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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **ISCHIA WILL HOST TO THE NEXT CONGRESS OF THE WORLD FEDERATION OF HYDROTHERAPY ON OCTOBER 15-20**

*The congress theme is “Thermal clusters: present situation, proposals, and strategies for health care and local development”*

*sponsored by the  
**MINISTRY OF HEALTH***

Ischia – September 7, 2017 - Representatives and experts from 23 countries will participate in the **FEMTEC Congress**, which will take place at **Ischia Porto (Naples) on October 15-20, 2017** on occasion of the **80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of the World Federation of Hydrotherapy**, the only trade association accredited with the **World Health Organization**.

Its very topical theme is **“Thermal clusters: Present situation, proposals, and strategies for health care and local development”**. According to the definition of the World Health Organization ([www.who.int](http://www.who.int)), a “health cluster” is an aggregate of local entities that coordinate with each other to study and define practices and strategies for a specific health sector” (<http://www.who.int/health-cluster/en/>). When such regions feature scientifically acknowledged mineral water sources, their potentials to act in view of improving the quality of life of people are expanded even further. In this case these are referred to as “health thermal clusters”. In this respect, environmental, therapeutic, cultural, and anthropological resources act in synergy in view of good health, as well as of local economic development.

The present challenges posed by modern and environmentally advanced society can find a comprehensive response in the resources offered by “thermal clusters”, a true heritage of the past that can be experienced with a modern approach. However, this calls for forms of aggregation and organization into a “**system**”, as well as for effective actions by a variety of “players” (politicians, administrators, entrepreneurs, companies) at local, national, and international level. The “**genius loci**” of the thermal resort obviously needs to be preserved, but inserted into a local integrated vision. This trend is being understood and partly implemented in most European countries that boast a thermal culture and tradition.

**FEMTEC** ([www.femteconline.org](http://www.femteconline.org)), celebrates the **80<sup>th</sup> anniversary** of its foundation this year, and offers its members an opportunity to **meditate on, evaluate, and carry out an operational review of this subject**, which may provide a starting point for the *renaissance* of hydrotherapy in the modern age. The representatives of outstanding institutions, including WHO,

ESPA, EAPTC, ISMH, EMA, and the individual national trade Federations, will provide their practical input.

The **CME-accredited** Congress will discuss and develop the individual thermal issues dealing specifically with:

- Structure, organization, and management of national and international thermal clusters
- Remote physician and operator training
- Research as a factor for knowledge and information
- The role of thermal patients-users
- Communication
- Traditional and IT marketing
- New technologies and health safety
- Health insurance
- Health tourism

**Brand new**, included in the agenda of the event, is the session **“HOT SPRINGS CHINA DAY”**, where the Chinese Thermal Association will discuss its potentials and service offering to western experts and tour operators. Investments in the tourist sector in China totalled more than 130 billion EUR (+46%) in 2016, and forecasts were tripled for the next three years.

A **poster exhibition** will describe the historical, cultural, and scientific features of hydrotherapy.

*“Venue selection – the Isle of ISCHIA (<http://www.comuneischia.it/>) – is not only dictated by logistic requirements,” says **Umberto Solimene**, president of FEMTEC, “but also conveys the significance of introducing a unique region in terms of environmental, cultural, and thermal resources, integrated into an unusual geography. We are expected to carry out a hard and proactive work. While we are aware of the challenges, we trust our strengths and the scientific and entrepreneurial value, in view of building a common thermal house” .*

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