



# GREAT SPA TOWNS *of Europe*

## *Media Release*

15<sup>th</sup> February 2023

## Great Spa Towns of Europe – introducing the new Secretary General in Baden-Baden

Chiara Ronchini takes up her position today as the new Secretary General of the Great Spa Towns of Europe. Her first duties are to meet her team at a series of meetings in Baden-Baden this week, where she will be planning the next few months of her exciting new job at the forefront of this Serial Transnational World Heritage Site which was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2021.

Since 2021, the Great Spa Towns of Europe has become an Association and developed a support team to carry out the work of the Association. Some of that support is provided by the Municipality of Baden-Baden, where the administration and finance functions of the Association are based.

Ms Ronchini will use her visit to Baden-Baden, to meet with the finance, administration and communications team. She will also get to know the town as part of her fact-finding and familiarisation tour of all eleven towns which make up the Great Spa Towns of Europe World Heritage Site. She has a very intense schedule, which will include the Association's audit, meeting the Site Managers and World Heritage Team in Baden-Baden, meeting the Lord Mayor, Mr Späth, and of course visiting the key historic and cultural sites in the town.

At the end of February, the new Secretary General will travel to the City of Bath in the United Kingdom, for her first General Assembly, and then after attending ITB in Berlin, she will go to the three Czech towns of Františkovy Lázně, Karlovy Vary, Mariánské Lázně. She will be accompanied on these trips to Baden-Baden and the other ten towns by outgoing Secretary General, Paul Simons, who has been a key player in the development of the project since 2011.

Speaking from Baden bei Wien in Austria, the Chair of the Great Spa Towns of Europe, Mayor Stefan Szirucsek said “I would like to welcome Chiara to her new role this week, and to wish her every success as she takes over from Paul Simons. She joins us at a busy time, with our second General Assembly taking place very soon in Bath, and with important events on the horizon, not only in terms of visibility but also for protecting the important urban features of our Great Spa Towns. I am very pleased that Lord Mayor Späth will be there to welcome Chiara to the first of her official Great Spa Towns of Europe visit. I am looking forward to working with Chiara and developing exciting projects for our World Heritage Site in the months to come.”

Chiara Ronchini said “I am excited to be starting my new role today in these wonderful surroundings in Baden-Baden, and it is great to know that I have the support of Lisa Poetschki and her team and of course Lord Mayor Späth, here in the municipality. It is a great honour to be the new Secretary General of the Great Spa Towns of Europe, and to be carrying on the great work that Paul Simons has started, to take the Association and the World Heritage Site into a new phase of development.”

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## 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 44<sup>th</sup> World Heritage Committee meeting in on 24<sup>th</sup> 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 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> 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.