



Non-governmental Organization
inofficial relation with World Health Organization (WHO)
www.femteconline.org

Conclusion of the works of THERMAE & MEDICAL WELLNESS”, the 68th Congress of the World Federation of Hydrotherapy (FEMTEC), at the Forte Village Resort (Sardinia)

THE NEW EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF USERS OF HEALTH SPAs

The launch of “active thermalism” changes the thermal model in the world: the consumer is the main player and public/private cooperation formats are under study

Forte Village (Cagliari), October 5, 2015 – A shared vision of the development of thermalism and of the related wellness centres involving multiple players – users, medicine, public/private health system, entrepreneurs. Designing integrating forms of thermal-health insurance under the banner of “active thermalism”. These are some of the practical proposals originating from the input of more than 100 experts from 19 countries, gathered at the 68th summit of FEMTEC, the World Federation of Hydrotherapy, from September 30 to October 4 at the prestigious Forte Village Resort in Sardinia, focusing on “*Thermae and Medical Wellness*”.

In particular, Irena Ponitowska (Poland) outlined in her lecture the general health conditions of the European population that, in some respects (including, among others, life expectancy and lifestyles), are definitely positive in Italy compared to other countries. The speaker stressed the important role that the thermae and medical wellness can play in prevention as well as – indirectly – in the economy of national health services. In a reference to the opening message of minister Lorenzin at the Congress, focus was made on the crucial function of thermal facilities and the related wellness centres in the shift from “expectation medicine” (waiting for the onset of a disease and implementing subsequent treatment) to “initiative-based medicine” (prevention).

FEMTEC believes that any scientific considerations can and should have a direct impact on the health of citizens, whose “proactive involvement” is fundamental for their effectiveness. Therefore, based on an idea of Umberto Solimene, President of FEMTEC, coordinated for operational purposes with **Alceste Santuari** from the School of Economics, Management, and Statistics of the Bologna University, **the European association of patients and users of hydrotherapy and wellbeing centres was created**. Its members include delegates from Portugal, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and Romania. The goals of the Association include developing greater “thermal and wellbeing awareness” inspired by four pillars – research, training, technological innovation, and communication.

These fundamental themes were discussed during the congress by several specialists, including Christian Roques (France), who described the activity of the French Foundation for Thermal Research and its reports disclosing the implementation results; Francisco Maraver, who introduced the social and integrated thermalism models implemented in Spain; Rzig Oueslati (Tunisia) and Giovanni Gurnari (San Marino), who described the innovative ISO certification for wellness and thalassotherapy centres in the Mediterranean region; professor Umberto Solimene, who launched the European online courses for physician certification and training; and Alexandr Razumov, from Russia, who outlined relations between the thermae and rehabilitation. Olga Surdu (Romania) provided a broad review of the state of the art of research in the sector.

The documented report by Anni Hood (UK) of the Global Wellness Institute was greatly appreciated. Ms. Hood discussed the macroeconomic and marketing issues of the thermae and stressed their significant figures (an annual turnover of more than US\$ 400 billion). In consideration of the interests at stake, this calls for consumer information and assurance about the quality of the offering. One practical example in this respect comes from the medical SPA of the Forte Village, **an area of excellence in medical wellness**, where the creation of a **High Advanced School for SPA MANAGEMENT** is being designed in cooperation with FEMTEC.

On the wake of the expected deep changes in the budgets of the national health systems that, in a predictable future, may also consider thermal issues, the insurance group **Unipol** offers, **within the framework of the Unipolsalute project**, health insurance policies also for the thermal and wellness sector, which can turn out extremely attractive both for citizens and for the related entrepreneurial system.

“The era of ‘passive’ welfare is close to an end, as we can see in almost all countries, both in the west and elsewhere,” said **Umberto Solimene**, President of FEMTEC, *“and while thermal medicine enjoys modern consolidated and undisputed scientific validation, as confirmed unanimously by the speakers at the congress also in response to the remarks of outstanding, yet not documented experts of other sector, it needs to confront with the strict requirements of state budgets. One accurate strategy provides for the creation of ‘thermal health clusters’ in predefined regions, where observational studies can be carried out on the lifestyles of populations and on the relevant changes. Lastly, this thermal summit resulted into the definition of new behavioural strategy models that involve the ‘individual’ and his or her ability to communicate, including via the social media.”*

In his final remarks, President Umberto Solimene reminded that the next FEMTEC summit **will take place in October 2016 in Armenia** and expressed his utmost satisfaction about the practical results and the emerging proposals of this edition, ensuring that these will be submitted to the World Health Organization – the reference institution for the Federation – for evaluation in view of implementation.

All the participants highly appreciated the organization and the venue of the Congress, the **FORTE VILLAGE RESORT** (Cagliari), one of the world’s most renowned, with its CEO and General Manager **Lorenzo Giannuzzi**.

Press Office:

Maria Eva Virga

Tel.: +393384757326

E-mail: mevirga@hotmail.com

www.femteconline.org