

# BALNEOLOGY IN EUROPE

The European Spas Association is a network that facilitates contact between key players in the field, policy makers, and prominent figures in science and business, chaired by Thierry Dubois

AUTHOR: HTI News

**T**he European Spas Association – ESPA – places health resorts within the framework of the European healthcare and tourism market and promotes spa medicine as a curative and preventative healthcare option, using natural remedies, rehabilitation techniques and educating the public on a healthy lifestyle. It focuses on the recognition of local natural resources, highlighting the importance of health tourism in general. The Association also promotes quality spa services and education, cooperating with Spa Associations in a number of countries and overseas markets. Thierry Dubois, its chairman since 2016, has provided more insight into the association's mission and vision.

## How has medical and wellness balneology evolved over time?

- For more than 15 years medical and wellness balneology has experienced an annual growth of more than 10%. It, therefore, creates jobs, encourages substantial investment, and provides patients with natural treatments with no side effects. During their stay, the patients also consume goods and services (namely, accommodation, catering, leisure, transport, etc.). This is referred to as indirect impact, to which induced impact (that is, supplier consumption, job creation generated by the companies in question, etc.) must also be added.

## The question all European medical spas face nowadays is how to combine offering high-level luxury services to spa clients with providing medical services to those in search of prevention and rehabilitation?

- Before answering this question directly, let me point out that there are two types of cure stays: those

*"Two years ago, the ESPA's medical committee launched an epidemiological study in Europe in order to study conditions treated by balneology"*

covered by national health insurance funds and those which are not.

The first type consists of medical care, determined by national health regulations, which generally account for total, or at least partial funding (care, medical fees), sometimes with the addition of a special allowance for accommodation and catering. This participation of national health insurance funds is generally limited and often dependent on the patient's own resources. It does not allow the providers to offer luxury service, regardless of how extensive the coverage is. Therefore, this type of service is limited to a certain number of European countries such as Spain, Italy, Germany, France, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland or Romania.

## And what about the stays that are not covered by national health insurance funds?

- A number of European countries have developed an offer of exceptionally high-quality, with extremely comfortable 4 or 5-star hotels and modern spas furnished with state-of-the-art equipment. These "spa resorts" are becoming increasingly common in a number of European countries and attract a wealthy foreign clientele. They can be found, for example, in the Czech Republic, Croatia, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Germany and Italy. These spa resorts offer an exceptional medical service, supervised by specialist doctors, with care provided by paramedical staff (physical therapists, nurses, sports coaches...) and advice given by other specialised staff, such as psychologists or dietitians.

This market is expanding rapidly worldwide and is growing at an annual rate of around 10%.

## Can you tell us something about the specific programmes that are being developed in medical spas?

- France is a good example of a country that has developed specific programme for the treatment of certain conditions, such as the support of women in

# 25 YEARS



# ESPA

EUROPEAN SPAS ASSOCIATION



LITHUANIAN  
RESORTS ASSOCIATION

# The coronavirus pandemic is the historical time for revival and recognition of Balneology and climate health resorts

**BIRSTONAS, 22. October 2021**

**Csilla Mezösi - Secretary General of European Spas Ass. (ESPA)**

# European Medical Spas and Climate health resorts

## New perspectives in health tourism

### NEWS from EU level and activities needed

Resilience and Recovery Plan

Next option Regional development Innovation Plan

Commission: **pathway for tourism for a more resilient, innovative and sustainable ecosystem** - SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

**MEDICAL SPAS** as indispensable area of public health

New opportunity for Lithuanian members

News after ESPA Congress – Economic Impact of Health resorts

25  
YEARS



**ESPA**  
EUROPEAN SPAS ASSOCIATION

# EU4Health: MEPs pave the way for an effective EU health programme

*This cooperation should improve the **preparedness**, prevention and control of the spread of severe human **infections and diseases** across borders, **to develop and make available products for the prevention and treatment of diseases**, to combat other serious cross-border threats to health, and to safeguard **and improve the health and well-being of all people in the Union**. Preparedness is the key to improving resilience to future threats, and Member States, given their responsibility for the provision of healthcare, should carry out stress tests on their healthcare systems **to identify weaknesses** and verify that they are prepared for a possible future health crisis.*

**Debate in the EU Parliament MEPs voted a Joint Motion Resolution on 17. June 2020. We hope that the result will be a clear, strong and united message, to help Tourism now and in the coming years:**

**42.**Points out the importance of [#healthtourism](#), comprising [#medical](#), [#wellness](#) and [#spa](#) tourism; calls on the Commission to promote, when appropriate, European health [#prevention](#), [#balneology](#), sustainable and mountain medical tourism; highlights the need for further investment in improving the [#sustainable](#) tourism infrastructure, and the importance of enhanced visibility for European resorts for spa and wellness tourism; calls on the Commission to make provision for further **science-based funding opportunities**, as medical tourism may help to **reduce health costs** through prevention measures and lower pharmaceutical consumption, and would further **improve sustainability and labour quality**;



European Parliament



FINANCIALLY SUPPORTING THE EU AS THE HEALTHIEST REGION  
IN THE WORLD

**EU4Health Programme worth EUR 9.4 billion for 2021-2027**  
with a health in all policies approach



#EU4Health  
#EUBudget



**Tourism**  
Manifesto

## ***ESPA final proposal for EU Recovery and Resilience Facility***

**Communication campaign ‘Tourism must be part of national recovery and resilience plans’** to support our paper on investment proposals.

### ***Power up:***

Invest in further science-based funding of health tourism, as medical spas and climate health resorts may help to reduce public health costs through prevention and would further improve sustainability and productivity in Europe. A big part of Europe offers natural remedies for an efficient use of nature’s healing resources in health prevention and prophylaxis of chronic diseases.

### ***Renovate***

*Investment in promotion and education of citizens with improved visibility for European citizens and in international markets. To promote health tourism as the unique selling point of Europe, with the know-how heritage and as sustainable destination with the special added value of natural remedies.*

### **Recharge:**

Invest in promotion and make funding available that natural remedies based on mineral water, landscape and climate are available to a great number of citizens and visitors as possible around the world by reducing future expenses in healthcare.

### **Connect:**

Development of multi-sensor device & software to connect public health and health resorts and to follow the health conditions and positive effect of medical spas treatment though smart technology. The goal is to connect and schedules treatments with specialists and physical activities - age actively and live longer

Outdoor wellness is more important

**26.8 %**  
Guests say nature became more important in the pandemic

**43.4 %**  
Guests want to enjoy their wellness holidays mainly outside

Health gains importance

**21.7 %**  
Guests wish for offers to strengthen the immune system

**83.4 %**  
Are interested in measures to mitigate late effects of covid

AQUA PLANET HEALTH COMPANY TOURISM ORIGINAL

Sebastian Kneipp Die 5 Elemente Veranstaltungen Gesundheits-Blog  
Aktionen Presse Mediathek Shop

200 JAHRE

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European hydrotherapy at the heart of post-COVID

Home > Health > European hydrotherapy at the heart of post-COVID

TRANSLATE TO: Privacy

German Spa.Tradition.

#See You Soon

Deutschland Einfach freundlich

Post - Covid Recovery Conference

It's Time to Heal

24 June 2021

10:00 - 12:45

New demand-  
Updates in communication

Corona recovery concept in  
medical spas and climate  
health resorts

Tradition – medical  
competence in FOCUS

ESPA lobby by UNWTO  
Health tourism for the  
campaign 2022

Safe Destination/rural areas

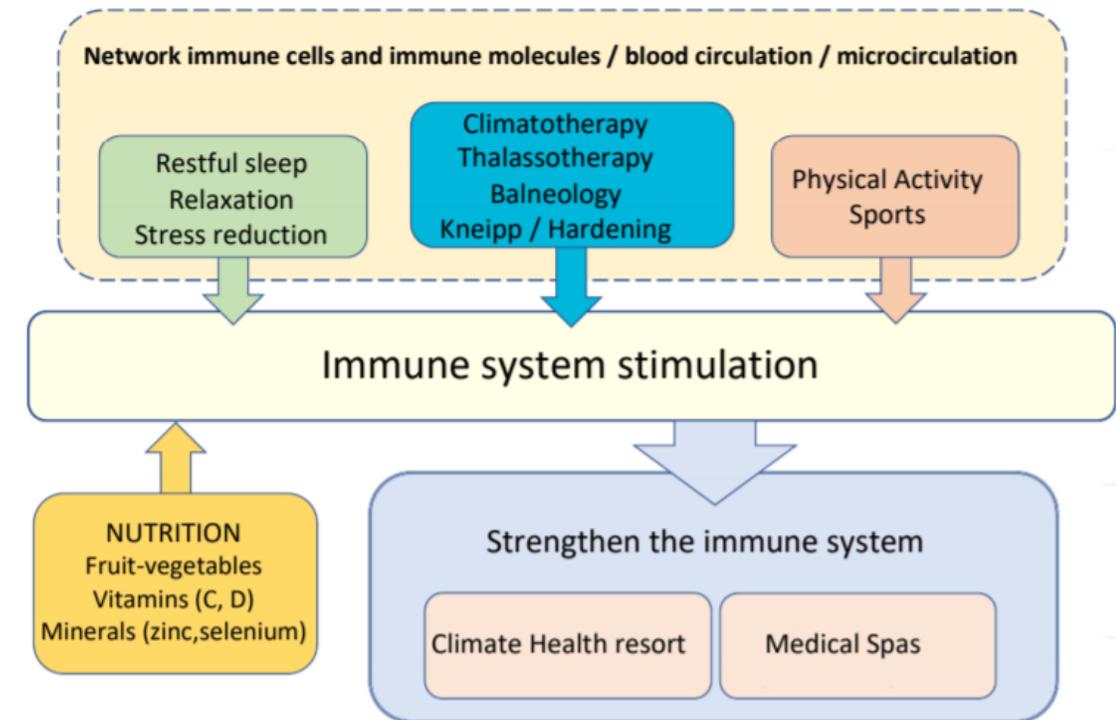
# EU Health Expert Group, regular publications

Some ESPA members have carried out an economic study of medical spa Treatments (analyse of cost factors during and after treatment), healing effects and cost factors for health insurance. This robust method approved by national authorities could be carried out in several EU countries in the same way and with a comparable method.

As EU citizens are demanding sustainability for the environment and nutrition - **it's time to focus on sustainable methods in medical treatment as well!**

As a Non-Profit organization, ESPA ask for financial support and cooperation of the Experts Group to **carry out medical evidence-based studies and to prove the positive economic possibilities and the cost saving effects** of treatment that focuses on natural resources combined with modern medicine.

*Univ.- Doz. Dr. Friedhart Raschke, Norderney Germany*





# EU Health Policy Platform

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## ESPA Medical Tourism travelling for medical reasons a booming segment

On Wed, 10th March 2021 from 13:00 to 16:00 (online: [https://www.itb-berlin.de/media/itb\\_all/itb\\_all/itb\\_berlin\\_all/laender\\_und\\_segmente\\_2/ITB\\_Berlin\\_NOW\\_Medical\\_Event\\_Program\\_2021.pdf](https://www.itb-berlin.de/media/itb_all/itb_all/itb_berlin_all/laender_und_segmente_2/ITB_Berlin_NOW_Medical_Event_Program_2021.pdf))

17:23 by Csilla Mezosi [European Spas Association] in the Agora Network network

The recent development of the Corona pandemic has also forced the health tourism providers for changes. They have adjusted their strategy and the European medical spas and climate health resorts will offer new Corona recovery concepts. The European Spas Association is confident that these efforts will benefit many patients affected by Covid19. At the ITB Convention, specialists from various spa medicine areas will introduce new initiatives of comprehensive rehabilitation programs for the primary medicine. These show good results to reduce the side effects of the corona virus infection.

The Medical Tourism sector, dedicated to health-orientated, medical travel, has become a well-established tourism segment at ITB Berlin in the past years, a unique platform for Medical Tourism which is an important fast-growing market worldwide. The Medical Tourism Pavilion is home for clinics, hospitals, hotels and destinations which provide medical tourism services in this booming market. Buyers and agencies are invited to visit the pavilion, but private visitors also had the chance to receive valuable information and even do check-ups on the ITB weekend. The opening speech of the ITB NOW Berlin congress is addressed by Mr. István Újhelyi, MEP - Vice-Chair of the Transport and Tourism Committee and Member of the Committee responsible for health and environment issues (the ENVI Committee).

## JUST A FEW HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE PROGRAM

### TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY

## A sector in need

Access to adequate financial support will be critical to the immediate recovery of tourism and hospitality SMEs and in ensuring their post-pandemic competitiveness, writes **Elena Kountoura**



The devastating impact of COVID-19 has hit not only the tourism sector, but also the wider hospitality chain. The tourism sector, which has been hit hard by the pandemic, is now facing a recovery that will be long and arduous. The sector's recovery will depend on the support it receives from the EU and its Member States. The recovery will be supported by the Recovery and Resilience Facility, which will provide a targeted approach to recovery efforts. SMEs provide the backbone of European tourism. Often family-operated, they are an integral part of European

opportunity for destinations, work-farers and all businesses that rely on tourism activity to provide. Hotels, restaurants, cafes, shops and their suppliers simply cannot afford a second year of losses.

To this end, the European Parliament has been calling consistently over the last year for two main pieces of legislation. First, a coordinated re-opening of safe travel and tourism within the EU, with common safety and health protocols in place. Second, the appropriate and inclusive financial support for the recovery of the tourism sector, particularly for SMEs in the wider hospitality chain. The tourism industry has very specific needs that require a targeted approach to recovery efforts. SMEs provide the backbone of European tourism. Often family-operated, they are an integral part of European

life and culture and are a driving force in social and economic growth. Yet they are extremely dependent on seasonality, the most vulnerable to crises, and have faced long-standing obstacles in accessing finance and markets.

Despite the support measures announced at EU level and by individual Member States, SMEs in the tourism sector remain in dire straits today. In some countries, the closing financial support is 'too little, too late' for them. This is because they face accumulated debts since last year's financial distress, and with virtually zero annual turnover due to lockdown restrictions, many now lack the necessary liquidity to reopen at this turning point, evenly when tourism is about to restart.

Such is the case in several Member States, including Greece. The majority of small tourism businesses could not meet the preconditions set in State Aid programmes, or were eventually excluded by the banking sector that manages the majority of support schemes. Even when they were eligible, they simply could not afford to acquire new debt from banks.

The Recovery and Resilience Facility, while representing an enormous opportunity for SMEs with funding being made available from mid-summer and onwards, will depend on how Member States have prioritised their needs. Moreover, this is focused on mid- and long-term concerns for the sector's future digitalisation and sustainability and less on the immediate need to keep businesses open and running.

It is a political choice for the EU and Member States to look into the discrepancies caused and to diminish the risk of bankruptcies and job losses, that small businesses still face, and therefore to avoid a domino effect in local economies and communities. I firmly believe that the political will to support the tourism and hospitality sector should be reflected in the national recovery and resilience



"I firmly believe that the political will to support the tourism and hospitality sector should be reflected in the national recovery and resilience plans submitted to the European Commission for approval"

plans submitted to the European Commission for approval. Priority should be to direct funds to SMEs, first of all for their immediate survival and recovery, as well as for their post-pandemic sustainable future, keeping pace with the twin transition to a 'green' and digital economy. To this end, the Parliament's Transport and Tourism Committee's recent report for an EU Strategy for Sustainable Tourism, has called upon Member States to develop national and regional action plans for sustainable tourism, which could be financed by the Recovery and Resilience Facility. Although tourism mostly remains a policy at a national level, the COVID-19 pandemic provides clear proof that crises must be dealt with collectively. This is also the case for climate change, extreme weather



PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES / PHOTODISC

WWW.THEEUROPEANCOMMISSION.EU 7 JUNE 2021 PARLIAMENT MAGAZINE 41



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## ESPA Medical spa treatment after breast cancer is part of the national health program in France

05 September 2021 by Csilla Mezosi [European Spas Association] in the Agora Network network

Women after breast cancer are undergoing spa treatment in certified health resorts and medical spas in France. The aim of the treatments is to improve the quality of life of patients in remission. This treatment is part of a national program and has been validated by the Clermont-Ferrand Cancer Center. The breast cancer cure is now being tested in 17 medical spas in France that are members of the Conseil National des Etablissements Thermaux (C.N.E.Th). This is the first time that thermal establishments (medical spas) have implemented cures that improve the quality of life of patients by a three-week cure. In addition to traditional medical spa treatment, patients benefit from an intensive program: adapted physical activity, nutritional, psychological and aesthetic support.

After the treatments, a survey is carried out on the quality of life after the treatment. The cancer aftercare program sets a new direction in hydrotherapy. More information: [www.francebleu.fr/infos/societe/les-thermes-de-luxeuil-les-bains-experimentent-la-cure-post-cancer-du-sein-1629915047?fbclid=IwAR1SF-](http://www.francebleu.fr/infos/societe/les-thermes-de-luxeuil-les-bains-experimentent-la-cure-post-cancer-du-sein-1629915047?fbclid=IwAR1SF-)

## ESPA Medical spas in Europe were the first to offer corona recovery concepts and the current situation have given top priority to balneology and SPA medicine

15 March 2021 by Csilla Mezosi [European Spas Association] in the Agora Network network

At ITB Now, the world's leading tourism trade fair during Medical Tourism Convention, the European Spas Association gave insights into the adapted strategy in European medical spas and climatic health resorts with the initiatives of corona recovery concepts. ESPA is confident that these efforts will benefit many patients affected by Covid19. Secretary General started the presentation with the key words post-corona rehabilitation, lifestyle changes, prevention and balancing of the immune system, healthy lifestyle in Europe's health resorts and spas.

Claude-Eugène BOUVIER, general delegate of the French association of 110 thermal establishments Cneht, presented the programme addressing post-COVID syndrome. The objectives of the "Thermal treatment of long COVID" is to enable patients to recover as fully as possible within the duration of the cure, i.e. 3 weeks, aiming at a return to the level of independence prior to the illness. This mainly involves respiratory rehabilitation and exercise reconditioning. The programme combines thermal treatments, at a rate of 4 treatments per day for 18 days, and a rehabilitation based on the acquisition of skills that the patient can apply when he/she returns home (respiratory rehabilitation, muscular reinforcement, improvement of balance, exercise training, psychological support). It is a multidisciplinary approach at the heart of which the physiotherapist plays a central role. The contribution of the crisis is unquestionably the widening of the thermal medicine activity fields, and the investment of new domains of competence linked to the care of the post-Covid patients as thermal cures can bring an efficient answer to a public health problem. The main note that the most common symptoms are frequently treated in spas as a daily routine and outside the context of COVID, which legitimises the creation of a specific spa offer. Here we underline that this type of Post Corona programme, besides the benefits it brings to the patients, values the role of the thermal medicine by integrating it more into the public health system.

Dr. Friedhart Raschke from Germany presented essential concepts about the preventive improvement of immune functions, and also speeding up recovery from post covid-19 syndrome (fatigue, headache, muscle-pain, sleep disturbances, depression) by application of maritime SPA, thalasso- and climato-therapy. He presented medical studies about the application of the healing power of the Sea water and maritime climate and he informed the ITB audience in detail about the effects of thalasso treatment and about the integration of nutrition, Balneology, Kneipp, physical activities on the seaside. Finally, very good results were shown with fatigue and burnout patients at the North Sea as the subject of the study in comparison to the standard rehabilitation program. Dr Raschke carried out his research as Medical Director of the Staatsbad Nordmercy, where the largest and most modern Thalasso badehaus in Germany is located.

Mike Wallace, health spa and wellness expert from Budapest presented his view on the expansive opportunities that thermal and thalasso spas can tap into in the post covid era. Lockdowns, financial insecurity and time to think have had their impact on people's mental health and outlook on life. By widening the scope from physical rehabilitation to an all-round health and prevention approach spas can cater for this new demand. He presented good examples of treatment in European medical spas and he listed the benefits of Health Destinations like scenic and beautiful, green, sustainable locations; the medical clinical standards of hygiene which make the main difference to other touristic destinations;

## How to improve health destinations – back to the roots

Offer truly unique positive effect on people’s wellbeing. Health for body and mind! Eating healthily, healthy recreation, finding balance in spectacular surroundings with basic elements like the “local remedies”. Precisely the practice of local remedies, like thermal baths, thalasso, fit the trends, where strengthening the immune system becomes increasingly important.

- Look into the future:**
1. Short distance travel will have advantage - regional health destinations
  2. Safe, hygienic destinations will be preferred, safe environments
  3. New treatments and services to inspire guests to visit
  5. More opportunities for smaller, less crowded health resorts
  6. A resurgence in individual spa and treatment experiences.

Balneology and therapies with natural remedies should be the helper and custodian of our immune system - which and directly save us from total economic ruin.

**FACTS about risk group and solution - positive effects by Balneology:**

**How to solve respiratory problems**

**How to solve cardiovascular diseases**

**How to solve diseases caused by overweight**

**MentalHealth\_MedicalSpas.pdf**

**LifestyleChanges\_BalneoMedicine.pdf**

## JUST A FEW HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE PROGRAM

9 March

- Opening of the virtual Medical Tourism Pavilion & Medical Media Get Together | 12.30pm

10 March

- HTI Roundtable: The future of Medical Tourism | 1.30pm
- New Perspectives in Health Tourism: Corona Recovery concepts in Medical Spas & Climate Health Resorts | 2.35pm



EU4HEALTH - By investing **€5.1 billion**, therefore becoming the largest health programme ever in monetary terms. **EU4Health will provide funding to EU countries, health organisations and NGOs.**

## The EU Health Policy Platform team

ESPA is new Members of the Beating Cancer Stakeholder Contact Group

ESPA - Stakeholders' Targeted Consultation on EU4health related priorities, strategic orientations and needs

**€4 billion** Improve quality of life



### EU4Health Programme 2021-2027

a vision for a healthier European Union  
22 January 2021, 10:00 – 12:00 CET



The opportunities for  
Medical spas

## WHAT IS the NEW ROLE FOR BALNEOTHERAPY IN COVID ERA?

CORONA RECOVERY  
CONCEPTS and  
to improve health  
destination  
back to the roots

### NEW TASK for All of US

- The fact that medical spas are part of the health care system, to the effect that help for so many COVID-19 survivors
- The operation of medical spas were impacted negatively by the lockdown regulations.
- **We must find a way to separate HEALTH TRAVEL from general tourism and promote it against any restrictions, so that it will not in any way be linked to general non-travel hysteria.**
- **The fundamental new idea: IT IS BETTER TO TRAVEL TO A SAFE HEALTH RESORT AND BALNEOLOGY CENTER THAN TO STAY HOME**
- We must clearly advocate the idea that, in these times of general collapse in the public health arena, taking care of one's medical condition in a top-of- the-line European medical spas is actually the only intelligent decision for many patients.

### **MEDICAL SPAS as indispensable area of public health**

Medical spas in Serbia, Germany and Slovenia made a good partnership from the first wave of Covid-19

## NEW OPPORTUNITY for your members

- Germany: The outpatient cure is now a mandatory service of the health insurance Especially in these times an ideal opportunity to get sustainable medical support out of the stressed everyday life!
- “Talk to your family doctor if your symptoms persist and you urgently need to do something for your health”
- “This doesn't just affect people with back problems or other joint pain. Symptoms such as depression, exhaustion or a post-Covid illness should also be taken seriously and addressed with the help of an outpatient preventive service.”



# Berum ábyrgð á eigin heilsu



LA STATION THERMALE | CURE THERMALE | ECOLE THERMALE DU STRESS | Les Thermes de SAUJON | SPA THERMAL PHILAE | NOS HÉBERGEMENTS

LES THERMES	INDICATIONS TRAITÉES	CURES
Présentation	Troubles anxieux	Cure conventionnée
Infrastructures	Dépression	Forfaits thermaux
Equipe thermale	Burn out	Réservez votre cure
Recherches thermales	Insomnie	
→ Actualités	Fibromyalgie	ATELIERS SANTÉ
Témoignages		

#VisitCzechRepublic

# The Czech Republic provides state contribution for a spa holiday in the amount of CZK 4,000 per person

## Corporate Health management

Staatsbad Pyrmont supports more than 50 businesses with different target points

Gesundheit als Erfolgsfaktor  
Betriebliches Gesundheitsmanagement – strukturiert, wirksam, nachhaltig

Staatsbad Pyrmont  
Gesundheit und Lebensfreude

Nds. Staatsbad Pyrmont Betriebsgesellschaft mbH  
Maria Bialas, Health Manager

LAMEDECINETHERMALE efficace pour longtemps

Réouverture | La médecine thermale aujourd'hui | Les cures thermales | En pratique | Le CNETH

## Cures post-cancer

Le cancer du sein est le cancer féminin le plus fréquent en France. Au terme des traitements lourds qu'il requiert, les femmes en rémission, outre la fatigue, éprouvent un fort sentiment de perte de féminité et d'abandon. Les stations thermales sont un relais possible pour accompagner leur convalescence, grâce à des programmes multidisciplinaires de reconstruction physique et psychique. Vous trouverez, ci-après, la liste des établissements thermaux proposant des cures post-cancer.

### Programmes spécialisés

Mini-cure réhabilitation post-cancer du sein

Seton le protocole PACTHe agréé par l'Association Française pour la Recherche Thermale

# New orientation Medical competence

## POST-COVID-SYNDROM as new diagnosis in Slovak Medical Spas

Program was prepared in the end of October 2020

From January 2021 only for selfpayers - very good results

From 26. of March 2021 new diagnosis in the List of Indications for spa therapy  
(act novelisation was needed)

**Stage after COVID - 19 with longlasting serious health impairment**  
**Fully paid by all insurance companies - 3 weeks stay**

5 indications groups according dominant and the most serious symptoms in health status



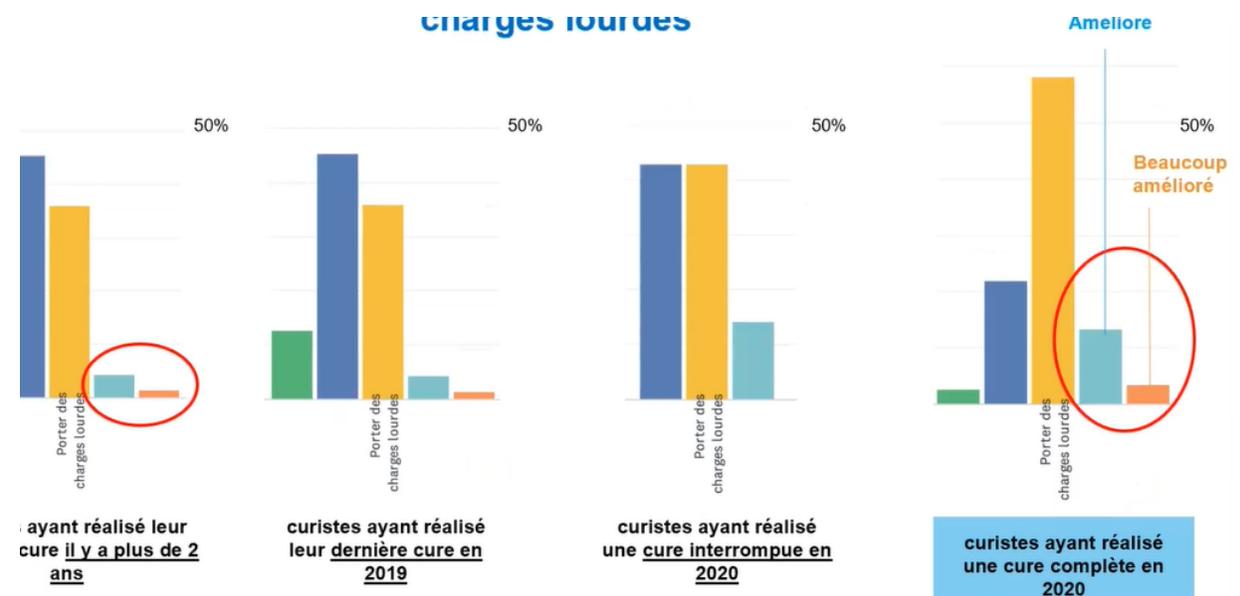
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## Traditional Cure

What Ensana has long been famous for

Available at 21 ensana Hotels / min. 7 nights

Our signature medical package combines our scientifically-proven natural resources with our expert physical therapies for you to experience the best of Ensana's healing philosophy.



La médecine thermale



# Gesundheit aus der Natur

Heilbäder und Kurorte



staying healthy at the craft business

# FIT BLEIBEN IM HANDWERKSBEREIB

Ein Kooperationsprojekt zwischen der Landesvertretung der Handwerkskammern Niedersachsen, dem Niedersächsischen Heilbäderverband und der IKK classic



## HIGHEST STANDARDS

We are committed to providing experiences and services that meet the highest hygiene and health standards in the spa industry.

SHOW the MEDICAL COMPETENCE!!!!  
In all content and visual



- The economic impact of balneology and new perspective after COVID-19
- Training and education in the spa industry
- Medical research – updates in medical spa programs
- Sustainability, safety and cost savings through new technologies
- Online sales and digitalization in health tourism

[www.europeanspas.eu/en/congress](http://www.europeanspas.eu/en/congress)



## Best Practice - Economic Impact of Balneology and Health Resorts

**Cedric Baecher**

NOMADEIS sustainability consulting

