



GREAT SPA TOWNS *of Europe*

Media Release

15th June 2022

New Chairman for the Great Spa Towns of Europe

The Great Spa Towns of Europe is delighted to announce that the new Chairman of the new Association, formed in Spa in April, is Stefan Szirucsek, the Mayor of Baden bei Wien in Austria. Mr Szirucsek takes over from Mrs Margret Mergen, Lord Mayor of Baden-Baden in Germany, who has led the organisation through its successful inscription on the World Heritage List in July 2021, and who had chaired the Mayors' Steering Group since March 2018.

Speaking from Baden bei Wien, Mr Szirucsek said, "It is a great honour to be appointed as the new chairman of the Board of the Great Spa Towns of Europe Association, and to continue to develop this great initiative. Being inscribed as a World Heritage Site is a huge accolade for Baden bei Wien and the other ten towns that make up the site, and with the formation of the new Association, I feel that we are facing the future even stronger than before."



The Great Spa Towns of Europe is a great example of pan-European co-operation, having been organised in the past by the eleven mayors of the towns across 7 countries. The new Board, which met for the first time last week is comprised of

- Stefan Szirucsek, Mayor of Baden bei Wien, Austria (Chairman)
- Sophie Delettre, Mayor of Spa, Belgium
- Andrea Pfeffer Ferklová, Mayor of Karlovy Vary, Czech Republic
- Dr Dirk Vogel, Mayor of Bad Kissingen, Germany

Together the Board will, with the eleven Site Managers direct the work of the Association and prepare and deliver the Property Management Plan for UNESCO.

Contact information and notes to editors below.

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Notes to Editors :

The Great Spa Towns of Europe is recruiting – they are looking for a new Secretary General – closing date for applications is 1st July 2022. See our website for more information:
<https://www.greatspatownsofeurope.eu/the-great-spa-towns/work-with-us>

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.