

## **FEMTEC –BELARUS**

### **New opportunities for broad collaboration**

**Visit (January 15-18, 2018) of President Solimene to Minsk in view of a scheme for collaboration in hydrotherapy (research, staff training, care and wellbeing processes) and in speleotherapy using the facilities of the Republic of Belarus.**

**Define a programme for research in the thermal sector; organize training and updating courses for the staff of the Care and Wellbeing Centres; arouse the awareness of the existing natural and treatment wealth; introduce the programmes of the modern thermal social care system, enhance the uniqueness of the existing treatment methods (speleotherapy) for chronic respiratory diseases: these are some of the shared activities agreed between FEMTEC and the national Institutions of the Republic of Belarus in charge of the sector based on the visits and meetings that took place between the FEMTEC delegation, headed by President Umberto Solimene, and outstanding institutional representatives.**

**Belarus boasts modern specialized thermal medicine facilities, with more than 100 centres located in various regions across the Country, and has several advanced social prevention and care programmes in place. Hydrotherapy, which attracts high numbers of patients from the Countries of the former Soviet Union, is coordinated by two State Agencies: the Curort Centre ([www.otpusk.by](http://www.otpusk.by)), to which the facilities of the Presidency of the Republic report, and the Centre for Coordination and prophylaxis and for social thermal care c/o the Council of Ministers.**

**During former meetings with the Heads (Oleg Mikhailov, Director of the Curort Centre, and Gennadi Bolbatovski of the Council of Ministers), the members of the FEMTEC delegation (U. Solimene, N.Chauskaya, Y.Palyanski) expressed their appreciation for the visited facilities including, in particular, the “Yunost” Centre ([www.yunost.by](http://www.yunost.by)) for its medical and organizational approach, which draws from local care traditions while using modern therapeutic tools.**

**A thorough visit and professional meetings took place at the world-unique Medical Hospital Centre of Speleotherapy: managed by Dr. Pavel Levchenko in collaboration with Dr. Natalia Dubovik, it offers approximately 250 bedplaces and is located within the mining complex of Solinogorsk, about 200 km from Minsk.**

**The use of speleotherapy, well known in some Central-European regions (Poland, Russia, Germany, Czech Republic) for the treatment of chronic respiratory diseases (asthma, allergies, BPCO, etc.) performed through stays, for inhaling purposes, in natural environments (usually dismissed mineral salt mines), finds a unique venue in Solinogorsk. The patients (aged 15 and above) of the specialized Hospital dedicated to this therapeutic approach are carried to a “mine” of halite and sylvinite (minerals rich of sodium and potassium) located at a 420-m depth, with tunnels dug for the purpose, provided with specifically designed and monitored ventilation systems, in order to inhale saline microparticles. These mines cover a surface of approximately 9 hectares and develop along several kilometres. Here patients carry out a variety of activities for specific periods during the day (about 3 hours), assisted by specialists. The website [www.speleo.by](http://www.speleo.by) conveys an idea of the complexity and uniqueness, and also provides a description of this facility.**

**The method should obviously be supported by more clinical and laboratory data. To this end, the creation of an international team of experts is being considered, coordinated by FEMTEC.**

**Hence, there are new opportunities for an international collaboration with Belarus, which FEMTEC would be happy to take. The mission, perfectly organized by Dr. Yuri Paliansky, coordinator of the FEMTEC-Belarus project, was supported by Dr. Inna Poluyanova of the Republican Center for Sanatorium and Spa Treatment.**