

InnovaSPA
Interreg Europe



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund

*“Innovative health solutions
for thermal spa regions”*

Newsletter 5

In this edition of the Newsletter:

- Details of the **Webinar** organized by the Lithuanian Innovation Center
- Details of the **Webinar** organized by the University of Debrecen
- **STUDY: Spa therapy & COVID-19 on the European market**

5th call activities of InnovaSPA project

InnovaSPA partnership used this restricted call (5th call of Interreg Europe programme) to exchange on how the COVID-19 crisis affects the spa industry and related innovative care solutions in order to improve the regional development policies of the partner regions to better face the current challenges.

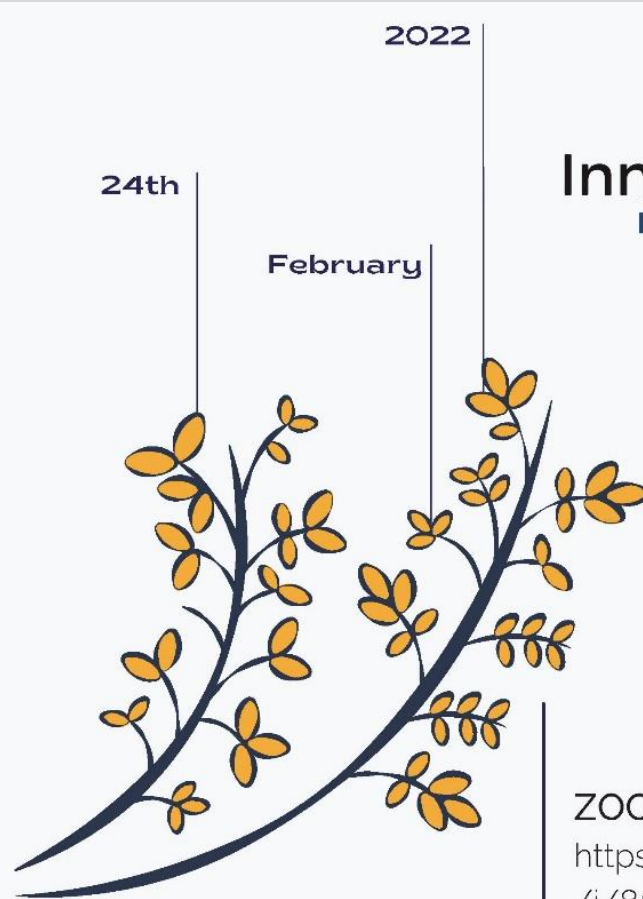
From InnovaSPA's point of view, given the COVID-19 crisis, innovative treatments and care solutions for health prevention and post COVID rehabilitation are relevant topics for the partner regions in this additional call.

The work programme was the following:

- A first webinar with a European dimension (February 2022), coordinated by the Lithuanian innovation centre, on the policy instruments developed by the partner regions for the revival of thermalism during the COVID crisis;
 - » A second webinar with a European dimension (June 2022), coordinated by the University of Debrecen (Hungary), on the good practices of post-COVID care in thermal establishments;
 - » A study visit and expert meeting in Latvia, in July 2022, organised by the University of Latvia on post-COVID rehabilitation in spas;
 - » A study, coordinated by Thermauvergne to enrich the cooperation within the consortium of partners, on the evaluation of the good practices "COVID & Spa therapy" existing on the European market and more precisely the thermal practices post COVID.

WEBINAR n°1
10.00 to 12.00 (CET)
ONLINE

PRO GRA MME



InnovaSPA
Interreg Europe



European Union
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Development Fund

ZOOM LINK:

[https://us02web.zoom.us
/j/8530839294](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8530839294)

In the context of the new **InnovaSPA** additional activities approved under the fifth call of Interreg Europe, the InnovaSPA partnership continued to further exchange experiences and good practices. The exchanges focused on the way COVID-19 crisis have affected and affects thermalism, the measures taken in order to face and recover from COVID-19 crisis and the innovative care solutions aiming to further improve the regional development policies in the partnering regions in order to better face the current challenges.

The first exchange of experiences and good practices session took place online during the webinar organised in February 24, 2022 by the [Lithuanian Innovation Center](#). The exchange focused on the actions the partnering regions and countries have implemented in order to support thermalism during COVID-19 crisis.

Regional stakeholders and project partners presented during the two hours event the political and financial instruments, developed in order support the thermal spas, the thermal industry, tourism and health tourism during COVID-19

During the online webinar the instruments developed in France, Romania, Hungary, Latvia and Lithuania have been presented. The stakeholders in France presented how Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Region, one of the most representative regions for thermalism in France, managed to deal with the crisis and what instruments have been developed at regional level in order to support the spas and tourism industry.

[ESPA](#) representative presented the “VOUCHER system” that some of the ESPA member countries benefited in the COVID-19 period.

The Romanian partners presented the financial instruments that the Romanian Government developed in order to support the tourism companies affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The representative of the Managing Authority of the Economic Development and Innovation Operational Program in Hungary presented the calls launched in order to support thermalism and post-COVID-19 treatments in Hungary. The Latvian representatives presented the policy instruments developed in order to support the SMEs in Latvia and hospitality sector during pandemic.

The last presentation was from Lithuania and focused on the financial support instruments for health tourism in Lithuania.

[For more info please click here](#)

During this webinar we shared good practices from our regions/countries about policy instruments (at the national or regional level) developed in order to support the thermalism during the COVID-19 crisis, as financial instruments in order to support the development of new products/services, subsidies, tax reliefs and other kind of financial and non-financial support. InnovaSPA partners/regions invited the representatives from their stakeholder groups to present the good practices.

The agenda of this webinar was:

Claude-Eugène Bouvier, Secretary General of the National Council of thermal establishments (CNETH)

Political and financial instruments at French level that supported the thermal spas and more widely the thermal spa industry during the COVID-19 crisis

Emilie Peyronnet, Project manager for Health prevention and thermalism, in Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region & **Jean-François Jobert**, Associate Director for Engineering & Marketing, Deputy Director of the Clermont Site of Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes tourism

Regional instruments that supported the thermal spas of Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes and more widely the regional tourism industry during the COVID-19 crisis

Csilla Mezozi, Secretary General of the European Spas Association (ESPA)

"VOUCHER system" develop in order to support thermal spas in some of ESPA member countries

Ovidia Caba, Director of Regional Policies, Programming Unit - Regional Development Agency Centru, Romania

Financing for companies whose activity has been affected by COVID-19 pandemic

Gunta Ušpele, manager of Latvian Health Tourism Cluster

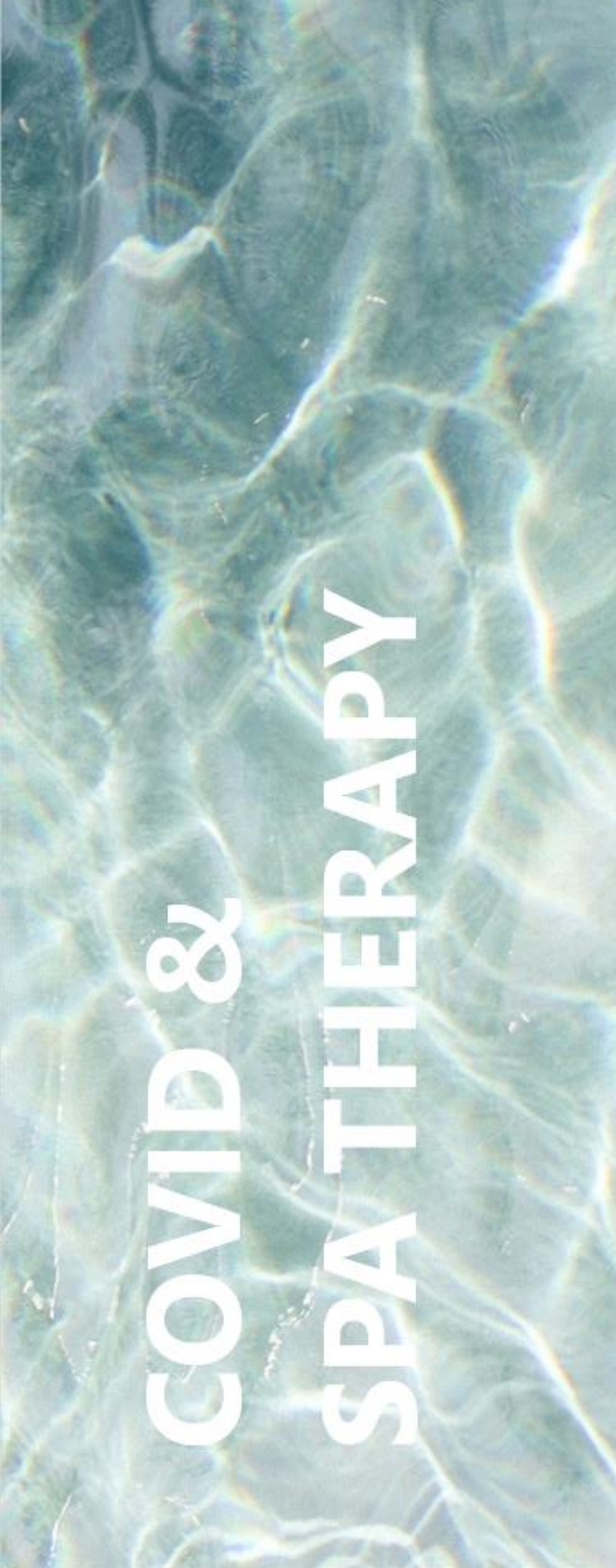
Policy instruments for support of Latvian SME's in Spa and hospitality sector in time of pandemic

Péter Keller, head of the Managing Authority of the Economic Development and Innovation Operational Program, Hungary

Calls connecting to thermalism and post-COVID treatments

Paulius Kamaitis, expert at Ministry of Economy and Innovations & **Justė Rakštytė-Hoimian**, project manager at Lithuanian innovation centre

Financial support instruments for health tourism sector in Lithuania



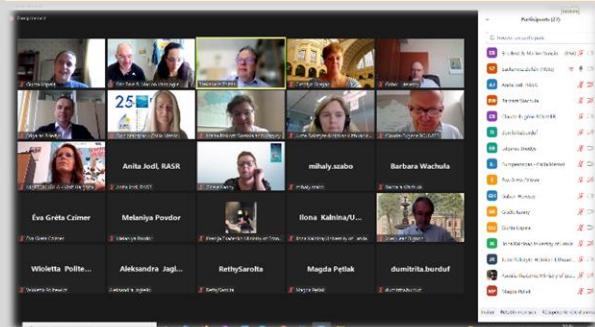
InnovaSPA Webinar

University of
Debrecen, Hungary



The second session of exchange of experience and good practices within the InnovaSPA project took place during the second webinar organized online by the University of Debrecen.

Mr. Zoltán Szekanecz, Professor at the Faculty of Medicine, University of Debrecen, who also opened the webinar with a presentation of Post-COVID and its non-pharmacological treatment, has moderated the event.



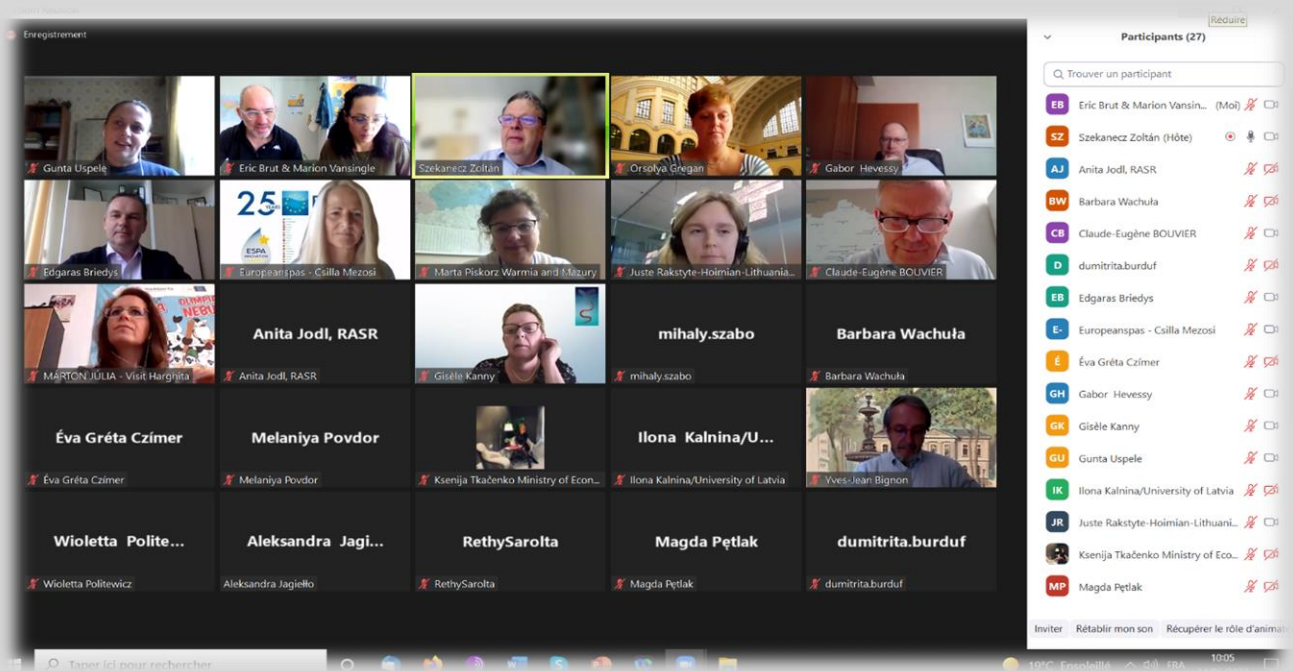
The stakeholders and project partners from France, Hungary and Lithuania shared Good Practices related to COVID and spa therapy.

The Good Practices shared during this online webinar, focused on:

- Importance of post-COVID 19 treatment and the interest of the 5th Interreg Europe call
- Post-COVID 19 treatment in Hungarian SPAs
- Post-COVID 19 rehab programmes in Latvia
- COVID-19 and spa therapy in Lithuania

The representative of European Spas Association, Csilla Mezösi, has presented, during this webinar, the first results of the “SPA THERAPY & COVID-19 ON THE EUROPEAN MARKET - the study and evaluation of good practices in European Medical spa”.

[For more info please click here](#)



The structure of the webinar was as follow:

Introduction:

*Post-COVID and its non-pharmacological treatment, **Zoltán Szekanez**, Professor at the Faculty of Medicine, University of Debrecen, Hungary*

*Importance of post-COVID treatment and the interest of the 5th Interreg Europe call, **Eric Brut**, Managing Director of Thermauvergne & Marion Vansingle, Head of European Cooperation of Thermauvergne*

Presentation of good practices in the member countries of the consortium: France, Hungary, Lithuania, Romania, Latvia, Slovenia, Poland

*Presentation of the first results of the evaluation study of the existing good practices "SPA THERAPY & COVID" on the European market, **Csilla Mezősi**, Secretary General of ESPA*

*Round-table discussion about the state-of-the-art and the future possibilities with the professionals, chaired by **Prof. Zoltán Szekanez**, from the faculty of Medicine of the University of Debrecen (Hungary)*

Post COVID-19 treatments in Hungary, Lithuania & Latvia



The most common treatments in spa's therapy centers in Hungary:

Medicinal water bath, Mud treatment, **Weight bath**, Water jet massage (tangentor), **Carbonated water bath**, Hydrogalvanic treatment, **Therapy (individual, underwater group and dry)**, Therapeutic medical massage, **Electrotherapy treatments** (magnetic sheet - 'BEMER' bed, ultrasound, laser and current stimulated treatments), IBR system (physiotherapy), **Salt therapy**.

- Post Covid-19 treatments are available in Hungary in at least 4 spa facilities
- Traditional methods are applied to treat post Covid-19 symptoms
- Packages are mainly offered for foreigners
- Spas use 'traditional' promotional media (website, social media)
- Depending on the situation the patient and/or the Social Security Fund cover(s) the cost of the treatments
- No scientific evidence exists as yet regarding the effectiveness of the treatments

Medical spa treatment-rehabilitation Programs at "EGLĒS SANATORIJA" include:



- **Physician's consultation**
- **Spirometry twice (examination of the respiratory function upon arrival and before leaving)**
- **5 therapeutic treatments* per day:**
 - Individual physiotherapy
 - Therapeutic bath: Dry Carbonic Acid with the Oxygen Therapy (NEW!)
 - Therapeutic massage: Classic (15 min) or with the apparatus "Wellsystem Medical Plus"
 - Physical agent modalities: Electrical Stimulation, Diaphragm Stimulation, Magnetic Field Therapy, Halotherapy, Ultrasound Therapy or other
 - Respiratory Function Improvement with RespiCare (NEW!) or Binaural Relaxation

**The treatments are indicative and will be prescribed individually by a physician who will assess the health condition and prescribe treatments considering indications and contraindications. The treatments are for adults.*



In **Latvia**, there are several rehabilitation centres who are provide post pandemic rehabilitation programmes, based on natural healing resources:

- 2 types of mineral water drinking courses,
- 2 types of mineral water bathing, and mineral water swimming pool (exercises in swimming pool).
- Jodine – bromine mineral water
- Hydrogen sulphate mineral water
- Climate therapy
- Peloid applications and bathing.

In all rehabilitation centers next step consultation with doctor – rehabilitologist, or/and neurologist or/ and pulmonologist and carefully develop the rehabilitation plan by individual case.

STUDY | SPA THERAPY & COVID-19 ON THE EUROPEAN MARKET

Study and evaluation of good practices in European Medical spa

Carried out by the European Spas Association (ESPA) between February – July 2022

Almost half of all post-COVID programmes (46%) started more than one year before the survey, and the other half (44%) started 6-12 months before the survey. Their duration was typically (86%) 1-2 weeks or up to 3 weeks. Very few programmes were less than a week or longer than 3 weeks. According to information from the interviews, patients who stay longer than 3 weeks in medical spa because their condition is slowly improving, and these patients finance their treatment out of pocket. Providers report that more than 2/3 of patients seek treatment 4-12 weeks after infection, followed by 30% more than 12 months after infection.

The post-COVID treatments are mainly prescribed by general practitioners (GPs) but there is 50% of the patients who have free access (private payers) – commercial patients. Several patients come from primary or secondary care hospitals.

The most effective therapies in post/long-COVID treatment in medical spa facility:

- PROVIDERS' TOP answers: recognised local healing waters (natural mineral, and thermal waters), bioclimatic conditions (sea climate, mountain or pelotherapy), healing peloids, physiotherapy, CO2 gas/mofette, psychotherapy.
- PATIENTS' TOP answers: inhalation – aerosol therapy, physiotherapy, methods of physical medicine, natural healing waters (external or internal use), climotherapy, natural healing peloids (fango-mud-peloids), psychotherapy.
- INTERVIEW PARTNERS' TOP answers: psychotherapy, physical medicine, group activities, exercises (dry or wet activities), oxygenotherapy, inhalations (aerosoltherapy), salt (healing) cave, mofette (just in Romania).

**Final results & the final version of this study will be available on the InnovaSPA website*

<https://www.interregeurope.eu/innovaspa/>

