



President's opening speech

Dear Mayor Dr. Franz, Dear Mr. Dominioni, Dear speakers and guests.

Thank you Dr. Franz for your warm welcome. It is a very great pleasure to be here in Wiesbaden today to celebrate European Thermal Heritage Day in the grand setting of the Kurhaus Wiesbaden – a wonderful example of European “thermal heritage”.

European Thermal Heritage Day is an annual event developed by EHTTA's Scientific Committee as an opportunity to raise awareness of and celebrate the subject that is at the heart of the Association and its objectives. It is regarded as an example of best practice by the European Institute of Cultural Routes, and won an award in 2019 for the concept.

EHTTA believes that thermal heritage represents a very particular European phenomenon, which includes natural, cultural, and intangible resources. The concept of thermal heritage is used to promote health and wellbeing, to create original tourism destinations, and to protect magnificent cultural landscapes. This event is designed to highlight the importance of thermal heritage as a centuries-old Europe-wide tradition, and aims to gain recognition and awareness of issues that affect the future of this valuable heritage.

The first European Thermal Heritage Day was held on the 100th Anniversary of the opening of the Gellért Baths in Budapest, in 2018, and was a study of “Thermal Tourism and Spa Heritage in Europe”. The following year the event was in Spa, in Belgium, focusing on the word “Spa” as a “concept that needs to be redefined”.

Last year, European Thermal Heritage Day on subject of Thermal Architecture was hosted by Baden-Baden in Germany, one of the “Great Spa Towns of Europe”, the new World Heritage Site, which we will hear more about later.

This year’s European Thermal Heritage Day will examine the subject of “Thermal Urbanism” in the context of the “Therapeutic Landscape”. Our host town, Wiesbaden is a great example of the concept of “thermal urbanism”, which is the idea that thermal towns, with their surrounding landscape were created to enhance the physical and mental health of their visitors, involving inhabitants and guests in a sustainable process that we still enjoy today, hundreds of years later. These spaces are particularly valuable as people look for healthy destinations and healing spaces after the pandemic.

This is the first of a series of three annual events, looking at the development of the Therapeutic Landscape – next year the subject will be “Parks and Gardens”, and the following year, “Thermal Towns”.

Events such as this allow us to take some time to examine in detail how and why our towns have developed and to share that knowledge amongst our members and more widely too.

I am delighted to welcome everyone here and watching online to this year’s European Thermal Heritage Day in Wiesbaden. I am looking forward to today’s dialogue and discussion that will shed light on an important aspect of our shared heritage.

Please welcome our next speaker, Mr Stefano Dominioni, Executive Secretary of the European Institute of Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe.

Approx. 3 ½ mins