

European Town Twinning Funding Success

The Great Spa Towns of Europe are ready to kick off their
'INTERSPACE' youth project!

The **Great Spa Towns of Europe (GSTE)** is delighted to announce that its application for funding under the European Town Twinning Programme (EC Europa CERV : CERV-2023-CITIZENS-TOWN-TT) has been successful.

The ambitious year-long project, known as INTERSPACE, will involve over 400 young people and citizens from 6 different European countries, speaking 5 different languages and living in 10 different spa towns. The students will visit Baden bei Wien in November 2024 and Mariánské Lázně in April next year at the same time as the GSTE General Assemblies.

"INTERSPACE" stands for "**Inter-spa** town **celebration of European** culture and heritage", and the project aims to foster intercultural dialogue between communities in the GSTE. It will also promote awareness and understanding of common European heritage and values, using the GSTE as the focus and physical location for all the activities. The Great Spa Towns of Europe were inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage property precisely because they all share a common heritage – namely the European spa town phenomenon.

Stefan Szirucsek, Mayor of Baden bei Wien and Chair of the Great Spa Towns of Europe said:

"I am very excited that this project is going to go ahead, and especially that the first event will be in my home town of Baden bei Wien in November. 2024 is the 200th anniversary of the first performance of Beethoven's 9th symphony, and its Ode to Joy, is the EU's anthem. We are so proud that Beethoven wrote much of this famous piece here in Baden, and are looking forward to organising a concert to celebrate this with young people from around the GSTE. We hope that our sense of pride in this and in our shared spa heritage will be communicated to the young people taking part in INTERSPACE. We are looking forward to showing off our town with talks and activities, as well as welcoming the participants in the town twinning to our General Assembly, where they will learn what it takes to run a large World Heritage Site, such as the Great Spa Towns of Europe, and where we will involve them in decision-making."

Chiara Ronchini, Secretary General of the Great Spa Towns of Europe added:

“We can’t wait to embark on this new adventure! This will be the first youth project to involve all the Great Spa Towns, and the first to use co-design and co-creation approaches. Not only will young participants learn about our precious, shared heritage, but they will also tell us why heritage matters to them, and how young people can champion and cherish it. This project will lay the foundation for a Great Spa Towns Youth Forum, a platform for young people to take active part in the management, promotion and conservation of our outstanding spa heritage. We are very grateful to have the opportunity to develop this exciting new project with the help from the European Union, as this funding will allow us to achieve much more than we could have otherwise done.”

Active youth participation and education, cooperation between municipalities, as well as instilling a sense of belonging and custodianship of and through our European cultural heritage, are the main objectives of this project and of the GSTE in general. Through this project, we will achieve a major outcome of promoting inter-cultural dialogue, mutual understanding and friendship as well as awareness of a unique European story. We will do this by reaffirming the key European values of identity, mutual respect, dialogue, and unity in diversity, solidarity and a positive interaction among the cultures of the GSTE.

The project will run until 30th June 2025.

- ENDS -

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In March, pupils from Montecatini Terme visited Baden Bei Wien, where they took part in a World Heritage Puzzle rally. INTERPACE exchange students will take part in similar activities. photo_sap



Check out our new Media Kit [here](#).

Notes to Editors:

1. The [Great Spa Towns of Europe](#) is a serial transnational 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. **Outstanding Universal Value (OUV):** The Great Spa Towns of Europe “bear an exceptional testimony to the European spa phenomenon, which gained its highest expression from around 1700 to the 1930s”. The Great Spa Towns of Europe is inscribed on the World Heritage List with Outstanding Universal Value on the following criteria:
 - Criterion (ii) Influence on Modern European Towns.
 - Criterion (iii) Taking the Cure; human health and mineral springs.

The full statement of Outstanding Universal Value can be found here:

<https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1613/>

3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. Several different types of **responsible tourism** initiatives can be found in all of the Great Spa Towns:
 - Sustainable Tourism Products
 - Eco-Friendly Transport – including new mobility concepts
 - Preventing Mass Tourism
 - Environmentally-friendly public procedures
 - Re-use of thermal waters