

## 67th GENERAL MEETING AND SCIENTIFIC CONGRESS ASTANA (Kazakhstan) -September 25-28, 2014

**Umberto Solimene (Italy) was elected new President and Istvan Fluck (Hungary) was elected Honorary President of the World Federation of Hydrotherapy and Climatotherapy**

Professor Umberto Solimene is the new President of FEMTEC, the World Federation of Hydrotherapy and Climatotherapy ([www.femteconline.org](http://www.femteconline.org)).

President of the **Centre for Research on Medical Bioclimatology**, Thermal and complementary medicine, and Wellbeing Science at the **Milan State University**, Professor Solimene boasts a long-standing track record as an expert in the hydrotherapy sector, having been for some time the Secretary General of FEMTEC, the Federation of national hydrotherapy associations from more than 25 countries.

For the first time in the 80-year history of the Federation, founded in 1937, the Managing Board and the General Meeting have selected an Italian figure to lead the only NGO in the sector for official relations with the **World Health Organization**.

The appointment was approved unanimously in Astana (Kazakhstan) on occasion of the **67th Annual Meeting of the FEMTEC Congress (September 25-28, 2014)**, which gathered more than 150 representatives of 23 countries (from Cuba to China), as well as high-level political representatives of Kazakhstan (Gulsciara Abdikalikova, Deputy Prime Minister, and Salidat Karibekova, Minister of Health) and accredited diplomats (the ambassadors of Russia, Italy, Cuba, Japan, and Hungary).

Professor Solimene succeeds to the late president **Nikolai Storozhenko**, for many years (1998-2014) the leader of FEMTEC, who was honoured and appreciated with speeches and lectures during the congress. Those by U. Solimene (Italy), A. Razumov (Russia), I. Fluck (Hungary), and M. Loboda (Ukraine) were particularly touching and were collected in the Congress Records.

The main theme of the Congress was the general situation of the world hydrotherapy sector, also in the light of the **FEMTEC-FoRST-WHO** project *"Hydroglobe, defining a world general framework for Hydrotherapy,"* a huge effort implemented through a survey based on interviews and questionnaires carried out on approximately 2,700 hydrotherapy centres, which involved experts and facilities from ten countries boasting a significant background or development in the thermal sector. The survey, disclosed in Rome on March 6 last, provided a reliable overview of hydrotherapy/thermal medicine in terms of usage levels, techniques, treated diseases, staff training, and legal frameworks in each country under study.

In his development programme based, among other things, on the conclusions of the debate held during the Congress and dedicated to hydrotherapy strategies in a changing society, President **Umberto Solimene** acknowledged the consideration granted to him and highlighted a few strategic goals: *"strengthen international relations and partnerships in the different sectors; introduce and support the World Health Organization's guidelines; carry out scientific research as a basis for the further inclusion of thermal medicine in national health systems, and increase the user base of treatments"*.

The General Meeting also confirmed the appointment of the **Board of Directors**, which includes representatives from several countries, with the official admission of **Spain** (F. Maraver) and **Italy** (A. Ferruzzi). **Istvan Fluck** (Hungary), an outstanding representative of European Hydrotherapy, was appointed **Honorary President**.

**S. Bulekbaeva** (Kazakhstan); **A. Razumov** (Russia), President of the Russian Hydrotherapy Association; **R. Ledesma** and **M. Leyva** (Cuba); **I. Ponikowska** and **J. Choinowsky** (Poland); **O. Surdu** (Romania); **G. Gurnari** (San Marino); **A. Ferruzzi** (Italy); **R. Oueslati** and **S. Montacer** (Tunisia); **A. Belaitar** (Algeria); **A. Krisciunas** (Lithuania); **I. Melnik** (Germany); **F. Menendez** (Cuba); **F. Maraver** and **C. Morer** (Spain); **F. Roques-T. Dubois** (France), and **V. Sevriukova** (Russia) were among the speakers and provided prestigious scientific and organizational updates on hydrotherapy in their respective countries.

Presentations by the **Kazakh colleagues** aroused great interest and appreciation. In the session organized at the beautiful hydrotherapy centre of **Burabay** (200 km away from Astana), they described the thermal

care system in the Country, which is currently the object of a strong modernization and development programme requested by President N. Nazarbaev.

Lots of scientific events and professional visits were organized during the Congress. Particular interest was aroused by the visit to the **Republican Centre for Child Rehabilitation** in Astana ([www.rdrc.kz](http://www.rdrc.kz)), considered as one of the best in the world, headed by **Professor S. Bulekbaeva**. The Centre was the promoter and excellent organizer of the FEMTEC Congress, and displayed great professionalism while providing a concrete demonstration of Kazakh hospitality. One of the best congresses in the long history of FEMTEC!

In November a qualified delegation of rehabilitation experts from Kazakhstan, headed by Professor **Sholpan Bulekbaeva**, manager of the Centre, will participate to a number of workshops on the thermal rehabilitation sector, which will take place in Emilia Romagna, Italy (Terme di Riolo, Terme della Fratta and Rehabilitation Centre of Montecatone).