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*The meeting on “Thermae & Medical Wellness” will see the birth of the European Association of Hydrotherapy users*

## **TOWARDS ACTIVE THERMALISM**

*Consumer involvement in decisions and processes in the thermal sector, also from the social viewpoint, is one of the subjects of the 68<sup>th</sup> Congress of the World Federation of Hydrotherapy (FEMTEC) organized from September 30 to October 4, 2015 at the Forte Village Resort*



**Milan, September 10, 2015** – More than 4 million people in Europe regularly submit to thermal and wellbeing treatments. **Directive 24/2011/EU** on cross-border health care pays special attention to the rights of those that need to travel abroad to seek health treatments, including for prevention purposes. On this occasion, consumers will be involved for the first time in Italian and international thermalism: modern thermalism is active, a meeting point between treatment users and thermal establishments. The issue of integration will therefore be at the focus of the 68<sup>th</sup> International Congress of FEMTEC, which will take place **from September 30 to October 4, 2015** at the **Forte Village Resort (S. Margherita di Pula – Cagliari)** sponsored by the **Ministry of Health**.

More than 100 experts from 18 countries (including China, Russia, Tunisia, Cuba, as well as the main European countries) will discuss this subject to submit practical solutions and new development patterns for European and international hydrotherapy. The stereotyped and “passive” model of hydrotherapy of the past is now outdated: the new model for the thermal establishments of the future will be outlined at the FEMTEC convention. This takes into account the need to involve users of thermal care, conscious users that want to be part of the treatment process, regulate its course alongside their physicians, and provide a proactive response. According to FEMTEC experts, the new model should be founded on four major pillars: **scientific research** (basic, clinical, and wellbeing evaluation) communicated to the users in an appropriate and responsible manner through the traditional press and the social media; accredited **training** of physicians and health and technical staff; technological **innovation** and health **safety**; **health governance** implemented via updated forms of social thermalism (e.g. private insurance agreements), and development of public/private management relations, with the establishment of health clusters in cooperation with the World Health Organization. The FEMTEC Congress will formally submit this model to the **Ministries of Health** of the Member States.

During the Congress, Professor **Umberto Solimene**, President of FEMTEC, in coordination with Professor **Alceste Santuari** of the School of the Economy, Management, and Statistics of the Bologna University, will introduce the newly established **European Association of hydrotherapy users**, whose main goals include: appropriate citizen information; relations with the Institutions for development of the provided services; innovative proposals for hydrotherapy in view of high-quality care. The voice of hydrotherapy users, never listened to before, will be expressed in the **Manifesto of Active Thermalism**, which will be signed by the Heads of the Delegations from the 18 countries attending the Congress.

*“Thermal medicine is one of the oldest forms of western therapy, and in this respect could even be considered as a traditional medicine (according to the definition of the World Health Organization). Therefore the ‘Thermae’, as an integrated system of natural resources, facilities, and services, can be seen as a meeting point among different forms of medical culture to provide treatment and rehabilitation, as well as health maintenance options. In fact, a more comprehensive definition of people’s physical and psychic wellbeing calls for the acknowledgement of a deep transformation of a few key words of the social system. This is why integration with ‘medical wellbeing’ should be achieved at the ‘Thermae’. The ‘scenario’ is changing and we, as specialists, are facing new challenges, including scientific, social and economic ones,”* says **Umberto Solimene**, President of FEMTEC.

The Federation envisages strategic cooperation with the **Global Wellness Institute** (US), one of the most important specialized organizations, which publishes regular reports on the turnover of SPAs in the world. FEMTEC will cooperate with the American institute by submitting data and analyses on the world hydrotherapy market, thus expanding the scope of its investigation from SPAs to thermal establishments.

The Congress venue is the **FORTE VILLAGE RESORT** (Cagliari), managed by **Lorenzo Giannuzzi**, a world-class resort where sea water, medical services, physical treatments, and leisure are perfectly integrated.

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