



GREAT SPA TOWNS *of Europe*

Media Release

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Great Spa Towns of Europe Association celebrates its first General Assembly Františkovy Lázně

Members of the *Great Spa Towns of Europe* have gathered in Františkovy Lázně in the Czech Republic this week to take part in the first ever General Assembly of the Great Spa Towns of Europe Association, led by the new Chairman of the Board, Mr Stefan Szirucsek, Mayor of Baden bei Wien in Austria.

Members of the Association and the Site Managers for each of the 11 towns of this new World Heritage Site will be joined by members of the International Steering Group, a committee made up of representatives of the States Parties from each of the five countries that are in the *Great Spa Towns of Europe*.

In a busy programme, spread over three and a half days, the Mayors will also be interviewing and appointing a new Secretary General to take over the day-to-day running of the organisation, once the current Secretary General, Mr Paul Simons retires.

Františkovy Lázně is one of three towns in the Czech Republic which are part of the *Great Spa Towns of Europe* – sometimes known as the “Bohemian Spa Triangle”.

Mayor of Františkovy Lázně, Jan Kuchař said:

“Hosting the first General Assembly of the new organisation is a great honour for us in Františkovy Lázně, and I am looking forward to welcoming friends and colleagues from the Association and from the Karlovy Vary region and around Europe to our wonderful ‘Great Spa Town’. We have planned an informative programme around the meetings and study tours will take delegates to the peat moorlands as well as to our rather unique Carbon Dioxide Baths.”

Stefan Szirucsek, Chairman of the Great Spa Towns of Europe Association said:

“Since our inscription as a World Heritage Site in 2021, the *Great Spa Towns of Europe* have been developing important structures and systems to take us forward as a World Heritage Site, and to protect our world class cultural heritage. One important aspect of the meetings will be the discussion of the State of Conservation Report, which will be delivered to UNESCO this year. We also have a huge responsibility in appointing a new Secretary General, and I am very pleased that we have attracted an extremely high calibre of candidates from around Europe for this pivotal role.”

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Notes to Editors :

1. The *Great Spa Towns of Europe* is a ‘Transnational Serial’ World Heritage Site, comprising 11 famous historic thermal spa towns and cities in seven countries. The site was inscribed on the World Heritage List at the 44th World Heritage Committee meeting in on 24th July 2021.

2. The *Great Spa Towns of Europe* in Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom represent a unique cultural phenomenon which reached its height in the 18th and 19th centuries, as well as a particular urban type and form which deserves global recognition as a phenomenon which helped to shape Europe.
3. Inscription on the World Heritage List is the highest international recognition for global cultural and natural heritage sites. It is managed by UNESCO (the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) on behalf of the United Nations from its headquarters in Paris.
4. There are over 400 working spa towns across Europe and those selected are the *crème de la crème* of Europe's best. The eleven *Great Spa Towns of Europe* possess architectural ensembles, parks, gardens and landscapes which are maintained to the highest standards. They also maintain a wide range of outstanding cultural activities, welcome an international clientele and provide a continuing living tradition of leisure, health and well-being.
5. All of the *Great Spa Towns of Europe* are easily accessible, often by rail, and offer a wide range of quality accommodation. Cultural activities and heritage attractions compliment the health and leisure treatments traditionally associated with spa towns. Local gastronomy and wine present a distinctive feature of each spa town along with more contemporary well-being programmes. Rural pursuits, walking, hiking and cycling in the surrounding therapeutic spa landscape are available for all visitors.