

Some years ago a neuropsychiatrists team from the University of Pisa (Pfanter, Masi et al.) carried out a very interesting study proving the efficacy of balneotherapy with “Strong water” against anxious disorders.

In a pure dermatological and medical approach, the dermatologists team of the University of Pavia has conducted some studies - under the guidance of Professor G. Borroni - on patients before and after taking balneotherapy with the thermal water of Levico and Vetriol, proving the clinical efficacy of the thermal treatment of mild to moderate psoriasis (International Journal of Immunopathology and Pharmacology).

The ENT team of the Padua University - under the guidance of Professor A. Staffieri - published some very important studies on the beneficial effects of the arsenical-ferroginous water of Levico administered by nasal irrigations and aerosol: its clinical efficacy has been proven in the treatment of chronic rhinitis and smokers rhinitis (American Journal of Otolaryngogy), in rhinosinusitis, reducing nasal breathing resistance and increasing mucociliary clearance (Acta Otolaryngologica) and also in the wound healing after endoscopic intervention on chronic rhinosinusitis (American Journal of Otolaryngogy).



Also very interesting are all the studies in the rheumatic field. They were conducted by the Operative Unit of Rheumatology of the University of Siena, under the guidance of Dr. A. Fioravanti and proved the clinical efficacy of thermal water of Levico in the treatment of osteoarthritis of the knee (Rheumatology Int). Another important study, conducted under the guidance of Dr. Fioravanti, proves that the thermal water inhibits the negative effect of interleukin – 1B on nitric oxide production and apoptosis in human osteoarthritic chondrocyte (Journal of Biological Regulators&Homeostatic Agents).

We can say that from the 19th century the arsenical-ferroginous water from the Vetricol spring sources has proven to be an important therapeutic aid, thanks to its strong anti-inflammatory and antioxidant action, attracting ever-larger numbers of patients from all over Italy and European countries.

Carlo Stefenelli – OMTh - Vice President

THE BALCANS

SLOVENIA - CROATIA

Slovenian natural spas and health resorts

Slovenia's natural health resorts that have arisen in places with mineral and thermal springs have been in the last hundred years the locations where modern rehabilitation of patients after surgery and patients with chronic diseases and conditions are offered. In addition to the use of natural healing factors, there are also the methods of medical rehabilitation, work therapy and physiotherapy that are available to the patient. Natural healing effects of thermal water, soothing maritime and mountain climate with aerosols, salt water and saline mud, healing peloids and peat are those healing sources with which Slovenia has been richly blessed by nature and which form the basis of the activity of 15 Slovenian natural spas and health resorts. Spa and medical Spa activities in the Slovenian natural Spas include both the preventive health as well as rehabilitation treatments by additional use of natural remedies. The use of natural remedies allowed the resorts a medical specialization for individual diseases, damage and disability.

TRADESHOW OF SPA AND WELLNESS TOURISM IN CENTRAL EUROPE 23 - 25 October 2014, RADENCI, SLOVENIA

The Slovenian Spas Association is the initiator of the SPA-CE trade show (www.spa-ce.si), featuring not only Slovenian natural spas but also spas, wellness centers and providers of medical and other programs from other Central European countries. The main purpose of the SPA-CE trade show is for the most important providers of spa and wellness services from European countries to meet with tour operators, tourist agencies, representatives of insurance companies and other potential buyers of their services. The aim of the organizers is for the SPA-CE trade show to become a place to meet, exchange ideas and provide opportunities for new connections among its participants in the wider Central European Region! This year one of the main objectives was also to attract private insurance companies from Germany to get better approach to the EU Directive 24/2011 permitting all EU citizens to choose the best suitable thermal location. For this purpose, a study tour for some Medical Doctors from Germany was organized for this purpose at the end of November.

CROATIA



For the fourth time, representatives of the Balkan countries met on the occasion of the largest professional symposium in the field of spa and wellness industry at the Balkan Spa Summit, held in the Spa Terme Tuhelj from October 9-12/2014. More information on the event and its main role is to be found at: <http://www.balkanspasummit.org/about-bss/>.

The Balkan region is rich in natural springs of thermal mineral water, and other favorable conditions, such as areas with a suitable climate, forests, coast and the natural and historical wonders essential for the development of the thermal sector. The Balkan countries have a vibrant tradition of using these natural resources in order to preserve the health and well-being of their people.

Working together, we started four years ago in Bulgaria at the first Balkan Spa Summit, continued in Turkey and Serbia, and this year the tradition continues in Croatia. We agree in assessment that the spa industry in all Balkan countries is promising as long as we combine the tradition of spa and spa culture and methods that are unique in the Balkan region with modern concepts and trends in the spa world in an innovative way.

Great acknowledgment was given to the organizers, to The Wellness and Fitness Association of Croatia (WUH), led by Mr. Marko Jurakić also with the letter of the President of the Republic of Croatia.

Iztok Altbauer
Director SLOVENIAN SPAS ASSOCIATION©
OMTh Advisor