



# *hti*NEWS

EUROPEAN HEALTH TOURISM INDUSTRY MAGAZINE

Issue 5 • 2020 • Year IV

## Health Destination Croatia

Cross Border  
**HEALTHCARE  
DIRECTIVE**

## 4TH EUROPEAN HTI SUMMIT *Brussels*

**INTERVIEW: ISTVÁN UJHELYI, MEMBER  
OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT**

**Challenges  
for the Future**

**INTERVIEW: EDUARDO SANTANDER, CEO,  
EUROPEAN TRAVEL COMMISSION**

**Tourism  
Is not Only a Business**

Investing in Sustainable Strategies *p.28*

BALNEOLOGY in Europe *p.38*



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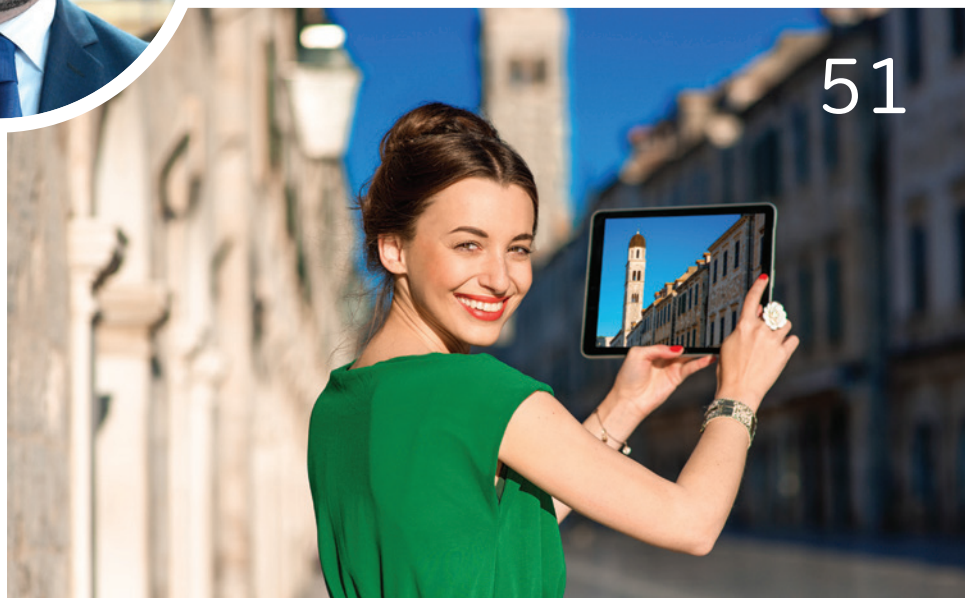




*"Tourism industry represents more than 10 % of the total European gross domestic product and provides jobs for over 25 million citizens"*

**István Ujhelyi**

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# European HTI Summit, Brussels 2019

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# THE EUROPEAN HTI SUMMIT

## Designing the Future of the European Health Tourism Industry

Since 2017 the European HTI Summit gathers key European health tourism leaders and policy makers and discusses challenges and opportunities for Europe as a destination of health

**AUTHOR:** HTI News

**T**here is still no consensus on a definition of health tourism and what it includes. When talking about “health tourism”, we refer to well-being, thermal spa and medical tourism. Widely recognized education and certification programmes are still not in place in most of EU countries. Many of them have not yet adjusted their legal framework nor removed administrative barriers. There is no performance measurement system and no appropriate benchmarking among European services providers. Brexit is another challenge to deal with. Barriers are evident within a not so successful implementation of the EU Directive on Cross-Border Healthcare, in effect since October 2013.

Widely recognized education and certification programmes are still not in place in most of EU countries, and many of them have not yet adjusted their legal framework nor removed administrative barriers

### SEARCHING FOR AN UMBRELLA PLATFORM

Even though it was not its primary goal, the European citizens have the right to expect getting medical assistance anywhere within the



Photo: Depositphotos



Tourism happens to be the 3rd largest socio-economic activity of the European Union while Europe as destination is the most visited region in the world

European Union. However, only a minority of the EU citizens know how to get healthcare in the EU although most of them have complete trust in the health system of the other EU countries and simply assume they will be reimbursed, which unfortunately, it is not the case. At the same time, it seems that some European countries are searching for an umbrella platform, either in the form of an association or just an initiative which would integrate their marketing interests through a strong professional network, thus becoming the force to influence policy makers and possibly change the rules of the game.

### THE WHY

The European initiative on joining

forces when talking about the health tourism sector, was definitely triggered by the following facts:

- Tourism happens to be the 3rd largest socio-economic activity of the European Union while Europe, as a destination, is the most visited region in the world. However, it is rapidly losing its market share (currently 50% but forecasted 41% by 2030 according to the UNWTO).
- Health tourism proved to be the fastest growing tourism segment worldwide with a 15-20% yearly growth and a new trend, positively influenced by demographic, sociological and cultural conditions of life in Europe.
- European health tourism has strong tradition, reputation, infrastructure, educated human resources and high quality of product and services. Namely, Europe happens to be the oldest and largest spa market in the world, with 30% of the world's thermal and mineral springs.
- Europe is the birthplace of the Mediterranean Healthy Diet recognized by the WHO as the healthiest food in the world and by UNESCO as Intangible Cultural Heritage.
- Yet, a multidisciplinary approach and sophisticated services are essential in bringing this offer to the marketplace since it requires strong efforts and resources in packaging and promoting the product – which is definitely missing.



# 4th European HTI Summit

*European Parliament, Brussels (Belgium),  
20 November 2019*

**T**he 4<sup>th</sup> EHTI Summit once again gathered the leading experts in the field of health tourism and policy makers in Europe in a dialog about the challenges and opportunities for Europe as a destination of health. Hosted by the Member of the European Parliament MEP István Ujhelyi, Vice-Chair of the Committee on Transport and Tourism, Member of the Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, and Special Ambassador of the UNWTO, the event gathered around 90 delegates from 28 countries, high-level public officials and professionals in medical, thermal and wellness tourism including healthcare providers, travel agents, tour-operators, facilitators, insurers and many others.

## RELEVANT HEALTH TOURISM DATA

MEP Karima Delli, Chair of the Committee on Transport and Tourism, and MEP Elena Kountoura, also participated and offered to be instrumental in addressing the need for relevant health tourism data both within the Parliament and with the new Commissioner Thierry Breton, raising the topics that

directly affect further development of the health tourism industry in Europe. All MEPs expressed a tremendous commitment to fight to the benefit of the health and sustainable tourism on the legislative level within the Parliament, asking though for concrete proposals.

## MEDICAL TOURISM AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

This year's edition promoted Croatia as a health tourism destination, so it was sponsored by the Croatian National Tourist Board, Croatia Airlines and Bagatin Clinic.

Therefore, a welcome note was given by Kristjan Staničić, Director of the Croatian National Tourist Board - HTI Gold & Country Partner. The keynote was offered by the World Travel and Tourism Council - WTTC that at this occasion released a report on medical tourism as an opportunity for growth, which set path for discussion. Tourism generates 10.4% of global GDP, and for the 8th consecutive year, tourism outpaced the economy worldwide, 1 out of 9 jobs are linked with the travel and tour-

ism industry, the sector is still booming. It is clear that countries worldwide increasingly recognize the opportunities that medical tourism brings as a catalyst for social and economic development and its potential to support quality education, highly skilled workers, favourable visa policies, promotion of country's attractiveness and its well-developed infrastructure, as explained by Lola Uña Cárdenas, WTTC Government Affairs Director EU. The goal of the research is to enable lobbying to the government to better understand the effects of this sector. However, there are already three studies on health and/or medical tourism produced within the last two years but all of them certainly lack data and statistics from the private sector, as intervened by the audience.

## MAIN CHALLENGES

The roundtable chaired by Eduardo Santander, ETC – European Travel Commission Executive Director, raised the question of the sustainability of the European health tourism today and what to expect as of tomorrow, bringing in the discussion the leaders of ESPA, EHTTA and Termatalia, UEHP, ITB Berlin and the European Commission. Girma Anuskeviciute from European Commission's Tourism, Emerging and Creative Industries Unit explained the activities carried out for boosting competitiveness of the European health tourism and addressing its main challenges such as sustainability, skills and digital transformation. She also clarified the transnational tourism partnerships and health, wellness and accessible tourism projects raising visibility of European destinations, along with plans for further funding of the sector. ESPA's President Thierry Dubois described how to provide high quality level for clients in luxury spa and to provide medical service for people

The event gathered 4 Members of the European Parliament, 8 European associations, 27 public organisations and 22 companies – in total 80 participants from 26 countries.



Photo: HTI News



looking for prevention and rehabilitation in the European medical spas, also stressing the main health treatments and the change of demand with the new society, and the international cooperation in promoting balneology and health tourism in Europe.

## INCLUDING SUSTAINABLE & RESPONSIBLE THINKING

The European Private Hospitals Association represented by Ilaria Giannico explained the position of private hospitals in Europe towards the EU Cross-Border Healthcare Directive, appealing to better incorporation of the Directive in European countries, while providing examples of good and poor implementation. She also pointed out the areas of patients' flow within Europe which implies neighbouring countries as well as other personal reasons, and gave a brief overview of the potential impact of Brexit in the healthcare sector. ITB' Commissioner for CRS and Medical Tourism Segment Rika Jean-Francois, stressed the need to speak about the necessity of including sustainable & responsible thinking into the medical tourism to guarantee a long-term stability – with climate change and "Fridays for Future" demonstrations all around, tourism itself is questioned and challenged. The question is how to market medical tourism in a responsible and sustainable way, taking into account diverse social factors and patient protection. Jose Manuel Baltar Blanco, President of Termatalia and President of the European Historic Thermal Towns Association, revealed the criteria that contribute to building up the European thermal identity but also on how sustainability may be instrumental in the



From Left to right: Leila Kršić-Jurić (HTI), MEP Karima Delli, MEP István Ujhelyi, Kristijan Staničić (CNTB), Lola Uña Cárdenas (WTTTC) and Nejc Jus (WTTTC)

Photo: HTI News

health tourism sector through thermal heritage and demographic challenges. He explained the priority channels in positioning the European health tourism product on foreign markets, and the experience in Latin America.

## CHALLENGES OF THE SOCIETY 5.0

The second roundtable brought a challenging discussion on health tourism and the Society 5.0, chaired by Martin Plachy - ESPA Vice-President from the Czech Republic, with speakers Sini Havukainen, CEO & Co-Founder of Layette from Finland, and Anton Brkić, Department Head at the Croatian National Tourist Board. Plachy offered an inspiring introduction on how digital revolution, new technologies and artificial intelligence may work better for the society of the future. Hence, many digital innovations can already make our life smarter and comfortable. One of them is the Finnish

application Layette that makes being a mom and dad easy, promoted under the slogan "You guide your child and Layette will guide you!"

Several times Finland was recognized as the best place in the world to be a mom, mainly due to a unique project of Finnish maternity clinics system that helps parents taking care of pregnancy, new-borns and kids until scholar days. With this application, Layette is now sharing Finnish knowledge with mothers worldwide. Bringing a child into the world produces countless questions and each third new mother in Finland downloads this application. With the support of Layette, the toughest job in the world has now become a little bit easier.

Another great example of Society 5.0 and achieving a high degree of convergence between the virtual world of new technologies and physical real space, seems to be the eVisitor registration system, developed in Croatia. It is a program that helps both tourism accommodation providers and the government to keep track of tourist stays (while respecting GDPR rules) and of tourist taxes. It provides easy registration of guests in all types of accommodation and management of tourist tax statistics in a real time scenario. Also, it helps to create a central database of all accommodation providers in the country, while ensuring education on technological and legal changes. The program is consistent with hotels' software, and it is centralized, unified, online and also mandatory in Croatia, thus providing diverse statistics at any time. eVisitor has been awarded by the UNWTO in 2018 for Innovation and Technology in Tourism. Namely, it will serve as the basis for the upcoming digital tourism project in



From left to right: José Manuel Baltar (Termatalia, EHTTA), Rika Jean-Francois (ITB), Eduardo Santander (ETC), Ilaria Giannico (UEHP), Girma Anuskeviciute (EC DG Grow) and Thierry Dubois (ESPA)

Photo: HTI News



Croatia that will integrate a central registry for all tourism stakeholders (including restaurants, spas, agencies, guides, and others), online registration of the business and investments' portal. After all, eVisitor is open for franchising to other countries. To conclude, Plachy reiterated that both examples indicate the extent of how deeply new technologies already stepped into our lives but also stressed the need to use them in a smart manner which would improve the quality of our lives while still remaining unique and irreplaceable human beings.

## NETWORKING

In addition, a networking reception was offered at the panoramic restaurant on Parliament's 12th floor.

Pursuing the promotion of Croatia as a "full of well-being" destination at this year's

On the next day, in collaboration with hub, brussels and EHTTA respectively, medical professionals and buyers visited CRG – the fertility clinic of UZ Brussel university hospital, while other participants visited the historical thermal town of Spa and candidate for the UNESCO World Heritage Site Status

summit, the reception was hosted by the Croatian National Tourist Board and Croatia Airlines. It showcased not only the offer of Croatia and its connectivity with Brussels but also a sample of the Croatian gourmet experience through the taste of the well-known pastry dish "štrukli", wines from the legendary Badel 1862 winery and the sweetest Croatian recipe Bajadera pralines produced by the oldest chocolate manufacturer in south-eastern Europe Kraš, founded in 1911. Organizing the Summit in the most influential city in Europe that is home to 48,000 European officials, diplomats, lobbyists, international professionals and press correspondents, proved to be a true success and a path to a bright future for the health tourism sector in Europe. See you again in Brussels in 2020!



From left to right: Anton Brkić (CNTB), Martin Plachy (ESPA) and Sini Havukainen (Layette)

Photo: HTI News

## Important Role of Health Tourism

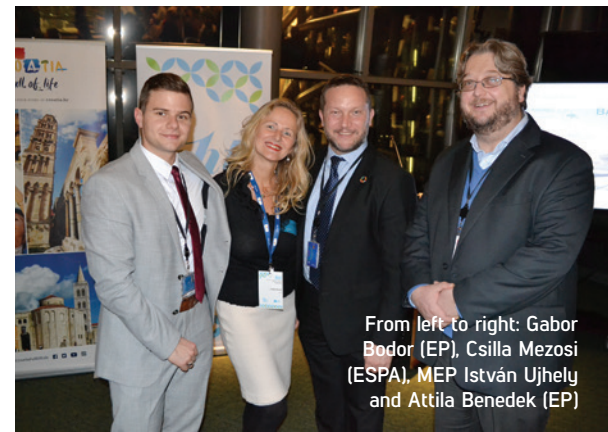
The European Health Tourism Industry Summit 2019 provided valuable insight from key industry leaders, experts and EU policy makers in addressing both the challenges and the new opportunities in the promising field of health tourism in Europe. Health tourism has great potential as a thriving year-round activity, that can lead to new job creation, produce new sources of income, mobilize new development projects, and spread benefits to all. At the same time, it has an important role in promoting health and a healthier lifestyle, which should strongly be reflected in all related EU policies.

Tourism, is an accelerator for sustainable growth, a catalyst for achieving economic and social prosperity and must be placed high in Europe's agenda for creating a brighter future for all.

**Elena Kountoura**

Member of the European Parliament and Former Minister of Tourism of Greece (2015-2019)

Photo: Private archive



From left to right: Gabor Bodor (EP), Csilla Mezosi (ESPA), MEP István Ujhelyi and Attila Benedek (EP)

## SUMMIT CONCLUSIONS

**1.** Tourism needs its own budget and to be part of a transparent portfolio within the European Commission: this initiative has already been presented to the newly elected President von der Leyen by several Members of the Parliament who also supported the TC's Tourism Manifesto.

**2.** Medical tourism represents a clear path for faster social and economic development which certainly highly correlates with the GDP of the country thus influencing employment, skills, visa regime, infrastructure and overall promotion and perception of the country.

**3.** The Cross-Border Healthcare Directive did not have major budgetary impact on the sustainability of healthcare systems although cross-border patients' flows in Europe show a stable pattern but low financial impact. Since CBHD promotes EU citizens' right to access healthcare in any EU country and to be reimbursed by their home countries, it is expected to keep respecting and promoting the freedom of the patient with regard to the healthcare within the EU.

**4.** A comprehensive and very detailed research on the European health tourism including the private sector is crucial to enable further development. Statistical data are the key to measure if the path taken is the proper one. The European Travel Commission is ready to step in action through the Tourism Manifesto. ESPA, as the largest European association members from more than 20 countries, is ready to include all its members into a comprehensive research to the benefit of European private and public stakeholders.

**5.** Based on the Summit discussion, the HTI will prepare a white paper on the needs related to the health tourism sector in Europe, including the topics of research and statistics and backed up by the associations present herewith. The HTI will then send it as an official statement to the MEP Ujhelyi for further processing within the European Parliament.

## Croatia can Utilise its Advantages

Health tourism and cross-border health care in the European Union represent an important part of the European single market. EU legislation on cross-border health care, namely Regulation 883/2004 and Directive 2011/24, are especially important. These rules provide a right to access health treatment outside the Member State in which a patient is insured/has residence, under certain conditions, covered by the patient's social health insurance fund. Directive 2011/24 also provides a basis for developing instruments related to health tourism, like e-health, cooperation through European Reference Networks, recognition of medical prescriptions and similar. These rules have been implemented by Croatia and other Member States of the EU. Even though cross-border health care is still a relatively marginal phenomenon, a great room for improvement exists.

Croatia is a country with a comprehensive system of health protection, high quality health care facilities and providers who are well integrated into European networks of excellence. Workforce is of high

quality and competitive on the European level, with higher education programmes being already taught in English at Croatian universities. Health treatments are comparatively cheaper when compared to the countries of northern and western Europe. The country is easily accessible through a network of modern motorways, airports, seaports and railways. Taking all this into account and the fact that improving access to health care will be one of the priorities of the EU in the next several years, I believe that Croatia can utilise its advantages and rules on free movement on the European single market to become a real focal point of health tourism in Europe.

**Tomislav Sokol**

Member of the European Parliament



## Participating Organisations & Companies

**European Parliament** Brussels  
**European Commission, DG GROW Tourism, Emerging & Creative Industries** Brussels  
**European Commission, DG Health & Food Safety** Brussels  
**ETC - European Travel Commission** Brussels  
**ESPA - European Spa Association** Brussels  
**EHTTA - European Historical Thermal Towns Association** Brussels  
**ENALMH - European Network of Active Living for Mental Health** Brussels  
**UEHP - European Union of Private Hospitals** Brussels  
**WTTC - World Travel & Tourism Council** London/Brussels

**AFRETh - Association Française pour la Recherche Thermale** France  
**Aglaea** UAE  
**Aratravel** Italy  
**Bagatin Clinic** Croatia  
**BAKI International Health & Travel Solutions** Turkey  
**BUBSPA - Bulgarian Union of Balneology and spa tourism** Bulgaria  
**China Hot Spring Tourism Association** China  
**City of Bad Bramstedt** Germany  
**City of Orense** Spain  
**City of Wiesbaden** Germany  
**Cluster Wellness Serbia** Serbia  
**CNETH - Conseil National des Etablissements Thermaux** France  
**Croatia Airlines** Croatia  
**Croatian Chamber of Economy** Croatia  
**Croatian National Tourism Board** Croatia  
**CS Consulting** Germany  
**Czech Spa Association** Czech Republic  
**French Thermal and Climatic Federation** France  
**GCMA - Global Cross-Border Medical Alliance** China  
**GCR - Global Clinic Rating** United Kingdom  
**H&W Group** China/France  
**HNLFI- Health Clinic & Spa** Iceland  
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**Municipality of Domburg** Netherlands  
**Municipality of Krapinske Toplice** Croatia  
**Nativa Media** Croatia  
**OPTBR - Patronal Organization of Balneary and Spa Tourism** Romania  
**Royal Spa** Czech Republic  
**Saujon Spa Group** France  
**Service-Reissen** Germany  
**Slovenian Spa Association** Slovenia  
**Switzerland Tourism** Switzerland  
**Technische Hochschule Deggendorf** Germany  
**Termatalia** Spain  
**Terme Tuhelj** Croatia  
**Travel2b** Belgium  
**Tripsetc Travel Company** USA  
**Xperthis** Belgium  
**Zagreb Tourist Board** Croatia



Photo: Depositphotos



# CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

European tourism must prepare for future challenges through strengthening ties with new, as well as existing, partners and working towards more political representation, says MEP István Ujhelyi

**AUTHOR:** HTI News

István Ujhelyi has dedicated a large part of his career to the development of European tourism. Having served one term as Vice-Chairman of the European Parliament Committee of transport and tourism, he was recently re-elected for a second term in 2019. Mr. Ujhelyi has also worked tirelessly at strengthening the relations between China and the EU, initiating, among other things, the 2018 EU-China Tourism year. István Ujhelyi is Vice-Chair of the TRAN Committee, Founder and President of Europe-China OBOR Culture & Tourism Development

Committee. In 2018 he was appointed as special ambassador of the UN World Tourism Organisation. He is founder and president of the Confucius Institute in Szeged (Hungary) established by the University of Szeged and Shanghai International Studies University.

We discussed the future of European tourism and the potential represented by the strengthening of the relations between the EU and China.

**Asia and the Pacific constituted the strongest growing region in 2018, achieving 7% growth for both arrivals and receipts but Europe saw the second strongest growth. What are the biggest challenges to keep the European tourism market share and can we expect an increase in the next decade?**



- That is right, but if you examine the numbers, Europe as a destination has also shown substantial growth. I am convinced that the dedicated EU – China Tourism year helped a lot in this regard. Europe can maintain its leading role, if the focus is sustainability, by promoting the lesser-known but really valuable destinations, investing in transport projects, for example new ports for cruise lines etc.

**How can we make European tourism more sustainable and how can we maintain this as a continuous process? What are the key challenges in this process?**

- Try to involve more the local people through the diversification of tourism activities. Find the way of rural possibilities in tourism. Get the regions further from the capitals digitally involved.

**Overtourism and the unregulated development of tourism in some European countries have gained prominence in recent years and if tourism is to become truly sustainable, the industry must adapt to new ways of thinking and acting. In your opinion, which are the main steps the EU should take regarding this issue?**

- We could not stop the revolution in digital sciences and services. We must be prepared for new challenges concerning online platforms, the new way of accommodation. We have to include the local citizens and regional players more. We have to focus on having proper education, one which would focus on developing new skills.



*"Generally speaking, the industry has made a huge step ahead during the last decade, however, we are still really far from our goal. Therefore, we must place emphasis on the opportunities that digitalization and new technologies can offer to the entire industry, in collaboration with all the key players"*

**The main purpose of travelling to Europe is leisure, recreation and holidays, accounting for 56% of all international arrivals. However, health tourism is growing faster than tourism in general – do we have enough data to estimate the size and growth of the European health tourism industry?**

- There is a mind-shift in our societies, more people would like to live a healthier life, eat less meat, try to find a more sustainable way of living. Citizens turning to health tourism is therefore only natural. Generally speaking, the industry has made a huge step ahead during the last decade, however, we are still really far from our goal. Therefore, we must place emphasis on the opportunities that digitalization and new technologies can offer to the entire industry, in collaboration with all the key players. On the one hand, this could be the engine of further development, while on the other, these new technologies could provide us with more specific data concerning the main trends, tendencies, challenges and opportunities, which are shaping the future of the tourism sector.

**What can be done, at the policy level, to further improve the development of the tourism industry in Europe and what are the key challenges in this process?**

- As you are aware, tourism industry plays an outstandingly important part in European economy. Being the third largest industry sector, it represents more than 10 % of the total European gross domestic product and provides jobs for over 25 million citizens. Needless to say, its political representation does not correspond to its economic weight. Therefore, since the very first day of my mandate in 2014, I have been tirelessly working towards putting tourism on the agenda of European politics. In collaboration with fellow MEPs, key players and associations of the industry, we have accomplished a great deal, inter alia, the creation of the DiscoverEU programme, the establishment of the European Capital of Smart Tourism Award, and the initiation of the EU-China Year of Tourism. Nonetheless, there is a long and bumpy road ahead of the entire industry, I am absolutely realistic and I have no doubt that the European tourism sector deserves a dedicated tourism budget line in the next Multiannual Financial Framework. On the part of the EP, we voted 300 million euro for 7 years. Now the ball is in the European Council's court, where Croatia is to serve as the



Photo: HTI News





Photo Depositphotos

leader of this Presidency for half year, till July. The Croatian Government put tourism policy in its strategy. We urged for a stronger representation of tourism, so now there are several Commissioners who are pushing for elements of the tourism policy to be implemented. What we need this term after the budget line is a coherent European Tourism Strategy.

**Tourism also provides a platform to boost cooperation between Europe**

*“The European tourism industry is faced with many challenges in the form of new technologies, new forms of accommodation and shifting mindsets. Strengthening the ties with regional players and local citizens is key to facing them successfully”*

**and China and in the year 2024 the number of Chinese tourists is expected to reach 242 million. This is also one of your biggest points of interest. How important is to establish the pathway to a better cooperation between the EU and the Chinese tourism stakeholders to foster sustainable growth, innovation and intercultural exchanges?**

- China as a country, its history and culture, has always had and always will have a really special place in my heart. I do believe that it is our role to strengthen the EU-China relations in various fields, inter alia; culture, education and tourism, and at the same time to work on building new bridges of cooperation in other areas. This is especially true nowadays, when we face new challenges amid phenomena such as rising populism and protectionism. Thus, it is crucial that we put more emphasis on the strengthening of EU-China relations

“Tourism represents a platform for boosting the relations between the EU and China on the basis of reciprocity and cooperation”

and partnership. The importance of this has been recognized by the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, and the entire European Commission. Consequently, it has

been stated several times, that China is and will be a key priority and partner. Therefore, it is time for action in order to be able to fully utilise the potential of EU-China relations based on reciprocity and cooperation. Needless to say, the One Belt One Road (OBOR)

project has a great potential to build new bridges, particularly in new fields, such as culture and tourism. This is the reason why in 2016 I decided to establish a joint Brussels-based NGO called the OBOR COMMITTEE, whose aim it is to capitalize on this new initiative to create a high-level network between European and Chinese partners with great experience in diplomacy, business and politics with a special focus on culture, tourism and education.



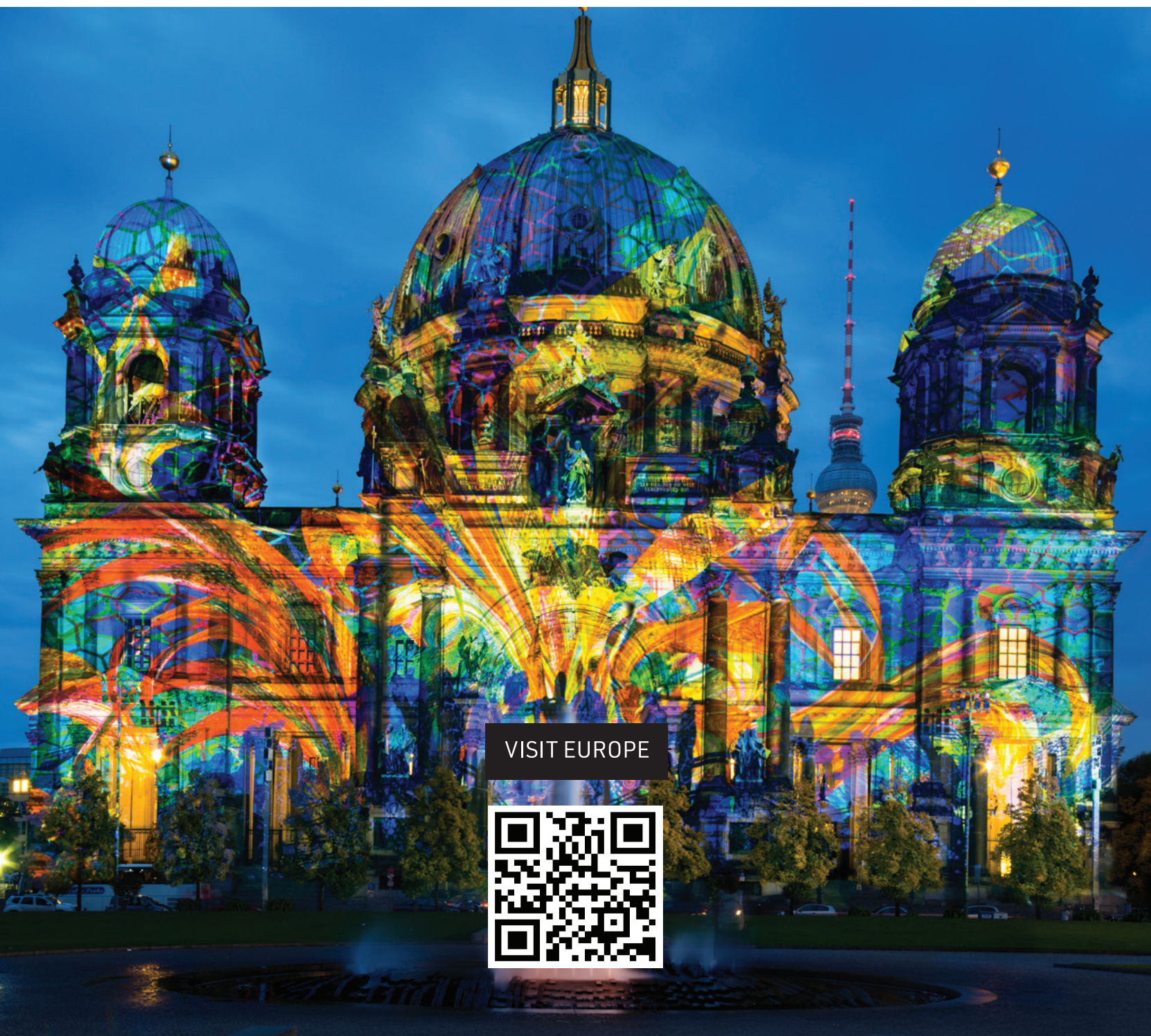
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# TOURISM

## *Is not Only a Business*

It is important to remember that tourism is not only a business. It enables the European continent to sustain its cultural and natural heritage, provides revenue to fund facilities and infrastructure enjoyed by visitors and residents alike, and promotes an awareness of a common European identity

AUTHOR: HTI News

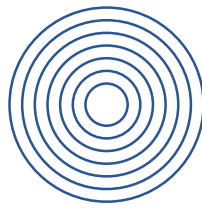


**E**duardo Santander is the Executive Director of the European Travel Commission (ETC), an association of National Tourism Organisations (NTOs) created in 1948 to promote Europe as a tourism destination. In this role, Mr Santander steers ETC's activities aimed at building the value of tourism for the countries of Europe through cooperation in sharing best practices, market intelligence and promotion.

**In 2017, Europe consolidated, for the eighth consecutive year, its position as the leading destination worldwide, accounting for 50% of the share of worldwide tourism, as stated in the ETC Travel Report 2017. However, Europe has to face several challenges in competing for market share – what are they and how to overcome them?**

- International tourism is expected to grow steadily for the next ten years. Long-haul arrivals for European destinations will become more and more important as part of that projected growth. However, there will be challenges ahead undoubtedly.

A loss of market share for Europe is predicted as tourism is expected to grow even faster in competing regions, in particular, South-East Asia. Any such loss of market share on the long-haul markets is something we need to anticipate and one we are work-



*„We see the EU, in particular the European Commission, as the body that should be responsible for ensuring smart investment in tourism by all Member States and their regions, local authorities, public entities, academia and the private sector, by working together instead of duplicating efforts”*

ing to address.

How are we doing this? Let's take a step back. Travel consumer behaviours vary day by day and week by week. It is up to the destinations and the industry to adapt their offering and the way we communicate to potential visitors if we want to remain relevant. We need to build the skills necessary to cope with technology change to take full advantage of the opportunities that it can offer.

Not all regions face the same challenges also. Take seasonality and the threat of mass tourism for example, it is fair to say that these are bigger threats in Europe than in other competing regions around the world. It is our job to face these challenges head on.

Despite these challenges, coupled with the not insignificant ever present issues of international economic and political instability, the threat of commercial wars or the urgent need to address climate change, tourism continues to be one of the most resilient sectors of the European economy.

**Tourism is an important driver of economic and social development, representing a key sector of the European economy, generating almost 10% of total EU-28 GDP and employing 26.5 million people.**

**What are expected predictions for the future? What are the essentials for achieving the sustainable growth of European tourism?**

- The importance of the sector for European economic and social development really cannot be overstated. Tourism is the third largest economic sector in the European Union and the indirect impacts it has on member countries is clear for all to see. It stimulates economic growth across Europe, generating income, employment and investment in the region.

By way of illustration, there were over 562 million international arrivals to the EU-28 countries in 2018. This supports an amazing 27.3 million people (11.6% of total EU employment). In fact, the tourism sector supported the creation of 1 in 5 new jobs in the last five years. On top of this, research from the WTTC found that over 3 million additional tourism jobs will be created in Europe by 2029, assuming it is enabled by a supportive environment. In this context, the sector will become increasingly important to the European economy given that it is labour-intensive and primarily composed of SMEs, with a high female and youth employment ratios.

Despite these positive figures, we cannot take our eye off the ball. While 2019 saw further growth in tourism arrivals to Europe, it was at a more modest level than in 2018.

The European Tourism Manifesto is a unique initiative and a first in the history of European tourism. The Manifesto is currently endorsed by 52 organisations. HTI PARTNER – organizer of the European HTI Summit, is also one of them



Photo: Private archive



According to the UNWTO World Tourism Barometer, Europe's pace of growth slowed to 3% in January-September this year, down from double that rate last year, reflecting slower demand during the peak summer season.

**However, the focus of ETC and industry has now switched firmly towards the sustainable development of the sector rather than just growth in volume.**

- ETC sees the changes needed in our industry as opportunities, and we believe a three-pronged approach is necessary for European tourism to thrive going forward.

Firstly, we must focus on maximising the benefits of tourism for all citizens through creative ideas based on cooperation among destinations and evidence-based market research (like our new marketing strategy "Horizon 2022"). We must ensure that both travellers and citizens share the profits of the tourism industry: directly from the business itself, but also through new opportunities and possibilities of employment, including converting old jobs to new ones.

Secondly, we need to find solutions to more effectively disperse visitors throughout the year and geographically over Europe. By decreasing seasonality and alleviating pressure from city hubs, we will bring economic benefits to communities situated beyond tourist hotspots, who have not typically benefited from tourism.

Lastly, we need to encourage the tourism industry to come together, to boost public-private partnerships and to seek collaboration between sectors. This consolidation will let us bring about the change necessary for tourism destinations to operate and grow more healthily.

Tourism, when managed well, provides an incredible boost to host communities: it can transform the lives of citizens and help businesses prosper where they didn't before. When tourism is not managed well, however, it can lead to overcrowding and an erosion of the culture and environment which visitors once came to celebrate. As a vast continent with an abundance to offer to travellers, this mismanagement is the enemy of tourism in Europe – not growth.

**European public and private stakeholders have presented their "Tourism for Growth and Jobs Manifesto". What are the key points of that document, and what can be done to address them?**

- The European Tourism Manifesto is a unique initiative and a first in the history of European tourism. For the first time ever, Europe's public and private tourism stakeholders have come together to call on the European Union to do more to support this important sector.



„The tourism sector supported the creation of 1 in 5 new jobs in the last five years. On top of this, research from the WTTC found that over 3 million additional tourism jobs will be created in Europe by 2029“

The Manifesto is currently endorsed by 51 organisations covering the whole spectrum of the value chain and beyond: travel agents & tour operators, air, rail and ground transportation, accommodation providers, restaurants, bars, cafes, shopping centres, tourist sites and attractions, and many others.

Together we advocate for better coordination at European level of the various instruments involved with tourism in the EU. In order to be as effective as possible, these instruments need to be managed in a systematic and coordinated way. We see the EU, in particular the European Commission,

as the body that should be accountable for ensuring smart investment in tourism by all Member States and their regions, local authorities, public entities, academia and the private sector, by working together instead of duplicating efforts.

Secondly, we are calling for a coherent and strategic approach to support a long-term European tourism vision and the different phases of its implementation. The EU needs a dedicated tourism strategy with clear aims, objectives, indicators and actions for tourism in the EU involving all stakeholders.

Lastly, we need to back the previous

Photo: Depositphotos

two actions with adequate funding. Since December 2009, tourism policy has had its legal basis, recognised by the Treaty of Lisbon, within which, Article 195 gives to the EU the responsibility to promote the competitiveness of the European tourism sector by creating a favourable environment for its growth and development and by establishing an integrated approach to the travel and tourism sector.

**The European Travel Commission plays a key role in building and promoting Europe as a tourist destination through the “Destination Europe” strategy. What are the challenges and the perspectives?**

- While Europe is one of the most diverse destinations in terms of the broad spectrum of experiences and products available, it still has an appeal that is too generic and a rather undifferentiated image. Brand Europe does not have the same impact as some of our competitors. Our competitors have more resources at their disposal and are therefore having a bigger impact as they are in a position to run ambitious campaigns and programmes that attract partnerships outside tourism.

The European tourism industry is quite fragmented with lots of different players involved and a lack of cohesion across the board. In occasion, conflicts of interests lead to compromising choices and can result in the creation of generic messages, which exacerbates the challenge somewhat.

We believe there is still a lack of understanding of the value of tourism to the EU as a whole, and, therefore, a constant pressure on budgets for destination marketing. We, in ETC, are working hard every day to raise awareness and understanding among national and European authorities and the general public of the importance of tourism and the need to ensure its development through appropriate collective measures.

**Which country members have the key player's role in European tourism? ETC also emphasizes the need to promote lesser known destinations within Europe - what are some less-known destinations that are on the rise?**

- We are planning a major global promotional campaign for 2020 under the tagline “More Europe than you think”. The campaign will showcase in particular products and

experiences around nature and outdoor activities, culture and heritage, contemporary arts and creative industries. All European destinations and in particular those in second tier cities and rural areas are invited to participate in this campaign provided that they have developed the right products and experiences to cater to the needs of these interest-based groups.

**China is becoming one of the main source markets with huge growth potential for European tourism. Beside China, what upcoming global markets is ETC turning to? What marketing strategies is employing?**

- Through our head office in Brussels and operations chapters overseas, ETC undertakes trade and consumer marketing in four major long-haul outbound travel markets: Canada, China, the USA and Brazil. In recent years, China has become the largest outbound source market worldwide. Along with USA, they are the two most important long-haul origin markets for European destinations overall.

Bearing this in mind though, we are choosing not to segment our source markets simply based on geography anymore. We are moving from a predominantly demographic targeting to a behavioural and attitudinal one. We are transitioning to a global cross-border interest-based segmentation. This new definition of markets is easier to connect with at an emotional level and better align with the specifics that Europe has to offer.

At the same time, this will allow us to market Europe in more countries than ever before.

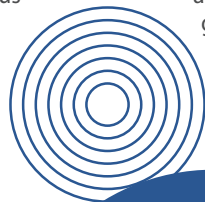
**In your opinion, what kind of policy can European institutions implement in order to further improve the positioning of European tourism and attract tourists?**

- In order to remain the world's foremost tourist destination, Europe must respond to the shifting patterns in global tourism and capitalise on the potential of tomorrow's outbound travel markets while developing sustainable tourism practices aligned with the European Green Deal. That said, we have outlined some of our thoughts on key policy initiatives which would further improve the positioning of European tourism like Visa Policy, Promotion of European Diversity, Funding for long-term joint promotion, Private Sector Collaboration and Tourism and Transport Infrastructure.

**And how do you see the synergy of leading European health tourism associations and their gathering in European Parliament through HTI platform?**

- The Health Tourism Industry platform is a great mechanism to bring together all European health tourism stakeholders and policy makers. Health, wellness and medical tourism has grown exponentially in recent years and both established and emerging destinations are increasingly tapping into the potential of this tourism segment in their attempts to diversify, increase revenue and tackle seasonality challenges.

We need to better understand this growing segment in order to fully leverage the opportunities it presents. The HTI platform allows us to stay on top of the trends, to exchange and grow our knowledge, and to generate new business opportunities.



“It is up to the destinations and the industry to adapt their offering and the way we communicate to potential visitors if we want to remain relevant. We need to build the skills necessary to cope with technology change to take full advantage of the opportunities that it can offer”



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# WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Where lies the future of sustainable European Health tourism and what is the European Commission doing to boost the competitiveness of the European health tourism sector and to address its main challenges?

**AUTHOR:** HTI News



**G**irma Anuskeviciute is a Policy Officer at the European Commission working in the Tourism, Emerging and Creative Industries unit of the Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, since 2007. The unit develops and supports EU policy initiatives aiming at competitive, sustainable and innovative tourism.

**What is the European Commission doing to boost the competitiveness of the European health tourism sector and to address its main challenges (e.g. sustainability, skills, digital transformation)?**

- Allow me to answer this question by taking a broader angle on European tourism sector. Our focus is on horizontal priorities and shared challenges in the European tourism sector. We formulate actions to support the entire value chain in tourism sector - diverse tourism stakeholders and businesses.

**European tourism industry faces many growing and emerging challenges, which are also relevant for the specific sector of health tourism and which cannot be addressed individually. Which are the main challenges that health tourism is facing today?**

- First, there is question of sustainability in terms of climate and environmental footprint, circular economy and socio-cultural impact. Phenomena of unbalanced tourism growth have been affecting negatively visitors and local communities, as well as low cost travel, seasonality, and the rapid growth of collaborative economy. What we do at the Commission level is that we encourage dialogue and exchange of best practice on sustainable tourism management, give visibility to smart and sustainable destinations in the European Union and enhance the capacity of SMEs in sustainable tourism management.

Second, digital transformation and new collaborative business models (i.e. digital platforms, collaborative economy) is a particular challenge for the SMEs as well as for small, unprepared and less resilient destinations.

In this area the European Commission boosts capacity for digital transformation and innovation for tourism businesses via the development of innovation ecosystems, stronger value-chain cooperation and the uptake of new technologies. The priority is to ensure the balanced and responsible development of the platform economy and new business models, for

photo: Private archive



*"We hope that the tourism industry will play its part by strengthening their position on national and European level. For instance, by forming umbrella associations for health tourism you already have taken the first step towards this objective"*

the benefit of travellers, businesses and local communities.

**What about the third challenge?**

- Third challenge, the workforce in the tourism sector increasingly lacks the skills and knowledge required by modern and quality tourism offer.

We help the tourism workforce acquire right skills for the future. For example, under ERASMUS+ project we support developing a multi-stakeholder platform which will we analyse major trends & skills needs, develop concrete actions, revise occupational profiles, update new curricula, promote mobility of students and jobseekers. We cover 3 categories of skills: (green, digital, social) and five key tourism sub-sectors: hospitality, food and beverage operations, travel agencies and tour operators, visitor attractions and destination management.

The share of the health tourism sector in this will be strongly influenced by the industry's capacity to take their

future in their hands and turn challenges into opportunities.

We hope that the tourism industry will play its part by strengthening their position on national and European level. For instance, by forming umbrella associations for health tourism you already have taken the first step towards this objective.

**The European Commission has been long supporting transnational tourism partnerships and helping raise visibility of European tourism destinations, including health, wellness, and accessible tourism projects. Could you share some good practice examples with us?**

- The Commission has been long supporting the diversification of the EU tourism offer. In the last 5 years, for example, under our COSME programme, we supported with €37 million 118 transnational partnerships involving 350 tourism SMEs and stakeholders ([https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/tourism/offer\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/tourism/offer_en)).

Among these, we have directly supported development of transnational projects (such as itineraries, routes) with a focus on wellness and spa tourism, accessible tourism, tourism for all. For instance, *SOWELL* project has promoted wellness tourism during off-peak season for 2 target groups - young and seniors, *European Senior Travellers* project promoted health and spa tourism in low season for elderly, *ProWell* project focused on rural wellbeing tourism; *ROMAN SPAS* project promoted the Roman thermal baths across Europe and in third countries and *Well-O-Live* project promoted wellbeing experience across the European Routes of the olive trees.

What is important in creating a successful tourism project is to make sure projects have the right cooperation and partnerships, think sustainability – manage a project with a lasting impact and think beyond the lifetime of the project and have an integrated approach to tourism and work to create synergies.

**Another important initiative is European Destinations of Excellence (EDEN).**

- Through EDEN the European Commission promotes sustainable tourism in lesser-known destinations. We want to give visibility to emerging destinations that take a sustainable management approach for the benefit of the environment, the travellers and local communities. We

already have awarded around 160 destinations from 27 countries. Last year's theme was "Health and wellbeing tourism". 17 destinations of excellence





Photo: Depositphotos

"The share of the health tourism sector in this will be strongly influenced by the industry's capacity to take their future in their hands and turn challenges into opportunities"

have been uncovered in different European countries. The European Commission will award them in Brussels at the European Tourism Day on 5 May and will invite them to join the EDEN Network.

Another new initiative that many destinations can learn from is the European Capitals of Smart Tourism.

This initiative awards outstanding achievements of European cities as tourism destinations in four categories: accessibility, sustainability, digitalisation and cultural heritage and creativity. Helsinki and Lyon were 2019 European Capitals of Smart Tourism, while Gothenburg (Sweden) and Málaga (Spain) were awarded as 2020 European Capitals of Smart Tourism.

We have compiled a compendium of best practices (<https://smarttourismcapital.eu/best-practices/>) with the selection of best practices in the applicant cities of 2019 European Capital of Smart Tourism competition. It will be soon updated with best practices from the 2020 competition.

**What are the Commission plans for funding and further development of health**

**and wellbeing tourism?**

- Tourism does not have a dedicated funding instrument at European level. Thanks to the horizontal relevance of tourism, tourism stakeholders may receive support under different funding

instruments, namely in the area of regional development and cohesion policy, support to SMEs and skills. In addition, the European Investment Bank supports investment opportunities in the tourism sector, including medical, wellness and spa tourism.

A large segment of EU funding comes from Structural Funds, mainly from the Regional Development Fund (ERDF). Similarly, under COSME, we try to use the modest budget at our disposal in an efficient way to support transnational cooperation and diversify the European tourism offer.

The limited scale of our resources does not allow for a targeted support of specific tourism sub-sectors such as medical, spa or wellness tourism, but these sectors may still benefit under horizontal actions.

In 2019, the European Commission

launched a call for proposals with the aim to boost sustainable tourism development and capacity of tourism SMEs through transnational cooperation and knowledge transfer. The total budget for the co-financing of projects is 5 mIn EUR. The implementation of the successful projects is expected to start in May 2020.

Under COSME 2020 the European Commission will launch an open call for proposals focusing on digitalisation in the tourism sector.

As for the next MMF 2021-2027: several of the proposed programmes foresee support for tourism e.g. the structural funds, InvestEU, Single Market Programme, Creative Europe, Horizon Europe. This reflects the policy of mainstreaming tourism related investments under the diverse EU financing programme, which makes perfect sense in view of the interdependencies of tourism with other sectors of the economy.

Guide on EU funding for the Tourism sector 2014-2020: available in all languages at <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/e0707433-aa5f-11e6-aab7-01aa75ed71a1>





## WORLD TRAVEL & TOURISM COUNCIL

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The Membership fee for the first year is USD \$3500 (Pre-Sale offer up to 31 March 2020) and USD \$4000 going forward. For further inquiries please email: [associate@wttc.org](mailto:associate@wttc.org)

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- Access to WTTTC thought leadership and policy papers, including best practices for better informed decision-making.
- Participation in a forthcoming exclusive online community with specialist content and development opportunities for SMEs.
- Use of WTTTC logo within your marketing collateral



# MEDICAL TOURISM

## *A catalyst for socio-economic development*

Research conducted by the World Travel & Tourism Council shows medical tourism plays a crucial role in the market. It shows great potential for further growth, given the right kind of support and regulation

AUTHOR: HTI News

**L**ola Uña Cárdenas, Vice President of Government Affairs and Nejc Jus, Economic Research Manager from the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), have conducted a study on the role and advantages presented by medical tourism, as well as its economic benefits. Medical tourism, referred to as 'health-related personal travel' by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), is defined as the products and services purchased by people who travel abroad primarily for medical and health-related reasons, including expenses for food, accommodation & local transport. During their research, Lola Uña Cárdenas and Nejc Jus found that medical tourism makes a key contribution to the market. With the right kind of support, as well as regulation, medical tourism has great potential for growth.

### ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION

The aim of the research was to measure the economic contribution of medical tourism in 115 countries worldwide. The

research also presents some of the best policy initiatives from select countries that have supported the development of medical tourism. The report has shown that international spending on medical tourism products and services grew by 358 % in nominal terms between 2000 and 2017, increasing from \$ 2.4 billion to \$ 11 billion. This growth resulted in spending on medical tourism reaching 1.2 % of international visitor spending in 2017, compared to 0.6 % in 2000. The United States is the largest destination market for inbound medical tourists, with spending reaching almost \$4bn in 2017 and representing nearly 36% of the total spending on global medical tourism. Turkey, Thailand, Jordan, Costa Rica, and Mexico are some of the leading emerging economies when it comes to inbound medical tourism spending.

### AN OPPORTUNITY FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH

The United States is also the world's leading outbound medical tourism market, with a 20 % share in the total market and

US citizens spending around \$2.3bn on medical tourism services abroad. Kuwait is the second-largest source market for outbound medical tourism, largely due to its government policy of supporting and subsidizing medical procedures abroad. Nigeria is the third largest source market in this sense. The most effective policies in supporting and stimulating medical tourism are those that establish the regulation and widely accepted accreditation or certification of medical practitioners and facilities, provide specific visa support, training and skills development, as well as developing and implementing targeted marketing strategies, and attracting investment into the medical sub-sector. A growing number of countries have recognised the opportunities presented by medical tourism as a catalyst for socio-economic development.

The most effective policies for supporting and boosting medical tourism are those that establish the regulation and widely recognised accreditation or certification of medical practitioners and facilities



# “INVESTING IN SUSTAINABLE STRATEGIES IS CRUCIAL”

Environmental concerns have long been neglected but the tourism industry should be the new leader in responding to climate changes, says Rika Jean-François, Commissioner ITB Corporate Social Responsibility and Head of Coordination ITB Guest Countries

AUTHOR: HTI News

**W**orking for ITB Berlin since 2004, Rika Jean-François started building up the fair's Corporate Social Responsibility, advocating sustainable tourism, coordinating and planning all CSR-related events at ITB and speaking at responsible tourism events internationally. Additionally, Ms. Jean-François became an

acknowledged jury member of international responsible tourism contests and is a board member of the PATA (Pacific Asian Travel Association) and the its Sustainability Committee as well as of the IGLTA Foundation (The International LGBTQ+ Travel Association). At ITB, she is also heading ITB's official Partner Country programme and has recently spearheaded the development of ITB's Medical Tourism segment in cooperation with their partner Diversity Tourism.





Photo: Private archive



*„Climate action is urgent: in every sector! We need global collaboration, European collaboration and collaboration of all stakeholders – private, public, patients and residents!“*

**We live in a time of an existential climate crisis, life as we know it, is threatened. Especially tourism is blamed for climate change even though, of course, all industries are involved.**

- Tourism is under special pressure because travelling is not a 1st need like food, clothing or housing. Medical tourism in comparison to leisure, can of course be more of a need – sometimes it is even life-saving. Medical tourism also has a high percentage of longer stays which means it has a better carbon footprint, even when long-haul flights are taken.

#### **What can we do?**

- Nevertheless, in any case, climate action is urgent: in every sector! We need global collaboration, European collaboration. Collaboration of all stakeholders – private, public, patients and residents.

We cannot discuss endlessly because the question is how to survive! According to Prof. Schellnhuber, Director Emeritus of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK), the earth only has a 19% chance to survive as we know it.

#### **What does that mean for our business? Each one of us has a responsibility, it is not only the institutions who are responsible.**

- We should rethink what we are doing and urgently develop a tourism strategy that reflects on transport emissions. Develop new packages which include railways alternative routes, lobby against fossil fuels, harness technology... Environmental concerns have long been neglected, now young activists and politicians suddenly pay attention to it and take a closer look at our industry, tourism – it is a

chance. We must be leaders.

We need to set new standards, against plastic waste, support the use of circular economy products. Investors and business owners need to invest in sustainable strategies now, as well as destinations. They need to measure their climate impact, including supply chains. We should create systems of incentives or penalties.

Waste management is a special challenge, of course and responsible water management is crucial as well.

#### **Along with the environmental factors we also have to look into the social factors. It is extremely important to also include – not exclude the local communities.**

- The European Tourism Manifesto also puts emphasis on the quality of life of local communities (fair benefit, fair working conditions, also in sub-sectors!) The locals should equally benefit from health care. In their daily lives they need a good infra-structure that should be provided to them as well as to the tourists; try to build better places to live so that the clients can also benefit from a good infra structure – and not the other way round. Ask for their needs of the local residents and acceptance of your plans when developing a new project, include them in any further planning, create “pride”, so that they can support and love the programme. Avoid “overtourism” through structural planning from the beginning. The local population needs to also benefit from developed health care. Make sure doctors are satisfactory paid and have a chance to develop their skills to avoid brain-drain from doctors into the private sectors. A poor local medical infrastructure only available for affluent tourists is surely bad for social peace and thus for any resilience in tourism.







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# Cross Border Healthcare Directive

Ilaria Giannico, Secretary General of the European Union of Private Hospitals (UEHP), presented her position on the Cross-border Healthcare Directive, as well as some real experiences coming from UEHP hospitals in different countries dealing with European patients

AUTHOR: HTI News

Ilaria Giannico is Secretary General of the European Union of Private Hospitals (UEHP). Ms Giannico joined UEHP in July 2016. She is experienced in EU Affairs and EU funding programmes. Her professional background includes the collaboration with the Belgian-Italian Chamber of Commerce and the activity at Confindustria Delegation to the EU, working in close relationship with the EU institutions. Ms Giannico regularly speaks at international congresses and forums bringing the voice of private hospitals in Europe at the heart of the most influencing policy discussions on the future of healthcare.

## What is the position of private hospitals in Europe towards the Cross-border Healthcare Directive?

- The CBHD establishes that EU citizens have the right to access healthcare in any EU country and to be reimbursed for care abroad by their home countries, under certain conditions. We respect and promote the freedom of the patient to choose where and by whom to be cared for. UEHP has been monitoring the implementation of CBHD from the beginning of the legislative process, and we fully recognise the huge potential of this Directive, especially for reducing waiting lists; overcoming the rigid separation of NHS, learning from each other also improving quality standards of care not only for foreign patients but also for the domestic ones. However, we recognise that the implementation of the CBHD in the different countries is still not complete. The EU opened 26 infringements procedures against Member States for late or incomplete notification of the transposition measures. In particular the most common barriers to the full implementation of the Directive are the poor citizens awareness, the lack of clear and structured information, the lack of cooperation with the ministries and national Contact Points (NCPs), the administrative burden and the time needed to handle each request, the language barriers, the low reimbursement tariffs, the compulsory prior authorisation chosen by 21 Member States out of 28.



## Can you give us some examples about the implementation of the CBHD in the countries members of UEHP.

- The situation is very patchy and fragmented. I can give you two examples: in Spain and in Italy. Our Spanish member, the Alianza de la Sanidad Privada Espanola (ASPE), is the National Contact Point for private healthcare providers, which enables the association to provide target service and information to the Spanish private hospitals and to citizens willing to be treated in a private hospital in Spain. The NCP's website has improved a lot over the past years, but unfortunately Italian private hospitals are still excluded from the information given by NCP. In fact, the website lists only 65 all public hospitals available in Italy to receive patients from abroad. This information is of course not realistic and not complete. We see a number of side initiatives where private hospitals in Italy are promoting their services, like "doveecomemicro.it", a website where the users can look for a hospital and make queries based on pathologies, the region, the city, the name of the hospital, etc.

In order to join forces and efforts and to help promote the offer of the private sector we also developed a UEHP tool, which is the UEHP cartography, an interactive map of the private hospitals in Europe members of our association you can find on link <https://uehp.gitlab.io/map/>.

## Where do patients travel in order to seek healthcare in Europe?

- According to the recent studies carried out by the European Commission, looking at flows of patients travelling for healthcare after receiving prior authorisation, the greatest flow was from France to Spain. Where prior authorisation was not required, the greatest flow was from France to Germany. After that, the most frequent cases of patient mobility were from Denmark to Germany, followed by Poland to Czech Republic and Norway to Spain, where the bulk of it is for dental care. We can observe two main trends: 1) patients are mostly travelling between neighbouring countries; 2) beside proximity and collaboration between



clinicians in border regions, patients want to choose where to be treated for different reasons, such as return to the country of birth, bringing relatives closer to receive care from them, finding expertise not available in their home country.

Conclusions is: cross-border patients flows are showing a stable pattern, but the financial dimension of patient mobility is low and CBHD has not resulted in a major budgetary impact on the sustainability of healthcare systems.

#### What will be the impact of Brexit on CBHD?

- The "Notice on travelling between the EU and the United Kingdom following the withdrawal of the UK from the EU" published in July 2019 by the European Commission specifically addresses this topic at par 7.2: "As of the withdrawal date, patients affiliated in an EU-27 Member State will no longer benefit from the rules on reimbursement set out in that legislation as regards the cross-border treatment provided in the United Kingdom. Nor will patients affiliated in the United Kingdom any longer benefit from EU rules on reimbursement."

The Notice also includes a paragraph on the "Recognition of medical prescriptions issued in another Member State": "A medical prescription issued in the United Kingdom, as of the withdrawal date, will no longer be recognised in an EU-27 Member State on the basis of Union law."



Photo: Depositphotos

Photo: Layette



## The Layette PREGNANCY APPLICATION

Sini Havukainen, a professional midwife and nurse, got an idea of developing the Layette pregnancy application to help mothers and families globally

In the 1940s Finland's infant and maternal mortality rates were as high as in today's low-income nations. Then the Finnish unique maternity clinic system was created and we can see what consistency can do. *Save the Children Organization* has also recognized how it has enabled one of the world's lowest infant and maternal mortality rates. That's the main reason they have selected Finland year after year to be the best country in the world to be a mom.

#### IDEA OF DEVELOPING APPLICATION

Sini Havukainen, a professional midwife and nurse, realized the value of this national treasure and she got an idea of developing the Layette pregnancy application to help mothers and families globally to access the best maternity knowledge in the world.

Today there are alarming levels of false information available about pregnancy and parenthood. That inaccurate information not only affects children's quality of life but often puts children at high risk of diseases or even death.

#### ALL THE NECESSARY ADVICE

The Layette application features all the necessary advice empowering individuals to take control of their own and their children's health outcome with short written articles and videos. Parents can get a wide range of tailored information and tips from pregnancy all the way up to the age of three. This includes nutrition, explanations of early signs and symptoms of pregnancy and breastfeeding.

#### COOPERATING ALL OVER THE WORLD

Layette is cooperating with Red Cross, Midwife-, Health- and Diabetes associations and big companies from pharmaceuticals and insurance, for example. Sini has also had a chance to introduce Layette app at European Parliament, to the officials of the United Nations and Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare of multiple countries.

Japan is taking part in the Finnish maternal care system into nationwide use by the end of the year 2020. That's the reason why Layette has been just launched in Japan. Next year it will be expanded to other countries as well. Layette can truly influence families' quality of life so that they would not be feeling left alone with the toughest job in the world. Layette team believes that each country and every family deserves world-class maternal care.

Author: HTI News



*"The most important points to consider for the successful implementation in these digital health initiatives are their user-friendliness, degree of interest in digital health solutions and applications, availability of Wi-Fi coverage and mobile technology, digital savviness, scope of use, and products variability as well as data security"*



NAME: MR. PATIENT  
AGE: 27 YEARS  
DIAGNOSIS: BROKEN ARM  
REASON OF ADMISSION: ACCIDENT  
CARDIO: REGULAR BEATS, NO MURMURS  
PULMONARY: CLAIR, NO RALES  
ABDOMINAL: SOFT, NO ORGANOMEGALY  
NEUROLOGICAL: NOTHING ABNORMAL DETECTED

#### LAB FINDINGS:

WBC: 7.5G/L HB: 16.7G/DL  
MCV 92 PLT: 201 G/L CRP: 0.1 MG/L  
NA: 136MMOL/L K: 4.0MMOL/L CA: 2.54  
GLYCEMIA RANDOM: 1.6G/L A AST: 28U/L, ALT: 13U/L  
CPK 300 U/L, TROPONIN 0.00 CK-MB 40  
CREATININE: 102 UMOD/L

XRAY:  
BROKEN BONE

T: 37C  
PULSE: 99/M



# 5 Take Home Points from the European HTI Summit

The ageing European population, European economy, digital health, intriguing culture and tourism prospects are 5 main points influencing the European health tourism industry at the moment

AUTHOR: Sherif Hassan, MD

The European HTI Summit 2019 was held at the European Parliament on Nov 20<sup>th</sup> 2019. I attended the conference as their Representative in the USA and my home country Egypt. Delegates from institutional partners were present at the meeting including the International Tourism Bourse (ITB), European Historic Thermal Towns Association (EHTTA), Termatalia, European Union of Private Hospitals (UEHP), European Travel Commission (ETC) and European Health Management Association (EHMA).

As a practicing physician for over 20 years in different countries and operating under different capacities in addition to being an active player in the health tourism industry, I treasured the attendance and wanted to project these 5 main points influencing the European health tourism industry at the moment.

## 1. AGEING EUROPEAN POPULATION

Throughout history many countries have worked to keep high birth rates in order to have affordable taxes, more economic activity and even preserve or grow their armies. This is no longer the case.

Greying of Europe is a demographic change that is becoming more noticeable year after year caused by a decrease in the number of new-borns, reduced mortality rate, and a higher life expectancy among European populations. Low birth rates and higher life expectancy contribute to the transformation of Europe's population distribution pattern. The most significant change is the transformation to a much older population structure, resulting in a decrease in the proportion of the working age while the number of the retired population increases. This phenomenon is projected to increase greatly within the com-

ing decades, with rising proportions of the baby boomer generation reaching retirement. This will cause a higher burden on the working age population as they provide for the increasing number and more demanding older population.

The capitalization on the aging European population in the idea of fertility insurance seemed quite intriguing. As early twenties parenting is not so desirable by young Europeans mainly due to economic/career factors, there is the vision of augmenting human propagation by conserving fertility potential through storage of frozen embryos. This is a pretty orderly approach especially that only a minority of private health insurance policies do offer even only a partial coverage for fertility procedures.

## 2. EUROPEAN ECONOMY

In terms of the total value of all goods and services produced (GDP), as of the year 2017 the European Economy size is larger than the US economy. A key governing factor is that over 64 % of EU countries total trade is done with other EU countries.

A substantial finding is that with the EU population being just 6.9 % of the world's population, EU trade with the rest of the world accounts for 15.6 % of global imports and exports amounting to be the second largest player in global imports and exports of goods in 2016. Together with the United States and China, the EU is one of the three largest global players in international trade.

Interestingly the US had a larger share of world imports (17.6 %) than either the EU countries (14.8 %) or China (12.4 %) in the year of 2017. The impact of the global economic crisis that affected the EU zone in 2008 was followed by a sustained rise in the employment rate over the next few years.

The gender pay gap is generally much narrower for young employees and tends to widen with age.



*"A substantial finding is that with the EU population being just 6.9 % of the world's population, EU trade with the rest of the world accounts for 15.6 % of global imports and exports, making it the 2nd largest player in global imports and exports of goods in 2016"*





*Sherif Hassan, MD is a Precision Medicine Specialist in Washington DC, USA. He is also a medical informatics enthusiast with a vision that the future of medicine will be a consolidated science of functional medicine, AI, pharmacogenomics and stem cells*

This may be a result of the career interruptions typically experienced by women in the course of their working lives. The pay gap is particularly marked in the case of older women. Among the EU Members Spain has the widest pay gap, yet this is lower than in Russia and even Australia. Corrective legislation measures are being taken by EU countries to narrow this gap.

### 3. DIGITAL HEALTH

The Digital Health Europe multi-stakeholder group has worked on delivering a brief report about citizens secure access to and sharing of health data across borders in Europe. Following a survey, the group has captured information on several initiatives occurring around Europe, and their associated success factors and barriers to success. The outcomes of the report will contribute to the development of a White Paper on better citizen access and control of data, which will outline a set of recommendations and guidelines. European initiatives on citizens secure access to data, including citizens portals. This Data includes medical records, prescriptions, vaccination information, diagnostic images, and laboratory results.

The most important points to consider for the successful implementation in these digital health initiatives are their user-friendliness, degree of interest in digital health solutions and applications, availability of Wi-Fi coverage and mobile technology, digital savviness, scope of use, and products variability as well as data security.

Data Security is of utmost importance as I view General data Protection Regulation (GDPR) to being stricter than the Health Insurance Privacy and Probability Act (HIPPA) rules applied here in the USA. Europe has a very strong potential to be the world leader in that Arena, recently Germany launched its digital supply act to digitalize its healthcare rolling themselves ahead of the USA in that field.

### 4. INTRIGUING CULTURE

Less well known and largely overlooked with thought of tourist hotspots and prime tourist destinations is that Europe has one Culture "Diversity". There are some 160 culturally distinct groups in Europe, including a few groups in the Caucasus region that have relations and inclinations with both Asia and Europe. Each of these large groups exhibits two significant features. One being a degree of self-recognition by its members. Second is the tendency to be concentrated and numerically dominant within a distinctive territorial homeland.

The basis for collective identity is possession of a distinctive language or dialect. The Catalans and Galicians of Spain, for example, have languages notably different from the Castilian.

Interesting for me is the Balkans Area since I first visited Croatia in February 2018 I first noticed then read the History and language of the Balkans and came to know that the Eastern Orthodox Serbs, Muslim Bosnians (Bosniaks), and Roman Catholic Croats all speak a language that linguists refer to as Serbo-Croatian; however, each group generally prefers to designate its language as Serbian, Bosnian, or Croatian with different Alphabets. Some groups may share a common language but remain separate from each other because of differing historical paths. Even when coexisting within the same state, some groups may have similar languages and common religions but remain distinctive from each other because of separate past associations.

Letting apart effects of wars throughout the years especially the wars of the last century with a one clearly divisive east west Europe that for the better of the world did not last long.

Emphasis on ancestral history just like Americans of Irish origin visiting Ireland is becoming more and more noticeable. Reverse ancestral tourism would be an area to focus on. As an Egyptian and a passionate history reader I knew about the Egyptian Balkan Connection but was never aware that is that deep rooted into history.

### 5. TOURISM PROSPECTS

2019 started with positive figures for the European tourism sector following the solid performance in 2018. Short-term risks, such as the slowing global economy, trade relations whether in form of agreements or disagreements, and political uncertainty, will continue to influence the tourism sector growth.

Security concerns continue to be an area which needs further development. I was impressed with Croatia e Visitor Program not only from Security or Taxation aspects but also big Data aspect that can govern Croatia Future tourism Plans including Health Tourism.

Surprisingly the Top Tourism performer was Montenegro showing an impressive +41% tourism sector growth, the only destination that reported a double-digit increase is luring more high spending guests while its focus was to improve its winter facilities and resorts infrastructure that has allowed it to extend the tourism season. Strong growth will be supported from its largest source markets like Russia and China.

Conclusion: Europe is on solid track of maintaining long-term goal of sustainable and scalable health tourism industry even with rising Tourism futures of China, South Korea and North America. Geographic position, culture, history and environment conservation actions coupled with an economy built on productivity rather than liquidity gives it the edge over other regional destinations.



# European Spas Association

ESPA is an umbrella industry organization representing 20 European countries. Our global objective is to promote medical spas, health resorts and balneology in Europe and to take care that the natural remedies based on mineral/healing/thermal water, periods, dry gas and special climate will be available to a great number of guests as possible.

#europeanspas



## Our next events:

ESPA Congress by invitation of the Slovenian Spa Association and Slovenian Tourism Board is on **16-18th September 2020**.

Because of the great interest in business contacts the congress is organized for the first time including

- Hosted Buyer Program of Travel Agents
- B2B workshop during SPA-CE 2020
- ESPA Innovation Award Gala
- International Press Trip

Welcome to join ESPA events and read our news:  
[www.europeanspas.eu](http://www.europeanspas.eu)



**16-18th September 2020**

European Spas Association Congress  
ESPA Innovation Award (EIA)



**15-17th September 2020**

SPA-CE B2B Workshop for Health  
Tourism Business



**4-8th March 2020 Berlin (DE)**

ITB, Medical tourism Pavilion Hall21b



**9-11th June 2020, Birstonas (LT)**

Summer Meeting and BarCamp  
workshop



**December 2020, Wiesbaden (DE)**

4th European Prevention Day



**ESPA**  
EUROPEAN SPAS ASSOCIATION

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#europeanspas

# BALNEOLOGY IN EUROPE

The European Spas Association is a network that facilitates contact between key players in the field, policy makers, and prominent figures in science and business, chaired by Thierry Dubois

AUTHOR: HTI News

**T**he European Spas Association – ESPA – places health resorts within the framework of the European healthcare and tourism market and promotes spa medicine as a curative and preventative healthcare option, using natural remedies, rehabilitation techniques and educating the public on a healthy lifestyle. It focuses on the recognition of local natural resources, highlighting the importance of health tourism in general. The Association also promotes quality spa services and education, cooperating with Spa Associations in a number of countries and overseas markets. Thierry Dubois, its chairman since 2016, has provided more insight into the association's mission and vision.

## How has medical and wellness balneology evolved over time?

- For more than 15 years medical and wellness balneology has experienced an annual growth of more than 10%. It, therefore, creates jobs, encourages substantial investment, and provides patients with natural treatments with no side effects. During their stay, the patients also consume goods and services (namely, accommodation, catering, leisure, transport, etc.). This is referred to as indirect impact, to which induced impact (that is, supplier consumption, job creation generated by the companies in question, etc.) must also be added.

## The question all European medical spas face nowadays is how to combine offering high-level luxury services to spa clients with providing medical services to those in search of prevention and rehabilitation?

- Before answering this question directly, let me point out that there are two types of cure stays: those

*“Two years ago, the ESPA’s medical committee launched an epidemiological study in Europe in order to study conditions treated by balneology”*

covered by national health insurance funds and those which are not.

The first type consists of medical care, determined by national health regulations, which generally account for total, or at least partial funding (care, medical fees), sometimes with the addition of a special allowance for accommodation and catering. This participation of national health insurance funds is generally limited and often dependent on the patient's own resources. It does not allow the providers to offer luxury service, regardless of how extensive the coverage is. Therefore, this type of service is limited to a certain number of European countries such as Spain, Italy, Germany, France, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland or Romania.

## And what about the stays that are not covered by national health insurance funds?

- A number of European countries have developed an offer of exceptionally high-quality, with extremely comfortable 4 or 5-star hotels and modern spas furnished with state-of-the-art equipment. These “spa resorts” are becoming increasingly common in a number of European countries and attract a wealthy foreign clientele. They can be found, for example, in the Czech Republic, Croatia, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Germany and Italy.

These spa resorts offer an exceptional medical service, supervised by specialist doctors, with care provided by paramedical staff (physical therapists, nurses, sports coaches...) and advice given by other specialised staff, such as psychologists or dietitians.

This market is expanding rapidly worldwide and is growing at an annual rate of around 10%.

## Can you tell us something about the specific programmes that are being developed in medical spas?

- France is a good example of a country that has developed specific programme for the treatment of certain conditions, such as the support of women in





breast cancer remission, to help them manage their illness and avoid weight gain with a healthy lifestyle, which in this case can help prevent a possible recurrence. This programme, carried out in groups of a maximum of 15 people, allows these women to learn to live with this disease and reduces their anxiety. A programme about the care of the elderly has also been developed, which helps delay their entry into dependency. The thermal doctor and health staff identify clients who are exhibiting several advanced symptoms of ageing, and later work with these patients to provide stimulation, as well as the tools to allow them to remain autonomous for as long as possible. This work is continued by their attending physicians upon their return home.

**The ESPA represents 20 European countries, with more than 1400 medical spas and resorts. Which collaborations are on the Association's agenda in order to achieve its goal of promoting balneology and health tourism in Europe?**

- The ESPA's medical committee launched a European epidemiological study two years ago, with the aim of gaining more insight into conditions treated by balneology in the participating countries. Nine countries have committed to this, and the results are being collected. They will be made available in the first half of 2020.

In addition, a study funded by AFRETh (the French association of thermal research) is currently being carried out, with the support of the ESPA. This is a multicenter study which seeks to evaluate the use of thermal medicine in the management of low back pain. It includes Spain, Italy, Romania, Russia, Hungary and France.

On the economic level, the ESPA collects data from the member countries in order to provide an in-depth knowledge of the economic weight of balneology in Europe. All these studies must make it possible to demonstrate the medical and economic weight of the thermal sector. The medical effectiveness and economic interest must be demonstrated to elected representatives in the European Parliament so that they can lobby the Member States in which the spas are located for support.

**Can you single out some activities of the ESPA?**

- The ESPA has published a brochure with the guidelines for taking charge of spa treatments within the framework for the implementation of the European Cross-border Healthcare Directive. Furthermore, the ESPA has participated in the creation of European certification for hotels and spas; it is an active member of the QUHEP association alongside complimentary insurance providers and tour operators whose role it is to promote and enhance the certification of European centers which use mineral water.

Finally, to reward the best establishments and care programmes, as well as thermal medical research, the ESPA has established awards in eight categories, which are presented to recipients at its annual congress.

*Thierry Dubois was Chairman of the Managing Board of the Saujon Spa Group until 2014 and President of the CNETH (French professional association that groups together all the 110 French thermal baths) for 10 years. He is also the Vice-President of AFRETh, Vice-President of the French Thermal and Climatic Federation. Since 2016 Thierry Dubois is the President of ESPA*







# “THERMALISM IS A TRUE EUROPEAN VALUE”

What does the future of thermalism look like? José Manuel Baltar Blanco, President of the Provincial Council of Ourense and chairman of the European Historic Thermal Towns Association (EHTTA), knows all about it

AUTHOR: HTI News

**T**he EHTTA was created in Brussels on 10 December 2009 as a European network of thermal towns which boast distinctive pre-nineteenth century architectural heritage and mineral waters recognized across Europe. Aware of their exceptional heritage and their continuing importance as health resorts and centers of well-being, the thermal spa-members of EHTTA have come together, in order to develop a policy of tourism development based on a strategy of promoting this rich cultural heritage. José Manuel Baltar Blanco, President of the Provincial Council of Ourense and chairman of the European Historic Thermal Towns Association (EHTTA) is a true champion of this cause.

**EHTTA was founded by six historic thermal towns – Acqui Terme, Bath, Salsomaggiore Terme, Spa, Vichy, and the town of Ourense. Which achievements are you the proudest of, seeing as it is one of the EHTTA's core beliefs that Europe's unique thermal heritage deserves to be more widely known?**

- Our first major achievement as a new network was to become certified as a “Cultural Route of the Council of Europe”. Cultural Routes such as ours act as channels for understanding our shared European cultural identity, and we are proud to be a part of this network.

We want to share the story of thermalism, which has shaped modern medicine and tourism, as well as Europe itself, and which has a huge potential for enabling future generations to ensure their health, well-being, and prosperity. Our waters, our towns, our culture, and heritage all deserve to be more widely known, and I have an enormous responsibility to take European Historic Thermal Towns Association into a new era.

**You have become President at a historic**

*“Our waters, our towns, our culture, and heritage all deserve to be more widely known, and I have an enormous responsibility to take European Historic Thermal Towns Association into a new era”*

**moment for the Association, as it is being restructured in order to strengthen it so that it can carry out a wide variety of goals.**

- You are right. This includes the economic development of spa towns and the safeguarding of their cultural and architectural heritage, as well as research, and the development of a European tourism product that can generate economic benefits for our members.

**Is thermalism a true European value?**

- Of course, it is. The way our towns developed around our unique, almost magical health-providing thermal springs; the way they developed infrastructure – beautiful and functional buildings designed to provide care for people as well as to entertain them; and the way the towns drew people from far and wide across all levels of society to meet, inspire each other and to create new forms of society - that is thermalism.

**You are also the President of the Provincial Council of Ourense. What would you say to someone who has never been to Ourense and never heard of it? What could they expect to see there?**

- Ourense is one the most important thermal destinations in Europe and it's full of potential because we have an abundance of hot springs and thermal baths. Basically, there is a large thermal sea underground. Ourense is a place where you can disconnect and a place of health, thanks to our wellness and thermal water.

**How do you see the future of the EHTTA?**

- The EHTTA is ready to embrace the future and to continue to work to promote the concept and values of thermalism throughout Europe, and at the highest levels. We will continue to give voice to thermalism, which is the voice of tradition and well-being, as well as the voice of future generations.





# Discover the Thermal Heritage of Europe



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in 16 countries *are waiting for you!*

#thermaltravels

 [www.ehtta.eu](http://www.ehtta.eu)

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# Raia Termal

Raia Termal is a cross-border project which promotes the sustainable management of thermal resources and the surrounding natural and cultural heritage, jointly conducted by Portugal and Spain

AUTHOR: HTI News

Photo: Depositphotos

A major cross-border project merging thermalism with the sustainable management of natural and cultural heritage was presented at the latest Termatalia event, held in September 2019. Termatalia, the world's biggest annual thermal tourism fair, hosted alternately by European and South American countries, most recently took place in Ourense, Spain. The renowned oasis of thermalism is one of the six municipalities participating in "Raia Termal", a project aiming to bring Portugal and Spain together in the creation of a joint strategy for promoting the region as a unique international thermal tourism destination.

## TOURISM PRODUCTS IN THE BORDER REGION

The project sets out to create a series of itineraries and tourism products in the border region on the rivers Miño in Spain and Limia in Portugal. In Spain, the project is spearheaded by the Miño-Sil Hydrographic Confederation and the Ourense Provincial Council, while the Municipal Chambers of Melgaco and Terras of Bouro

headline it in Portugal.

The participants have been laying the groundwork for the valorization and promotion of the region's thermal and natural resources since the project's conception in 2015.

Largely financed by the ERDF, it is spearheaded by Spain's Miño-Sil Hydrographic Confederation and the Ourense Provincial Council, in co-operation with Portugal's Melgaço and Terras del Bouro

In addition to improving the existing spa and leisure centres in their towns, they have been constructing new, state-of-the-art facilities, such as the new thermal pools in the town of Bande, or the Cortegada spa in Ourense, completed in 2015.

Furthermore, these municipalities have been putting efforts into boosting other segments of the economy related to thermalism, while also launching several affordable tour packages aimed at the general public.

## CURRENTLY IN ACTIVITY 2 STAGE

"Raia Termal" is co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) through POCTEP, a programme supporting innovative local initiatives on the Spanish-Portuguese border which focus on sustainability and resource efficiency, all in light of the Europe 2020 strategy. The project is to be conducted over 36 months, and to cost approxi-

mately 2.66 million euros, with 75 percent of that amount coming from the ERDF. The investments are meted out in several stages, or activities, with the first being dedicated largely to intangible goods and services, focusing primarily on drafting a step-by-step plan for the promotion of thermalism in the area. The "Raia Termal" project is currently in Activity 2 stage, which provides for the sanitation of wastewaters and the reconstruction of hiking trails. As part of those efforts, a pumping well has recently been put into operation in Lobios on the river Caldo in Portugal, solving the problem of wastewaters, while two new paths have been built in Muinos, with additional work done on the Terras de Cortegada thermal route.

The "Raia Termal" is a representative case of successful cross-border cooperation, which is sure to serve as an example to other countries in the future.



*Conceived in 2015, the project was recently presented at Termatalia 2019 in Ourense, Spain – one of the participating towns*



20<sup>th</sup> International Exhibition  
of Thermal Tourism,  
Health and Wellness  
17<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> September 2020

# Termatalia



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# Not All Spas Are CREATED EQUAL

Are you planning a weekend at the spa? But, do you know that all thermal spa waters are not created equal? Thermal spas contain different types of minerals or elements in different forms of salts, in mixture with different levels of organic acids

**AUTHOR:** Sherif Hassan, MD

**O**ften do consumers go to a Thermal spa for treatment of various disorders without knowing what the best match for their purpose would be. They get confused between lithium, bromide, sodium, potassium, iodine, calcium, magnesium, fluorine, chlorine, carbonate, salicylic acid, sulfate, metaboric acid and carbon dioxide. Which does what?

The skin is the largest body organ making up approximately 10% of the total body mass of an average built person. It acts as a barrier between the inner body and the outside environment, protecting us from many harmful infections, chemicals and radiation.

## THE CLINICAL RELEVANCE

The skin has a very complex structure with the outermost layer being known as the epidermis. For a substance to penetrate this layer it must be fat soluble and not water-soluble as the salts of mineral and thermal spas.

The only route for mineral spa salts could get through is the small area of sweat glands and hair follicles, and these constitute only 0.1% to 1% of the skin surface. Even if a substance is absorbed from this area, the question is the clinical relevance of absorbed amounts? It is probably trivial.

Therefore the route that minerals can

get into the body otherwise in larger amounts is through inhalation and drinking.

## WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

Thermal spas contain different types of minerals or elements (sodium, potassium,

lithium, calcium, magnesium) in different forms of salts (carbonate, sulfate, orotate, oxide, citrate, gluconate etc.) in mixture with different levels of organic acids like metaboric and salicylic acid in addition to gases as carbon dioxide, sulfide etc.

Hot springs have remarkably high salt content because the high-water temperatures can hold more dissolved solids. This means that a given hot spring water can contain a large variety including calcium, magnesium, silica, lithium, and even radium. Sulphur explains that special aroma springs can sometimes have – here sulphur in the water is converted to hydrogen sulphide by the action of bacteria.

The heat in hot springs helps to soothe aching muscles and the minerals present in the water get soaked up by the skin and stimulate certain system and organ processes.

## SALT OF LITHIUM

Lithium on the other hand is the infamous therapeutic mineral used to treat neurological and psychiatric ailments in the carbonate salt form has attracted this reputation due to its numerous side effects.

Surprisingly lithium orotate is much more benign and turns out to be very well tolerated with higher safety margins and fewer side effects even in children. This salt is quite helpful in treating alcoholism, Alzheimer's disease, anxiety, attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder (ADHD),

*"Hot springs have remarkably high salt content because the high water temperatures can hold more dissolved solids. This means that a given hot spring water can contain a large variety including calcium, magnesium, silica, lithium, and even radium."*







Photo: Depositphotos

## Go to the hot springs for:

1. Musculoskeletal problems swollen joints, arthritis, muscle fatigue and torn muscles and ligaments.
2. Skin disorders: eczema and psoriasis.
3. Poor circulation and high blood pressure.
4. Respiratory disorders including the common cold, allergies, asthma, chronic obstructive airways disease and emphysema.
5. Relaxation: de-stressing is of out-most importance. Stress could lead to all kinds of health complications, such as high blood pressure, depression, and spike the levels of the stress hormones, like epinephrine, adrenaline and cortisol, which in turn, unfortunately, affects all our bodily functions in a negative way including weight, mood and the immune system.

So, make destressing one of your goals.

to a great extent and there is nothing better than natural exfoliation. By natural or biological exfoliation, I mean using doctor fish!

Red Garra or Dr. Fish is naturally occurring in the Mediterranean Basin, Turkey, Lebanon, Iran and Syria.

The fish can remove the dead skin with an enzyme (dithranol/anthralin) in their mouth, this enzyme also improves skin regeneration. It's also said the fish can stimulate acupuncture points, helping to regulate the nervous system, relaxes the body and help us destress!

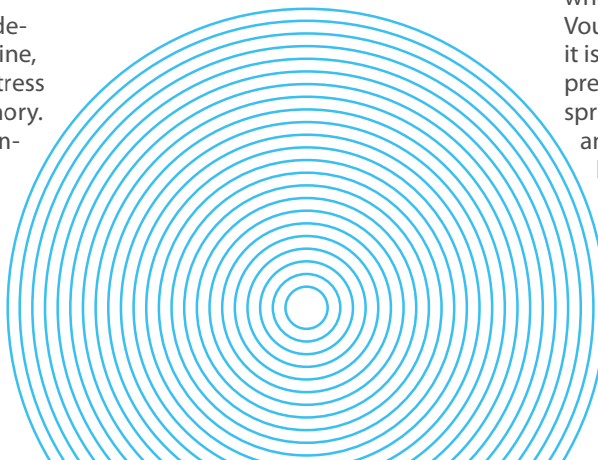
The best location that I am aware of where that fish naturally exists is Lake Vouliagmeni just outside Athens Greece, it is a natural wonder that assumed its present form after an underwater thermal spring seismic effect caused the roof of an enormous cave to collapse. The water lake also exhibits a unique blend of potassium, sodium (sodium), lithium, ammonium, calcium, chloride, iodine, and is slightly radioactive. All these elements provide relief from numerous ailments.

bipolar disorder, cluster headaches, depression, glaucoma, insomnia, migraine, Parkinson's disease, post-traumatic stress disorder, chronic pain and poor memory.

Lithium orotate has the highest concentration in the water of Slovenian Thermal Spas.

### USING DOCTOR FISH

Skin exfoliation by removing the dead skin cells helps spa therapy





# CITY OF SPA

A notable thermal city since the 16th century, Spa in Belgium is still a popular destination for health and relaxation

AUTHOR: HTI News

**A**n hour's drive from Liege, this charming Belgian town experienced its golden age back in the 18th century. Royalty started coming to the town of Spa in search of rejuvenation of body and spirit. Among its most distinguished visitors was Czar Peter the Great, who found relief for his liver disease at Spa's *pouhons* (thermal water springs).

## THE HUB OF THE SPA-WORLD

Until the second half of the 18th century, this picturesque town was one of the main destinations for kings, emperors, artists and other prominent figures. In addition to health reasons, they came to enjoy the town's social scene, slowly transforming it into the 'hub of the civilized world' and the 'Café of Europe'.

Its urban development followed the needs of the *bobelins* (the local-term for visitors), and the design of water treatments that revolved around three key

elements: water, exercise and enjoying a variety of other activities, such as horse racing, walking and dancing. Furthermore, in 1763 a casino was built, regarded today as one of the oldest in the world.

## THE MAKING OF THE MODERN SPA TOWN

In the mid-19th century, the aristocracy gave way to the bourgeoisie and a series of changes took place. The urban development of Spa caused it to finally live up to its name, as it was equipped with new

amenities such as bathing facilities, hotels and villas, arcades, and the like. Industrialists from Vevier and Liege, and politicians from Brussels, who enjoyed tennis, cars, beauty contests and flower competitions, became the new bobelins.

## THE MAGIC LIQUID

Several springs, locally known as *pouhons*, can be found in the town and the surrounding hills - some of the water is sparkling, some rich in iron and some slightly mineralized. Spa is also known for its brands of bottled water that have been exported around the world since the antiquity - Riene, Marie-Henriette (mildly carbonated) and Barisart (sparkling).

## AN OASIS OF RELAXATION

The first thermal baths were revolutionary for their time, due to the introduction of two new treatments: the effervescent baths (for combating heart disease and high blood pressure) and the peat baths (good for rheumatism and skin diseases). Today's spas are an oasis of pleasure and relaxation, boasting two large swimming pools (an outdoor and an indoor one), saunas, relaxation rooms, as well as a Wellness, Beauty and Health Center which offers a range of services.

## HISTORY, HERITAGE AND ATTRACTIONS

The rich history of this city is reflected in its architectural heritage, as well as numerous museums, including a museum dedicated to the history of laundry. If you happen to visit this captivating city, be sure drop by the Museum of Spa at the Villa Royale, the former residence of Queen Marie Henriette, an exhibition that explores the secrets of the Eaudyssée de Spa natural mineral water spa. For sightseeing, visit the Parc de Sept-Heures and Anglican Park as well as the Casino and Waux-Hall, which used to be a gaming house.

Also, don't forget about the Spa-Francorchamps race track, which dates back to the 1920s with a 14km-long start track at the heart of a protected natural area. Spa is known for Formula 1 racing which, with pauses, takes place every year at the end of August.



*Czar Peter the Great found relief for his liver disease at the pouhons of Spa, thus launching the trend of spa treatments*



Photo: Depositphotos





# European HTI Summit

European Parliament  
Brussels, November 2020

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# NEWS & TRENDS

## Argentina to Host the Next Termatalia

Although Termatalia's Ourense edition has come to a close, very exciting news are coming from Argentina. The 2020 edition of the event will be held in the Argentine province of Entre Ríos. Entre Ríos is the central province of the country, located in the Mesopotamia region. Its candidacy has been supported by the governor of the province, Gustavo Bordet, as well as private investors.

Photo: Depositphotos

## Hair Medical Tourism in Turkey

Thousands of patients have been flying to Turkey to participate in its booming medical tourism industry that includes hair transplants - over 200 hair transplant procedures were carried out daily in December 2019. Turkey's convenient location and affordable prices mostly attract patients from Egypt, Libya and the Gulf States, as well as those from Europe. This is a medical tourism industry worth around \$1bn (£700m) annually.

Photo: Depositphotos

## UEHP and Cybersecurity

The consequences of cybersecurity breaches, such as hacker attacks, are especially far-reaching when the attack affects the healthcare sector. This is exactly what happened in 2019 in a French hospital where all safety programmes were blocked and the patients personal information compromised. It therefore comes as no surprise that cybersecurity is of utmost importance to hospitals, or that the issue was one of the key topics at the UEHP (European Union of Private Hospitals) Workshop in Brussels, held in January 2020. UEHP is known for supporting all kinds of initiatives that are useful to healthcare professionals, and this is no exception.

Photo: Depositphotos

## Smart Tourism is the Future

The time has come for a new era in the field of tourism. With the rise of digitalisation and shifting customer demands, tourism needs a new pathway to the future. This is the key topic of the ITB Berlin Convention 2020. Digitalisation also constitutes an extremely important topic, as tourists are keen to know everything about the destination they are traveling to. Discussions will also focus on climate change and its impact on the demand in the tourism sector.



Photo: Depositphotos

## EHHTA Continues to Foster "Cafés of Europe"

It is a well known fact that Europe's thermal towns were a popular destination among artists and intellectuals. Inspired by this very idea, the "Cafés of Europe" project was created. The project is headed by the EHHTA. As the organizer, the EHHTA firmly believes in peace and open dialogue on issues of culture and further development. This way, the organization brings thermal towns back in touch with their links to art, welcoming everyone to these beautiful events.



Photo: Depositphotos





# Health Destination

# CROATIA

*Unique Oasis of a  
Healthy Lifestyle*

**Health From  
the Depths**

*Interview*

**Kristjan Staničić:**

„Croatia is prime health  
tourism destination”

**SPLIT**

City of  
Wellbeing

**ZAGREB**

Centre of Medical  
Excellence

*All Year Round*  
**TOURISM**

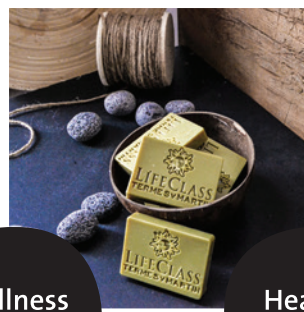


# The World of Healthy Pleasures

AN OASIS OF PEACE IN THE NORTH OF CROATIA. A WELLNESS RETREAT. THERMAL WATER. POLYCLINIC FOR LOCOMOTIVE SYSTEM. HOMEMADE NATURAL COSMETICS. A WORLD OF SAUNAS. BIOSCAN OF THE BODY. A WORLD OF HEALTHNESS. HEALTHY FOOD BY LOCAL SUPPLIERS. ACTIVE VACATION. THE EUROPEAN DESTINATION OF EXCELLENCE.



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relaxation



Healthy  
dining



Active  
vacation

**First Healthness Resort**  
*by dr. Rudolf Steiner*



# CROATIA

## A unique oasis for a healthy lifestyle

With the beautiful Adriatic Sea, a unique coast and the picturesque landscapes of continental Croatia, along with thermal waters, world class medical and spa-centers – Croatia is a unique gem of health tourism and popular year-round health tourism destination

**PROMO:** *Croatian Tourist Board*



Opatija was pronounced the official treatment centre of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy because of its mild climate and health-related benefits of the air and seawater

**CROATIA**  
Full of life



**Y**ou may already know a lot about Croatia, a country of unique beauty, temperate climate and rich history stretching back to the antiquity, that offers a variety of delicious and healthy food and intriguing wines. Many have been charmed by the enchanting combination of its deep blue sea with a myriad of islands and the green mainland interspersed with remains of ancient and medieval walls, castles and manor houses, symbols of different civilizations and cultures. All of this gives Croatia an air of a country that is filled with a distinctive positive energy and dominated by a healthy lifestyle.

Every visitor can feel the beneficial effect of its natural aromatherapy by walking along the paths planted with medicinal herbs, most frequently lavender and rosemary, or by simply standing under a cypress tree and breathing in the stimulating combination of Mediterranean vegetation, unbelievably clean air and mild climate.

### SPRINGS OF THERMAL WATER

Swimming, sailing, hiking, walking, running and cycling are only some of many activities to choose from when visiting Adriatic sea, coast, forests or any of the country's unspoiled natural areas. But Croatia also hides opportunities for spiritual and mental relaxation offered by its many springs of thermal water, the quality of which is ranked at the very top amongst EU countries. Thanks to a centuries-old tradition of medicine and scientific research, there is also the possibility for the treatment of more complex health problems. Simply put, Croatia is a unique

oasis of a healthy lifestyle, where not only life, air and the food are healthy but where you can relax your body and soul.

### ANCIENT HISTORY OF HEALING

Did you know that in 1889, Opatija was pronounced the official treatment centre of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy because of its mild climate and health-related benefits of the air and seawater there? However, one of the areas where climate and air have the strongest healing properties is the island of Lošinj, where people often come to treat respiratory and rheumatic diseases. This is why it is called the Croatian "Island of Vitality". Dalmatia abounds in healing mud pools that stretch from the area of the historical city of Nin, and even has an ancient spa palace; namely, suffering from chronic rheumatism, the Roman emperor Diocletian built a palace in an area rich in sulphur water sources and healing mud on the territory of today's Split. In addition, he had built an aqueduct that supplied the palace with water from the source of the river Jadro, the best potable water of the Roman Empire according to the words of the Xth-century emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus.

### MODERN MEDICAL CENTERS

Ancient Romans used therapeutic thermal waters and healing muds for the treatment of their legionaries and emperors. Thus, it is not a surprise that the two Roman baths Aquae Iasae and Aquae Balissae located in the Croatian towns of Varaždinske Toplice and Daruvar, served as a

Hrvatsko Zagorje offers medical services provided by experts specialising in cardiology, cardiosurgery and orthopaedics, as well as thermal-water based rehabilitation and a myriad of new wellness facilities and water parks



Photo: Depositphotos









basis for the construction of two modern fully-equipped rehabilitation centres for the world's leading athletes. Besides a picturesque landscape, the near-by region of Hrvatsko Zagorje offers medical services provided by experts specialising in cardiology, cardiosurgery and orthopaedics, as well as thermal-water based rehabilitation and a myriad of new wellness facilities and water parks. The region of Slavonia has also recently boosted its "anti-stress" offer by investing in the Thermal Spa Bizovac, where people can enjoy springs of thermal-mineral water that is three times saltier than seawater and has a beneficial effect on the musculoskeletal system.

In the immediate vicinity of Zagreb

there is a unique area with fields of naftalan oil and healing muds that are used in the treatment of skin diseases, including psoriasis.

### MEDICAL TREATMENTS IN ZAGREB

Did you know that for over a century the School of Medicine of the University of



Zagreb has continually educated and trained Croatian physicians and that its former Dean, Dr. Andrija Štampar, is one of the founders of the World Health Organisation? Today, Zagreb is

Zagreb is proud to be the home to many renowned experts specialising in cardiology, organ transplantation, orthopaedics, ophthalmology, artificial insemination, aesthetic surgery, dermatology and dentistry

proud to be the home to many renowned experts specialising in cardiology, organ transplantation, orthopaedics, ophthalmology, artificial insemination, aesthetic surgery, dermatology and dentistry.

### ISTRIA AND KVARNER BAY

Dental medicine services are often the reason why many thousands of Italians visit the neighbouring Croatian region of Istria, which is renowned for its rich gastronomic offer and many wine roads. Even though Istria, the Kvarner Bay and Zagreb are already well-established medical tourism destinations that count thousands of guests a year, mostly from Italy, Germany, Slovenia and Austria, more and more tourists visiting Dalmatia are also led by a desire to preserve their health and to receive different types of medical treatment.

But regardless of the region you choose to visit, our welcoming Croatian hosts will make sure that your stay in our country turns into an unforgettable experience!

Discover more about Croatia at [www.croatia.hr](http://www.croatia.hr). And for more information on Croatia's health and wellness offering visit [www.croatia.hr/en-GB/experiences/Health-and-wellness](http://www.croatia.hr/en-GB/experiences/Health-and-wellness).





# HEALTH from the depths

Deep underneath the earth, on its journey to the surface, water is infused with minerals and trace elements that transforms it into a source of health and vitality – the most famous thermal spas in Croatia have sprung from these thermal springs

AUTHOR HTI News

Croatia is an ideal destination to enjoy the healing properties of water. It is at the very top of the UNESCO list of water wealth in Europe and in the world, the large number of thermal and spa places with 103

sources of natural mineral water will take care of the complete rejuvenation of your body and soul. Bathe in the warmest of European waters, ride the 'ocean' waves, relax under the massaging waterfalls and geysers, recover from all your worries and enjoy like an emperor - all of it only in Croatia.

## Top-Terme Topusko

### ENJOY BATHING IN VOLCANIC WATER

The particularity of these spas is certainly the water that flows within them. It is water of volcanic origin that is suitable for health treatments and the rehabilitation of the nervous, muscular, and



locomotor systems. Simply enjoy bathing in the volcanic water, and it will do all the rest.

## Krapinske Toplice thermal centre

### FROM GEYSERS AND WATERFALLS TO OCEAN WAVES

Krapinske Toplice thermal centre boasts the therapeutic hyperthermal water and natural therapeutic mud, which create an ideal basis for the application of all modern physical medicine and rehabilitation treatments. The Aquae Vivae water centre, a large indoor pools complex, is especially delightful. You can enjoy the water attractions such as geysers, waterfalls, and artificial rain that will warm you up, refresh, and relax, all at the same time. If you are up for a bit of action, try out the swimming pool with its artificial ocean waves. This thermal centre will even delight divers, since you can dive in a special swimming pool using full scuba diving equipment.

## Bizovačke Toplice thermal centre

### SWIM IN THE WARMEST PART OF THE PANNONIAN SEA

The main feature of the Bizovačke Toplice thermal centre is its temperature that reaches up to 96°C, and is thus warmer than any other known thermal water. The water from Bizovac is actually the remnants of the Pannonian sea, and this is why it is salty and extremely rich in minerals. The Bizovačke Toplice thermal centre with its rich offer that ranges from night bathing, movie screenings and large water slide, to varying wellness choices, and other natural beauties and historical sights nearby, invites guests to visit this heart of Slavonia.

## Stubičke Toplice thermal centre

### LOOK YOUR BEST

Stubičke Toplice are hidden gem in the vicinity of Zagreb, and they are famous for the cryosauna – a treatment of exposure to extremely low temperatures from – 110 °C to – 190 °C, which has a positive impact on the skin and boosts the immune system, but also helps the loss of weight. After these unusual treatments, you will certainly notice the difference in how you feel, but also in the way you look.

## Terme Tuhelj thermal centre

### RENEW YOUR BODY AND SOUL

Fans of water adventures will find their thrills in the Terme Tuhelj bathing and wellness centre. Besides the sources of thermal water and the therapeutic mud, the thermal centre is famous for its Water Planet with more than 5,000 m<sup>2</sup> of water surface, suitable for all types of body and soul revitalisation. The geysers and waterfalls will make you relax with their relaxing water massage so much that you will forget about all your worries and on Saturdays you can enjoy the magic of the Water Planet until 2 am.

## Terme Sveti Martin

### ACTIVE RELAXATION IN THERMAL CENTRE IN MEDIMURJE

The Terme Sveti Martin thermal centre is certainly the favourite destination for professional and recreational athletes. Today's modern Spa & Sport Resort Sveti Martin is an optimal place for relaxation throughout the year. The thermal centre has a complex of indoor pools with thermal water, a summer aqua park, as well as a golf course and a wellness centre with holistic relaxation treatments. After each activity it is necessary to reward the body with a little something, and in the Terme Sveti Martin thermal centre you can do so

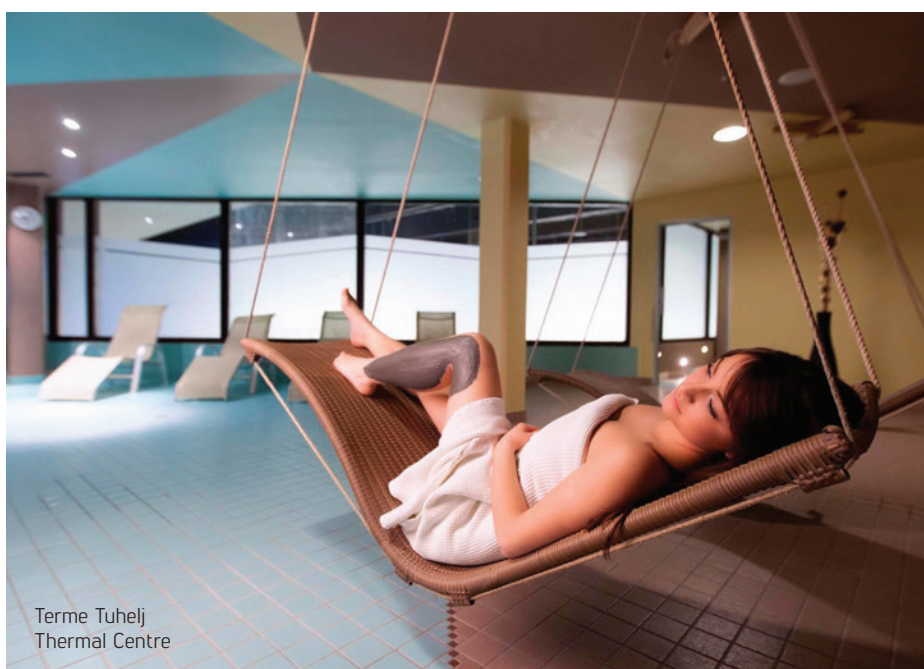


Photo: Nino Verdnik. Terme Tuhelj

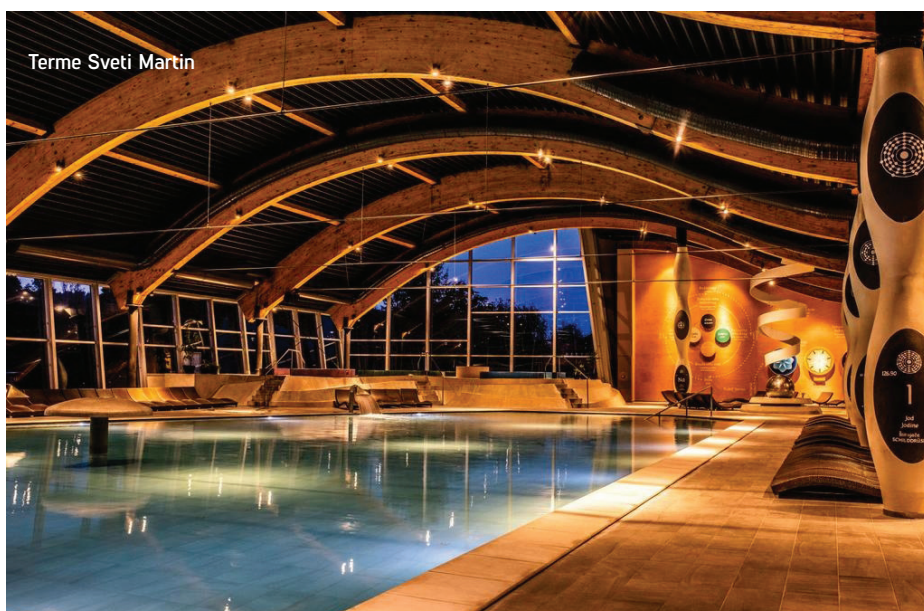


Photo: Terme Sveti Martin



with one of many massages, Finnish and Roman saunas.

## Naftalan thermal centre

### IT'S NOT ONLY THE WATER THAT IS CURATIVE

The Naftalan thermal centre is unique in Europe as a natural source of naftalan curative oil, after which this thermal centre was named. This is the second finding place of that kind in the world, and the only one in Europe.

## Terme Jezerčica thermal centre

### SO CLOSE, BUT FAR ENOUGH

The Terme Jezerčica thermal centre is located close enough to the Croatian capital city to attract many inhabitants of Zagreb, but at the same time far enough so that they can forget about their worries in a relaxing atmosphere. The abundant sources of thermal water and the indoor and outdoor swimming pools, together with five types of saunas in the Jezerčica Spa Centre regularly attract inhabitants of the capital city to feel this oasis of peace. It is difficult to describe that feeling, so the best way is to come and discover it for yourselves.

## Istarske Toplice thermal centre

### A ROCK THAT HEALS

The Istarske Toplice thermal centre is located in the fairy-tale-like hinterland of the Istrian peninsula in the Northern Adriatic, and is surrounded by a beautiful landscape. The 85-metre high rock called the Giant is situated above the thermal centre, and below the rock there is the source of the thermal water, the basis of Istarske Toplice. Thanks to this good giant, this thermal centre has been known since ancient times for its water full of minerals, which has been scientifically and proven in practice to boost the recovery process and the treatment of many illnesses.

## Varaždin thermal centre

### ENJOY THE SPA LIKE AN EMPEROR

The Varaždin thermal centre dates back to ancient times, and it has been a synonym for superior service and incred-



Photo: Aquae Vivae

Aquae Vivae, Krapinske Toplice

ible healing powers for centuries. The thousand-year tradition of using thermal sulphurous water and therapeutic peloids from natural sources are the reasons why so many people come here for treatments or to enjoy the place, and frequently they combine both. The emperor Constantine enjoyed the beauties of the Varaždin thermal centre, so you can easily say that you have enjoyed your time like an emperor after your visit to the Varaždin thermal centre.

## Daruvar thermal centre

### RELAXATION IN THE SWIMMING POOL AND BEYOND

True nature lovers will enjoy the Daruvar thermal centre in many ways.

As for health, here you can recover from various sports injuries or alleviate pain from illnesses like rheumatism, and at the same time enjoy the benefits of thermal water and therapeutic mud, as well various massages and saunas. Whilst on the gourmet side, you will certainly love the original meals of Daruvar restau-

rants prepared with local ingredients.

For the lovers of nature walks, you can visit the park and the wood that surrounds the thermal centre, and further revitalize your body with the fresh air.

## Toplice Lešće thermal centre

### A WELLNESS OASIS IN THE HEART OF NATURE

The Toplice Lešće thermal centre will enchant you with its idyllic peace, clean mountain air, and the beauty of the surrounding nature. Escape from the busy everyday life and try to forget about all your worries, and if you cannot do it on your own, a relaxing massage will certainly help, as well as the infrared sauna, the whirlpool bath, or a simple swim in the thermal water.

After you have stretched all your muscles in the pool, it is then time to wrap up the whole story about health, and for that you will need the healthy food in the 'Lešće' restaurant where they will welcome you with culinary delicacies prepared with local ingredients.



Photo: Ivo Biočina

Daruvar thermal centre



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# “CROATIA IS A PRIME HEALTH TOURISM DESTINATION”

With its long-standing tradition of good-value healthcare, superior quality of service and expert medical staff, Croatia has a unique opportunity to position itself as a prime health tourism destination, says Director of the Croatian National Tourist Board Kristjan Staničić

AUTHOR: HTI News

**K**ristjan Staničić is a true “veteran” of the tourism sector. A graduate of the Faculty of Tourism and Hotel Management in Opatija, he started his career at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, then went on to become Assistant Marketing and Sales Director at Novi Spa Hotels. This was

followed by time spent on several hotel management boards, including that of Hotel Bernardin in Portorož, Slovenia, before his experience earned him the position of the director of the Croatian National Tourist Board, which he has held since 2013.

**In 2019, Croatia registered a new record: more than 20 million tourist arrivals (5%**

**more than the previous year) and more than 108 million overnight stays (an increase of 2%), with almost 90% being realized by foreign tourists. They still mostly occur from June to September, yet CNTB has taken strong measures to extend the season. The sun & beach season in Croatia is highly attractive, however, CNTB is dedicated to combat-**



ing seasonality with other tourism products such as health tourism. What are the main products and target markets of the Croatian health tourism today?

- CNTB has partnered with the Croatian Institute for Tourism to conduct two primary studies on health tourism – a qualitative research of the perception of Croatia as a health tourism destination on the market of tourism intermediaries in 2017, and a quantitative research of the attitudes and spending habits of medical tourists – the TOMAS health survey in 2018. According to the TOMAS health survey, users of wellness (82%) and medical (73%) services in Croatia are predominantly foreign, mainly from the markets geographically close to us, while the primary users of rehabilitation services are guests from Croatia (67%). Health tourism, with its three subtypes – wellness, rehabilitation and medical tourism – has been recognised as a tourism product with a significant development potential for Croatia, which greatly contributes to the achievement of fundamental strategic goals of the country. These goals include increasing the *per capita* tourist spending, achieving a more even seasonal distribution of tourist traffic, as well as improving the spatial distribution of tourist traffic, with a focus on recognising regions that are not as developed in terms of tourism.

**CNTB has recently supported the TOMAS survey on the attitudes and spending habits of health tourism visitors to Croatia. What did the results show and what are the lessons learned in terms of market positioning?**

- The survey has revealed that the main



From left to right: Kristjan Staničić (CNTB), Valter Flego (MEP), Slaven Žabo (Croatia Airlines), Leila Krešić-Jurić (HTI) and István Ujhelyi (MEP)

reasons for medical and tourist travel are relaxation, physical therapy, dental procedures and rehabilitation. Some key factors in selecting a particular rehabilitation or medical segment are the expertise of the doctors and the reputation of the institution. The highest levels of expenditure have been recorded for visitors in the area of health tourism. According to the survey, Croatia has a unique opportunity to position itself on the market as a prime destination for high-quality medical and wellness tourism thanks to the expertise of its doctors, its healthcare tradition, as well as state-of-the-art clinics, medical practices and facilities. Furthermore, Croa-

tia offers good value for money, which is a strong incentive in health tourism. Other factors that make Croatia ideally positioned to be a health tourism destination are its well-preserved, unspoilt nature, a favourable and healthy climate, cultural identity, Central European and Mediterranean character, and hospitality.

**It has recently been revealed that Croatian tourism will be promoted through collaboration with global internet platforms in 2020. Could you tell us more about these initiatives and what are your expectations?**

- We have been following tourism trends and consumer habits in the process of deciding on particular tourist destinations, which includes cooperating with numerous foreign media and travel platforms and improving our cooperation each year. This year, we are partnering with Euronews, Expedia, Lonely Planet, National Geographic, Skyscanner, TripAdvisor, etc. We are focusing on creating custom content for users of these platforms by using tools that bring the best results. We are utilising these partnerships to place various tourist products on most of our outbound markets, including health tourism, taking into account an equal representation of all of Croatia's regions.

**The Croatian tourism sector has been taken to the next level over the past few years. eVisitor, the award-winning digital platform developed by CNTB, has certainly played a significant role in getting accurate and relevant data about visitors. It may become a great export product**



From left to right: Slaven Žabo (Croatian Airlines), Zlata Prpić (Croatia Airlines), Martina Bienenfeld (Zagreb Tourist Board) and Kristjan Staničić (CNTB)





From left to right:  
István Ujhelyi (MEP),  
Kristjan Staničić  
(CNTB), Lola Uña  
Cárdenas (WTTC) and  
Nejc Jus (WTTC)

"Health tourism has been recognised as a product with significant development potential for Croatia, especially with regard to achieving the country's fundamental strategic goals"

#### for Croatia - do you have further plans for sharing it to other countries?

- The eVisitor system has changed the relevance of tourist data in many aspects. The system is a mandatory, but free tool for all accommodation providers. It enables a simple online registration of guest and automated calculation of the tourist tax. At the same time, and thanks to the mandatory use and the fact that the technology is internet-based, it provides very valuable data about tourists. The most valuable characteristic of the data is its relevance. The eVisitor system provides statistical data about all registered tourist in Croatia almost in real time.

The potential of the data is huge and the tourism sector uses the data for its short and long term activities both on the local and national levels. The eVisitor system is also integrated with other national institutions. For example, it's used by the Ministry of public administration in the registration process of private accommodation providers. Also, the Croatian Bureau of statistics uses the data from eVisitor for its official reports.

Regarding the internationalisation of the eVisitor system, the CNTB has already received many requests from different NTO's and ministries to share the experience with the eVisitor system.

The experience of designing, developing and operating the eVisitor system is undoubtedly a very competitive export product. Our strength is not only the technol-

ogy as such, but also the experience in the implementation of new processes in the existing tourism sector and operational challenges with tourists, accommodation providers, local and regional tourist offices, as well as a variety of tourism and non-tourism related national organisations.

#### CNTB was the Gold & Country Partner of the European HTI Summit, hosted by the European Parliament in Brussels in November 2019. What significance does it have in establishing the position of the Croatian health tourism sector?

- This is the leading European conference on health tourism that drew about a hundred national and international experts, top lecturers and panellists to Brussels. Croatia's role as a partner country at such an important international conference has solidified our country's status as a renowned health tourism destination that is actively involved in seeking common solutions and

mechanisms which may help maintain the level of competitiveness of European health tourism as a whole. With expert international conferences such as this, we are also able to further position Croatia as a high-quality health tourism destination, which is characterised by a long-standing tradition, superior service quality and highly qualified workforce, making it one of the most important elements of tourism in Croatia.

#### Finally, World Expo 2020 Dubai is a fantastic opportunity for branding the country on a global level and presenting the Croatian tourism to more than 25 million visitors. What are the CNTB's plans for Dubai 2020?

- Given the significance of tourism for the entire Croatian economy, we will also be attending Expo 2020 Dubai, a major international business event. This will give us an opportunity to showcase everything that Croatia has to offer to our many existing partners, and potentially to some new ones. The theme of Expo 2020 is "Connecting Minds, Creating the Future". The Croatian delegation's pavilion will be located inside the Mobility District, and its theme will be "the Mobility of the Mind". Through this theme, Croatia will represent itself as a country of innovative projects, ideas, inventions and creative individuals who have gained global recognition because they welcome challenges and embrace new ideas.

"In 2020, Croatia is partnering with global internet platforms in order to facilitate launching health tourism and tourism products on most of its outbound markets"



# TOURISM

## *All Year Round*

Croatia is ready for serious health tourism. Excellent service, high expertise, professionalism and abundance of tourism content define Croatia as an attractive destination chosen by more and more tourists as their health destination

**AUTHOR:** *Ivana Kolar*





The rapid growth of the global health tourism market confirms that this sector is one of the strongest drivers of economic growth and development today. Managing its health tourism in a sustainable way, using almost immeasurable potentials, such as beneficial climate, ecological preservation, rich cultural and natural heritage, qualified tourism and health staff and on, and transferring them to the real benefits to the country, Croatia is a great example of that.

### RAPIDLY CHANGING SEGMENT

Health tourism, concerning medical, health and wellness tourism, is a growing, global, complex and rapidly changing segment that needs to be understood and strategically developed to take advantage of the opportunities given and to meet the challenges. Until recently, European leading healthcare destinations were the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy and Spain. Following the new European Directive on cross-border healthcare in 2014, new public medical tourism emerged on the market and, as a consequence, countries such as Hungary, the Czech Republic, Romania, Poland and Latvia became popular health destinations for Europeans. The destination of the future of health tourism is also Croatia.

### GLOBALLY RECOGNIZED CLINICS

Croatia is a strong tourism country with over 100 million overnight stays per year. Although health tourism counts only small part of it, in the last few years it has undergone serious development in terms of content and quality. Many clinics and polyclinics, such as Poliklinika Bagatin, Svjetlost Eye Clinic and Akromion, mostly privately owned, are globally recognized for their top service, expertise and professionalism. Their owners and managers develop their businesses ambitiously and enthusiastically and strive for high excel-

*"Croatia is a strong tourism country with over 100 million overnight stays per year. Although health tourism counts only small part of it, in the last few years it has undergone serious development in terms of content and quality"*



Photo: Depositphotos

lence. Croatian centers for dental medicine, beauty surgery, ophthalmology, orthopedics... are increasingly stepping into the European and global markets.

### CONTEMPORARY THERMAL AND WELLNESS CENTERS

Wellness tourism is also becoming an increasingly recognizable product of Croatia and offers relaxation, enjoyment, active vacation and serious preventive care for retaining youth and vitality throughout the year. A range of 5\* wellness hotels have been built, such as Hotel & Spa Iadera in Zadar, Hotel Bellevue on the island of Lošinj and Hotel Monte Mulini in Rovinj, also contemporary thermal and wellness centers such as Terme Tuhelj and Terme Sveti Martin, which offer holistic care for body, spirit and mind. Authentic treatments and programmes based on natural healing factors and the preserved nature enable the creation of Croatian wellness as a unique offer in the region.

Natural healing remedies such as thermal water, healthy mud, sea and air and extensive experience in rehabilitation processes are the advantages of Croatian health spas. Thalassotherapy in Opatija, Stubičke Toplice Special Hospital in the immediate vicinity of Zagreb, or Bizovačke Toplice today treat guests from all over the world.

More and more clinics, spas and wellness centers are connected with hotels and other providers in the tourism offer into interesting tourism products available throughout the year that puts Croatia side by side to European health destinations.

### CROATIAN TOURISM 365

Health tourism and other undiscovered tourism stories from Croatia are promoted by the Conference on year-round tourism "Croatian Tourism 365?", that traditionally takes place during autumn in Zagreb and presents Croatia as a destination for relaxation, enjoyment, fun and active vacation throughout all periods of the year.

Spending a few days in Croatian spas and hotels, combining the offer of continental and marine Croatia to recharge your batteries in top hotels, preserved nature and expert hands of Croatian therapists, is the best choice for your next holiday. Feeling great and maintaining vitality is guaranteed!

*Ivana Kolar is the founder and CEO of Julius Rose, business consulting in the field of business strategy, investment project management and new value development. She has a significant role in fostering the development of year-round tourism in Croatia and setting standards of the Croatian spa and wellness offer. Ivana Kolar is the organiser of the platform and the yearly Conference "Croatian Tourism 365?"*



Photo: Private archive





# Zagreb

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# Zagreb

## Centre of Medical Excellence

Quality medical services, top experts, state-of-the-art technology and affordable prices are the reasons why Zagreb stands out as an increasingly desirable health tourism destination

**PROMO:** Zagreb Tourist Board



**D**ue to its excellent geographic location, excellent transport links and plenty of cultural and natural attractions, Zagreb is a desirable location for city break trips, business meetings and congresses, as well as one of our most attractive health tourism destinations. The superior quality of service and the use of advanced technologies are the reasons why the capital of Croatia can rightly be called a centre of medical excellence.

### GREAT CONNECTIONS

The modern Franjo Tuđman Airport, as well as the excellent road infrastructure, provide Zagreb with excellent transport links to numerous cities in Europe and internationally. Due to its great geographical position, it is easy and simple to explore other parts of Croatia from Zagreb. Guests are attracted by the pleasant, temperate climate, the charming blend of continental and Mediterranean ambience, numerous cultural facilities, parks and other natural attractions that make this city so unique. If we add to this the level of medical services at prices that are up to 30% lower than in the West, it is clear why health tourism has become an important aspect of Croatia's overall tourism offer.

### BROAD RANGE OF MEDICAL SERVICES

Whether a guest is seeking a specific medical treatment, a solution to a specific health problem, or "just" an opportunity to get fit and relax, Zagreb and its surround-

ings have much to offer. Dental medicine, aesthetic medicine, ophthalmology, orthopaedics, tumour treatment, cardiology and other procedures... are carried out in numerous private and public clinics and specialty hospitals that are recognized as leading in their business segment. Moreover, top experts who gained their knowledge in major European and international medical centres of excellence work in them. It should also be emphasized that numerous Zagreb institutions are holders of internationally recognized certificates in health tourism such as Global Clinic Rating, Temos, JCI (Joint Commission International)...

### MEDICAL EXCELLENCE IN ALL AREAS

Health tourism services in Zagreb compete with major European

and international centres, particularly in the field of dental and aesthetic medicine, ophthalmology and orthopaedics. Dental medicine professionals will create a whole new smile for the client in just one day. As one of the most popular treatments, laser diopter removal in Zagreb eye clinics is performed using the latest generation of laser eye surgery, while aesthetic clinics are proud to be the epitome of the best and most innovative in this part of Europe. When it comes to orthopaedic procedures, sports medicine and medical rehabilitation, Zagreb clinics are again among the most reputable. Whether it is the implanta-

tion of prosthesis of all major joints (shoulders, hips, knees), treatment of osteoarthritis with autologous stem cells or post-injury rehabilitation - you are in good hands, as confirmed by numerous athletes and Olympians who choose the clinics and hospitals in Zagreb and the surrounding area to recover from injuries.

### RELAX - YOU ARE IN ZAGREB!

In Zagreb, in addition to an exceptional level of health service, you will also experience the true meaning of the word - hospitality. With interesting architecture, Zagreb hotels will provide you with a high level of service and comfort. For an additional good feeling and a much needed break from the routine, there are green oasis - city parks, including the oldest one - the Maksimir Park, and a variety of walking paths around



### COME TO ZAGREB FOR A DENTAL PROCEDURE

Zagreb dental clinics, known for their high professionalism and performance of very advanced procedures in the fields of implantology, oral surgery and aesthetic dentistry are often the main reason for choosing Zagreb as a destination which patients trust





Photo: Julien Duval, Zagreb Tourist Board



Polyclinic Glavić



Aris Salutaris



Radiochirurgia Zagreb



Svjetlost Eye Clinic

the lakes Jarun and Budek, and the lungs of the city - the magnificent Mount Medvednica. The destination experience is not complete without tasting local specialties, so exploring the magic of the local cuisine is definitely recommended. From haute cuisine to street food - whatever you choose in Zagreb, you won't go wrong! Take a stroll through the streets of Zagreb, see its cultural and other attractions, feel the pulse of the city which beats equally for every one of its visitors - with a welcome that every visitor will remember for a long time.

**Special Hospital St. Catherine** was among the first in Europe to start applying mesenchymal stem cells (MSC) in clinical practice. The hospital cooperates with the US corporation OneOme, founded by the reputable Mayo Clinic, and conducts innovative pharmacogenetic testing in order to reduce the adverse effects of medicines.

**Radiochirurgia Zagreb**, a specialty hospital that deals with cancer diagnosis and treatment, uses state-of-the-art radiology technology, including the Varian EDGE linear accelerator, a device that represents an evolution in the way of providing advanced radiosurgery.

**Polyclinic Bagatin** provides top-notch services in the fields of aesthetic medicine, dentistry, cosmetology and dermatology, applying the most advanced laser technology. The polyclinic offers clients consultations using a device that enables the simulation of postoperative appearance.

The physicians from the **Svjetlost Eye Clinic** are pioneers in corneal transplantation in Croatia. This clinic is among the top three ophthalmology clinics which have implanted Synergy intraocular lens for the correction of presbyopia (long-sightedness associated with age). A number of world stars such as Tim Roth and Armand Assante have placed their trust in them...

**IVF Polyclinic**, a private clinic for reproductive medicine, headed by Velimir Šimunić Ph.D., a pioneer in the implementation of in-vitro fertilization in Croatia, stands alongside the world's leading centres of reproductive medicine.

**Genos**, the first private DNA lab, is a leader in analyzing genetic mutations associated with hereditary diseases and conducting genetic tests.

While performing large joint implantation procedures, doctors of the **Special Hospital Akromion** apply autologous blood transfusions (using patient's own blood).

**The Magdalena Clinic** provides all its patients with unique and comprehensive cardiovascular care - from setting the diagnosis to cardiovascular procedures. A Telemedicine Centre also operates within the Clinic, communicating with patients 24/7.

**The Arithera Specialty Hospital** provides new spine treatment methods - Spine Pain Management, distinguished by their minimal invasiveness. Arithera, just like the **Polyclinic Glavić**, provides robotic neurorehabilitation of upper and lower limbs.



# BAGATIN

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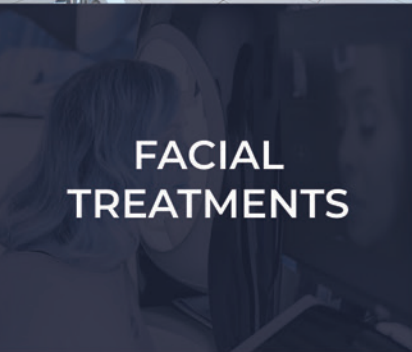
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21 000 Split



# Bagatin Clinic AWARDED FOR EXCELLENCE

The clinic confirms its long-standing reputation as Croatia's leading multispecialty clinic by winning International Medical Travel Journal's award for International Cosmetic Surgery Clinic of the Year in Berlin

AUTHOR: Andrea Šitum

The family-run Bagatin Clinic has been Croatia's leading multispecialty clinic for over two decades, offering patients the latest procedures in cosmetic surgery, dentistry, cosmetology and dermatology, coupled with state-of-the-art technology and exceptional care that adheres to the highest international standards. Ever since its foundation by the preeminent Croatian maxillofacial surgeon Marijo Bagatin in 1995, the clinic, which is currently run by his sons Ognjen (as chairman), Dinko and Tomica (renowned surgeons in their own right), has provided over 32,000 patients with an array of over 250 procedures across four departments. 2019 was a particularly successful one for Bagatin, as the clinic won a number of significant awards.

Photo: Bagatin Clinic

Winning International Cosmetic Surgery Clinic of the Year Award puts Croatia on the map as a key destination in medical tourism, says chairman Ognjen Bagatin

## PRESTIGIOUS TITLES

The clinic was not only recognized as the *International Cosmetic Surgery Clinic of the Year* by the IMTJ, but it has also successfully passed the TEMOS accreditation process, officially receiving two certificates: Quality in International Patient Care and Excellence in Medical Tourism.

The prestigious title of *International Cosmetic Surgery Clinic of the Year 2019* has been awarded by the authoritative organization for promoting medical tourism IMTJ - *International Medical Travel Journal*. In addition to the award for the Interna-

Photo: Bagatin Clinic



tional Cosmetic Surgery Clinic of the Year, which the clinic had already won in 2017, Bagatin Clinic were also finalists in another category - *Best Quality Initiative!*

The IMTJ awards celebrate top achievements, innovation and excellence in the medical travel, medical tourism and health tourism industries worldwide. As a part of this, an annual conference is held which brings together representatives of top medical institutions and confers awards on the best clinics in as many as 19 categories.

The 2019 IMTJ Medical Travel Summit and awards ceremony were held Decem-





highest levels of performance to deliver exceptional services to local patients, as well as patients with different cultural backgrounds, international patients and medical travelers, and to continuously guarantee quality.

Temos criteria and quality standards were designed in 2006, with the goal of optimizing the management of international patients in healthcare facilities worldwide, and the organization itself, Temos International Healthcare Accreditation, was founded and launched in 2010.

Photo: Bagatin Clinic

The IMTJ Awards, which celebrate top achievements, innovation and excellence in the medical travel, medical tourism and health tourism industries worldwide, were held December 1-3 in Berlin

## EXCEPTIONAL QUALITY

Through their professional assessments, Temos International Healthcare Accreditation aims to ensure that all of their accredited partners, now including the Bagatin Clinic, represent a safe environment of exceptional quality for patients and doctors, in addition to being valued by employees, for whom

they represent a valuable opportunity for personal and professional development.

The accreditation process took Bagatin Clinic a total of nine months and covered nineteen areas. With this strong partner and a recognition for patient safety and service excellence, the Bagatin Clinic is getting closer to realizing its vision of becoming a market leader in Europe, offering superior service and a patient experience, as well as providing quality professional development to the staff.

With these two major accreditation certificates and the international recognition as International Cosmetic Surgery Clinic of the Year for 2019, Croatia has definitely secured its place on the world map of medical tourism, and Bagatin Clinic has proven it provides top quality care and service to its patients.

ber 1-3 in Berlin and attended by representatives from 45 countries around the world.

## LEADERSHIP TEAM

The Bagatin Clinic was represented by Ognjen Bagatin and Andrea Stipanić, who proved that quality, effort and care for their clients can lead to the very top in medical tourism, a fact which has been recognized by 20 impartial judges and experts in the field from all over the world.

Receiving the IMTJ award for the Best International Clinic for Plastic Surgery, the Bagatin Clinic proved themselves to be on the same level as the big players in the world of healthcare institutions. In the words of their CEO, Ognjen Bagatin, shortly after the winner was announced:

"I feel great. I would like to thank my brothers Dinko and Tomica, our leadership team, our BagaTeam, this is a great victory not only for us, but for all of Croatia - this puts us on the map!"

Also, a comment from one of the judges of the IMTJ Medical Travel Awards, who

participated in the selection of the Bagatin Clinic as the best international cosmetic surgery clinic:

"The clinic shows a continued commitment to meeting the needs of a growing number of international patients and monitoring the outcomes of these patients after treatment. A very strong candidate in the medical travel market, dedicated to continuous improvement in internal refinement, external consulting and international brand awareness."

## GUARANTEE OF HIGHEST STANDARDS

TEMOS certificates of accreditations - *Quality in International Patient Care and Excellence in Medical Tourism*, were also presented to the clinic in Berlin from 1st to 3rd December 2019, as part of the IMTJ Summit.

Temos International Healthcare Accreditation helps hospitals, clinics and medical travel coordinators to find their

info

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• Frana Folnegovića 1c/1, 10000 Zagreb, Croatia

• Dioklecijan Hotel & Residence, Kranjčevićeva 45/1, 21000 Split, Croatia

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Photo: Bagatin Clinic



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I hope you can find time to attend. Our team looks forward to connecting, sharing and learning with you.“

Tom Mihaljević, CEO and President of Cleveland Clinic

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Photo: Depix Photos





# SPLIT

## CITY OF WELLBEING

Thanks to the mild Mediterranean climate, nature, Emperor Diocletian's heritage, as well as the best private polyclinics and spas – Split is today a city that nourishes wellbeing, where every visitor will heal both their body and their soul

PROMO: Tourist Board of Split





Photo: Tourist Board of Split



**W**hen you come to Split in the winter months, on one of those frequent days when the city is bathed in sunshine - despite the sometimes low temperatures - you can understand why sunglasses are the most important accessory in that city. Take a walk along the Riva waterfront, and you'll be fully convinced. Because, some say, there are few cities that live on "solar power" to such an extent.

Fortunately, the climate in this part of Croatia is truly a blessing, so the fascination with sunny weather is not a consequence of a lack of it. So why go anywhere else for a dose of health, any time of the year? In winter you will forget the cold sitting under the Dalmatian sun, summer beckons you to the beaches and the crystal clear sea, while spring and au-

turn to enjoy hiking, walking or biking on Marjan or further on the surrounding mountains, islands...

### EMPEROR DIOCLETIAN'S CITY

And this is not a recent fad. Split's "medicinal" properties are one of the foundations of its history, an inseparable part of the city spirit. It is not a mere legend that the Roman Emperor Diocletian built his retirement palace just after his descent from the throne to cure rheumatism with medicinal waters. This is why he built two spas in the Palace, where the Emperor and his guests enjoyed mineral and sulphur-rich water. Do you need better proof that Split is the perfect place to heal your body and soul?

Many others knew this after Diocletian, from the monks at the monastery of St. Francis on the Riva, to the Split homemakers who bleached their clothes

on the waterfront for centuries, to the fashionable guests in the stone-baths built by the Split local Nikola Selebam. It culminated at the beginning of the 20th century with the construction of a spa in a beautiful building on Marmontova Street. Its water won awards throughout the world and was declared the best in Europe by the University of Vienna, making health-seeking tourists - today we would call them wellness fans - rush to Split.

### THE BEST PRIVATE CLINICS

Today, the Split hospital in this building has its own rehabilitation department, but that does not mean that Split has been deleted from the health map. Private clinics - Sunce, Matulić, Obad, Bagatin... - take advantage of the Split climate as an important complement to their treatments and modern diagnostics. Numerous private clinics have long since become part of an increasingly popular wave of health tourism. Of course, there is also the University Hospital Centre Split as the largest hospital in Dalmatia.

Emperor Diocletian built two spas in the Palace, where the emperor and his guests enjoyed mineral and sulphur-rich water



*During your breaks from treatments in hotels and polyclinics, you can devote yourself to the best that Split has to offer: its nature. Explore the Marjan Forest Park or take a swim at the numerous sandy, pebbly and rocky beaches in Split*

Photo: Tourist Board of Split





Photo: Tourist Board of Split



At the beginning of the 20th century, a spa was built in the beautiful building on Marmontova Street. Its water won awards throughout the world and was declared the best in Europe by the University of Vienna

The hotel offer is also advancing, unimaginable without health facilities. One of the oldest hotels in Split, Hotel Park, which started offering five-star service two years ago, offers its Priska by DiSpa wellness centre not only to hotel guests, but also to others. For the needs of Hotel Park, in the immediate vicinity of the Bačvice beach, DiSpa has designed a brand new concept with treatment rooms, a jacuzzi, gym... The second five-star city hotel Atrium also offers relaxation in the indoor pool, sauna and a Turkish bath, face and body massage in its Aurelia SPA & Wellness centre... RE:CUPERA, one of the best wellness centres in Croatia, located at the Le Meridien Lav Hotel, another five star hotel, is found at the eastern entrance to the city. In addition to the indoor and outdoor pools, the hotel beach and gym, RE:CUPERA offers saunas, a hammam, massage or shower treatments, cosmetic treatments, healthy food and drinks...

## RELAXATION AND HEALTH FACILITIES

Others are not lagging behind either.

On an area of 2000 square meters, the Radisson Blu Resort offers 12 treatment rooms, two Finnish saunas, a hydro-therapy pool and a Japanese Onsen pool, as well as a fitness centre. Complete wellness treatment is also available at the Diocletian Hotel & Residence, which has a unique rooftop pool overlooking the Central Dalmatian islands. More recently there is also the Bagatin Clinic - one of the most respected in Europe - specializing in dental medicine, especially cosmetic and dermatological treatments. The Cornaro Hotel in the very heart of the city also offers relaxation and health facilities, while the Marvie Spa Hotel, close to the University Hospital Centre Split and the sea, is a must since last year. In addition to the usual wellness facilities and treatments and a pool, you can also receive medical attention, tips and instructions for a healthier life in this

hotel. Finally, there is a new star among the Split hotels, the Briig Hotel, right by the beach in Bačvice. At the top is an outdoor pool overlooking the sea and islands, as well as massage and a well-equipped gym.

And during your breaks from treatments in hotels and polyclinics, you can devote yourself to the best that Split has to offer: its nature. Explore the Marjan Forest Park, just a few minutes away from the city centre, or take a swim at the numerous sandy, pebbly and rocky beaches in Split. Nearby you can swim in the crystal clear sea on the islands of Brač, Hvar, Šolta or Vis; hike on the islands or the nearby Mosor, Kozjak and Biokovo, cycle on hundreds of kilometres of trails throughout Dalmatia, enjoy endless walks along the sea...

In short, you will heal both - your body and soul in Split.

Photo: Tourist Board of Split

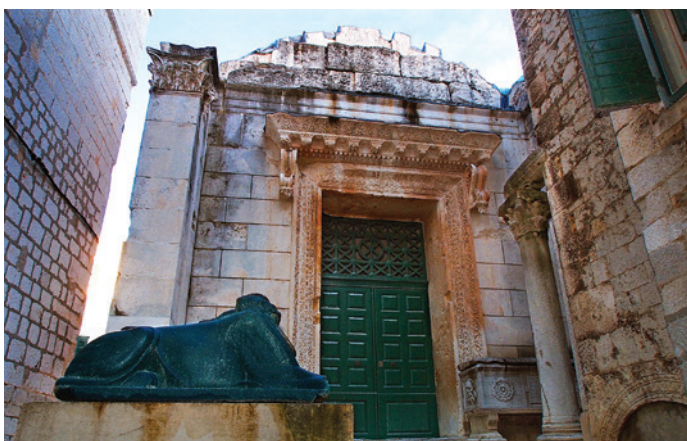


Photo: Tourist Board of Split







Photo: Marvie Hotel & Health

# MARVIE HOTEL & HEALTH

## *Perfect Location For Restoring Body And Soul*

While in Split, do not miss Marvie Hotel & Health, a modern design hotel by the sea, with up-to-date amenities and the particular offering of relaxation and therapeutic programmes for health and beauty

**PROMO:** Marvie Hotel & Health

**D**id you know that apart from its amazing coast and crystal blue sea, Croatia advantages of highly educated and skilled medical professionals? The medical tourism in Croatia is developing rapidly and hotel Marvie in Split incorporates two of its primary advantages – a spectacular location and the

knowledge and high-end medical expertise.

The property presents comfortable accommodation in 76 rooms, including two suites, the outdoor pool on the top roof terrace that holds an amazing view and an excellent roof-top bar. The second, indoor pool along with saunas, steam bath and relaxing and fitness area, cover the large area of Renevie wellness and spa area.



## BEAUTY AND MEDICAL TREATMENTS

This hotel is a one-stop-shop for numerous beauty and medical treatments. The range of treatments in Marvie Hotel includes the latest most efficient dermatological treatments and non-invasive skin rejuvenation expertise, recovering physical therapy and contemporary dental care inclusive of sophisticated implants methods. Their expertise and excellent knowledge are enhanced by the most contemporary medical methods and equipment. It is also the perfect spot for combining a vacation with medical or aesthetic treatments since they have carefully chosen their partners to meet the highest standard in health-care and aesthetic medicine. Further, their nutritionist will gladly help you to develop an individual dietary plan and the wellness therapists will do their best to help you create the best version of yourself.



Photo: Marvie Hotel & Health



Photo: Marvie Hotel & Health



Photo: Marvie Hotel & Health



Photo: Marvie Hotel & Health

## BALANCE AND HARMONY

Marvie also has a conference room ideal for business groups of up to 62 people so if you are searching for the perfect location for your company's workshop or conference, Marvie could easily fit. Its additional uniqueness is the offer of the restaurant as the hotel's restaurant Da'Mar brings

The range of treatments in Marvie Hotel includes the latest most efficient dermatological treatments and non-invasive skin rejuvenation expertise, recovering physical therapy and contemporary dental care inclusive of sophisticated implants methods



the Mediterranean, mostly gluten-free delicacies at the table so you know where to go when looking for three or four courses gluten-free dinner menu, with state of the art dishes!

Balance and harmony are integrated into every part of the hotel's offer and its specialized medical services are an added benefit that makes Marvie the ideal choice for a holiday or business trip after which you will feel better and look fabulous!

**For more information, check their website [www.marviehotel.com](http://www.marviehotel.com).**



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# Daruvar Spa

## GIFT OF NATURE

The beneficial properties of thermal springs were known even to the Romans – from ancient times onward, this magnificent gift of nature has restored health and vitality in the Daruvar Spa

**PROMO:** Daruvar Spa

Daruvar Spa is a modern centre for health maintenance discreetly integrated into nature, on the very springs of healing thermal water, surrounded by a large cultivated park of historical and monumental value. Located in the heart of the town of Daruvar, one of the most beautiful small towns in the continental Croatia.

Daruvar Spa is specialized in the treatment of rheumatic diseases, medical rehabilitation, individual treatments of injured athletes under the professional control of sports-medicine doctor and kinesiologist and in assisted treatment of infertility by natural healing factors. Physical therapy is performed under the expert supervision of superbly educated personnel on the modern equipment with natural therapeutic factors in which we have a very long tradition. You will find a pleasant accommodation in the spa hotel Termal (3\*) and Annex Arcadia (3\*). Both buildings are located in the hearth of Julijev park, just a few minutes of easy walk from the centre of the town.

When you visit Daruvar Spa, you will see for yourself why the old Romans adored this healing spa. Healing thermal water springs, mineral mud, preserved historical buildings and beautiful historical landscape parks, as well as sports and recreational, wellness-spa and medical facilities, still make Daruvar Spa a perfect place for treatment, relaxation and rehabilitation.



Photo: Daruvar Spa

info



### Daruvar Spa

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Email: rezervacije@daruvarske-toplice.hr

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PROMO | CROATIAN SPAS

## Special Hospital VARAŽDINSKE TOPLICE

Special Hospital for Medical Rehabilitation  
Varaždinske Toplice is a Reference Center of the  
Ministry of Health of the Republic of Croatia for  
the rehabilitation of persons with spinal cord injury

**PROMO:** Special Hospital Varaždinske Toplice

The Special Hospital for Medical Rehabilitation Varaždinske Toplice presents its activity through the services of medical rehabilitation and health tourism. Due to the outstanding achievements in this field, the Special Hospital has acquired the status of the Reference Center of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Croatia for the rehabilitation of persons with spinal cord injury. Through the Center, the latest developments in physical medicine and rehabilitation will be monitored and developed according to the models of top European rehabilitation houses. The construction of the National Rehabilitation Center for People with Spinal Cord Diseases and Disorders will be completed by mid-2021.

The modernly equipped Minerva Medica Health Center operates in Minerva with new facilities. In addition to existing medical wellness services, the Fit & relax studio with state-of-the-art fitness equipment is open to visitors. The team of experts consisting of kinesiologists and physiotherapists is responsible for achieving the desired results and selecting the best programs.

For more demanding questions, a specialist examination and/or consultation service is also available.

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Photo: Depositphotos



### Special Hospital For Medical Rehabilitation Varaždinske Toplice

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*Full of life*

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