



## **Press release**

A meeting was held last on 4<sup>th</sup> November in Brussels between the President of the European Historic Thermal Towns Association (EHTTA), Giuseppe Bellandi, the Delegate General Michel Thomas-Penette and Silvia Costa, President of the Committee for Culture, Education and Citizenship of the European Parliament. The meeting was also attended by the Mayor of Fiuggi, Fabrizio Martini, the Councilor from the City of Salsomaggiore Terme Elena Francani, responsible for EHTTA and Charles Gardier, Vice-President of EHTTA, Councilor of the Belgian city of Spa and of President of the "Francofolies", Member of the Parliament of the French Community of Belgium (Brussels Wallonia), which expressed at this occasion the intention of the historic Belgian spa town of Chaudfontaine to formalize the request to join the Cultural Route of Historic Thermal Towns.

The purpose of the meeting was to share the results achieved by the Cultural Route of the Council of Europe which has now brought together 29 historic spa member towns from 11 European countries, and to analyze and share strategies for increasing the visibility and concrete possibilities of development for the Route.

During the meeting the need to promote a more proactive action by the cities that join the network was highlighted. This action should ensure a better participation to European calls of interest aiming at the development of promotional marketing strategies, products and services for international cultural tourism. For this we will have to go towards in the settlement of an International "Project Team" with specific skills and expertise that each member town will be able to provide. This Team should work in harmony and use the simplest share methodology as possible. A renewed management supported by the recent creation of a "task force" that binds together the various cultural Routes of the Council of Europe, which was decided recently at the Baku Forum.

Charles Gardier agreed to examine the best possibilities to involve Hugues- Pierre Lesuisse who has a journalist profile – now responsible of the communication of the Municipality and the Francofolies to be part of this task-force in matters relating to press releases and contacts for EHTTA network.

During the meeting, the following opportunities emerged:

- The organization of a press conference to be held in spring 2015 at the European Parliament in Brussels (at the end of the Source Project ) to ensure our cultural route an increased visibility and direct participation BY MPs representing various European countries, and representatives of National and

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Regional Governments to highlight the way an international itinerary like ours is able to engage a transversal action linking tourism, culture, health and education. Representatives will be invited to become Ambassadors of the Route and to build the foundation for the continuity of Source project into new actions also shared by private partners (especially tour operators and local stakeholders) for the creation of trans-national thematic tourism products. A policy statement from the spa town's mayors will complement the technical Blue Paper expected from the SOURCE project. For the press conference, Charles Gardier proposed to involve Didier Reynders, the Belgian new Deputy Premier, Minister of Foreign Affairs and European policies, with responsibilities for federal cultural institutions.

- The realization of a workshop "Focus on EHTTA" with the participation of the Presidents of the Culture, Tourism, Environment and Health Commissions of the European Parliament, as well as representatives of national and regional governments crossed by the Cultural Route of the Council of Europe in order to support all development policies and projects implemented by EHTTA.
- The involvement of the Council of Europe in Expo2015 through the presence of the cultural Routes of the Council of Europe and especially of EHTTA, symbol of water as a source of life.
- The development of a Guide specifically dedicated to the Route of Historic Thermal Towns in Europe. A first contact will be led by Sivia Costa with the publisher of the Italian Touring Club.
- Enabling policies to support professional and specialized training (post-graduate) for excellence in Tourism fields, especially for the historical Hotel Hospitality's traditions and intrinsically linked to the identity of the Historic Thermal Towns, which are at the origin and development of modern tourism.

For your information, the MEP Silvia Costa has received a complete set of information about the SOURCE project, the interactive novel and web-documentary project, different EHTTA publications as well as the travel diary of Baden-Baden and the Valery LARBAUD guide to Vichy. These documents were particularly appreciated.

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