



## HealingPlaces

Enhancing environmental management capacities for sustainable use of the natural heritage of Central European SPA towns and regions as the driver for local and regional development

# HealingPlaces

## NEWSLETTER #5

### YEAR 3 | November 2021





**Dear Reader,**

In this issue we want to give you an overview of what happened in the life of the project during the fifth semester (1 April 2021 - 30 September 2021) within the three main activities of the project:

1. Construction of a database of threats and pressures on mineral and hot waters deposits in partners regions which will be available on the web-site and elaboration of environmental assessment tools, specifically dedicated to SPAs and easy to use,
2. Pilot actions in each region
3. Development of an integrated strategy for SPA sustainable development

For the HealingPlaces project, the still on-going COVID-19 pandemic pose a great risk, not only because of the immediate danger to health and life, but also because of the impediments to project development and interaction with stakeholders.

Despite the difficulties caused by COVID-19, the project partners, striving to take care of their health and minimize the risk, take action to carry out the planned activities in the most efficient way.

**Stay with us and enjoy reading!**

You are also welcome to our website for more project news and there you can subscribe to our Newsletter as well.

Visit: [www.interreg-central.eu/Content.Node/HealingPlaces.html](http://www.interreg-central.eu/Content.Node/HealingPlaces.html)

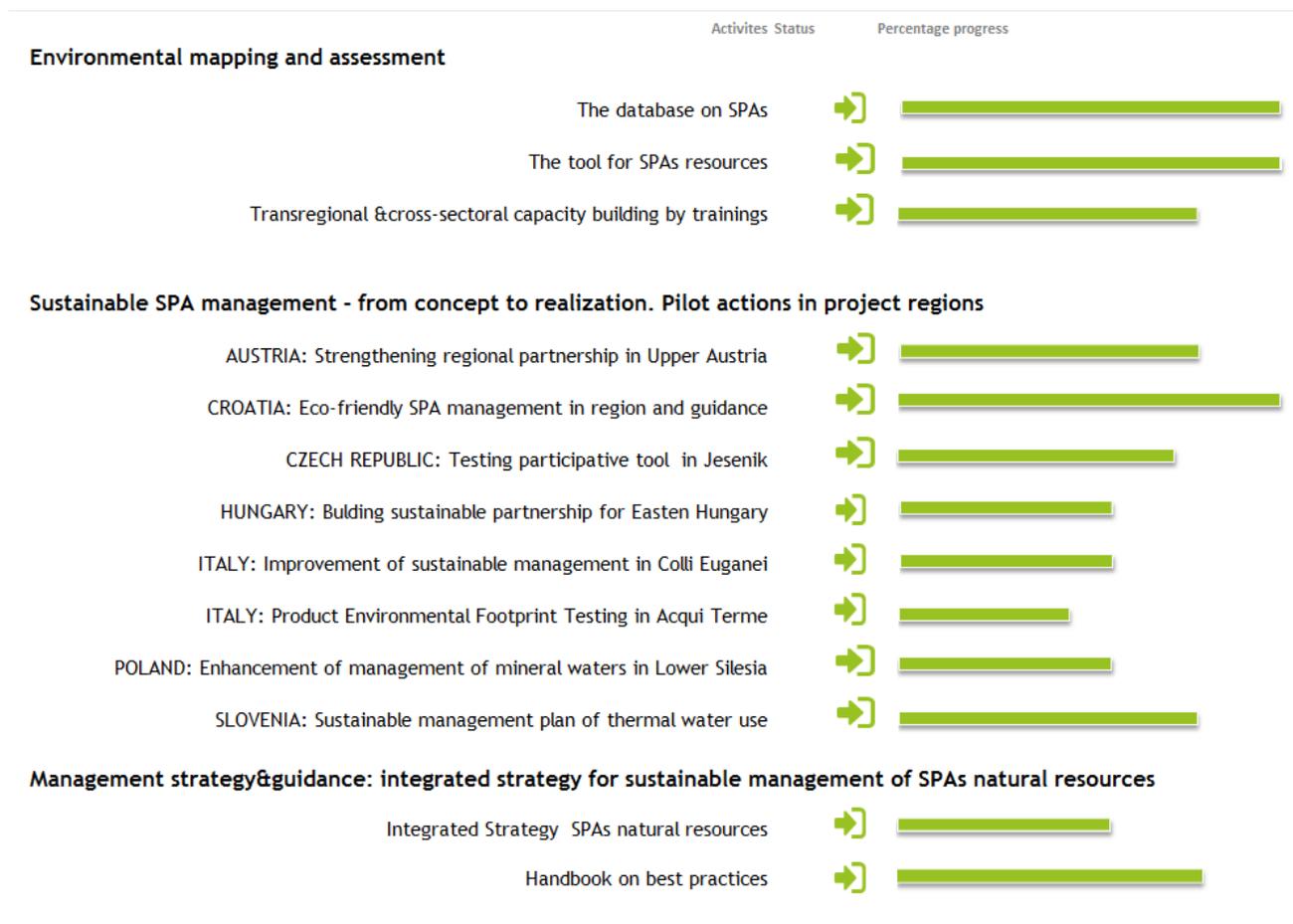
Your sincerely,  
HealingPlaces Team



## PROJECT PROGRESS

The activities of this semester of the project were still affected by COVID-19. Although one of the biggest victim of COVID-19 is the tourism sector, including among others spas and health resorts, those committed to the profession are looking to the future and focus on their future developments. At partners different situation arise with different restrictions. At some SPAs are totally closed at some they are open to only medical/health services. Having this situation in the project's life partners adapted their activities accordingly. Thus, meetings and workshops (regional or international) were held mostly online. Interactive study visit was also held in the virtual space.

Regardless the difficult situation, overall progress continues to be made across the project. Check out the chart below showing activities status.



- Planned in future
- Just starting
- On going
- Finished



Please find under the activities project partner carried out to perform the planned activities in the most efficient way.

## 1. Construction of a common and web-based tools for assessment of threats and pressures on mineral and thermal waters deposits in partners regions:

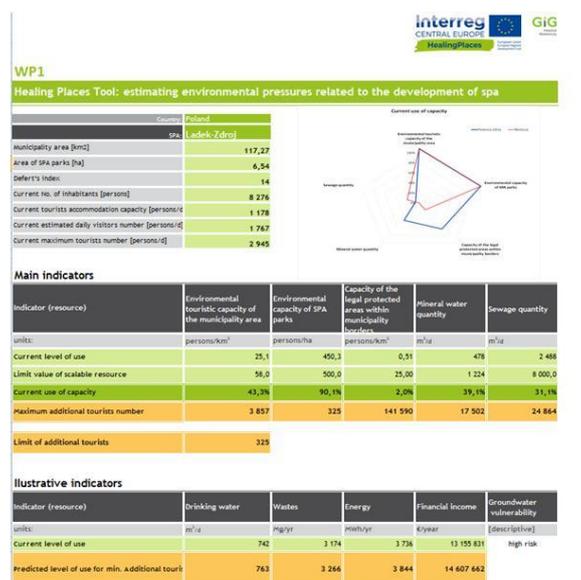
During the last 6 months, the activities within WP1 continued with the full speed. The IRT worked on building the database of most important threats and pressures to natural resources of SPAs in the partner regions. On the 21st of July 2021 the online partners meeting was organized on order to discuss the methodological approach to this issue. The consortium decided that the methodology applied so far requires a significant adjustment due to the incomparability of statistical data so since then we have been busy finding an alternative proposal. Among other things, we developed a questionnaire with the intention to distribute it among stakeholders in partner' regions.

The works on final version of the environmental assessment tool have been continued. The final version of Excel-based tool is available and tested by partners for specific region's needs.

GIG is working to make it available on-line and corresponding with the knowledge database (GIS map) already published in the Internet. In the coming months the further testing of the tool will be continued.

The Upper Adriatic Technology Park of Pordenone substantially progressed with works on elaboration of the app for management for thermal water resources and environmental sustainability.

The prototype of the APP will have 3 main objectives/functionalities:



entering punctual and verifiable consumption/usage data of SPAs and thermal realities;



viewing/consulting information (e.g.: bed numbers, biodiversity/geology/landscape characteristics, etc.)



automatic monitoring of data acquisition levels relating to the maximum or minimum level of the wells based on the data provided by professional institution.

Since the tool will be adapted for iOS/Android it will be easy to use by the technicians and decision makers of thermal water management authority but also will be useful to increase awareness of tourists and locals about the importance of thermal water management. An APP user-manual and a training course for specific users will be provided in near future.



## 2. Progress of Pilot Actions in specific partner regions

This article is intended to provide an insight into the current status quo of the pilot actions in the various countries. Although, through the COVID-19 situation difficulties occurred in implementing the individual pilot actions, the implementation process is back on track. In the different countries the pilot actions are at different levels and sometimes adaptations in the piloting plan were necessary. In the following the on-going pilot actions are described more in detail.

Poland

### *Pilot action 1:*

*Balanced and sustained management of mineral waters in Lower Silesia*

The Polish partners recently conducted a workshop for key regional and local stakeholders for strengthening the capacity in tool practical use with the issue on spatial development and land use and potential threats to the mineral water resources of the health resorts. Overall, the partners intend to provide the region with knowledge to use the underlying tool for land use policy in order to create assessment of legal regulations for the protection of mineral and thermal water resources and recommendations for the improvement of the Polish legal system (not only in pilot areas).



Italy

### *Pilot action 2:*

*Improvement of sustainable management of thermal natural resources in Colli Euganei area*

As mentioned in the last newsletter 11 VR sets has been bought for target of public policy makers and 300 cardboards were purchased to reach students, policy makers, families and tourists etc. Now the virtual experience is developed as a storyboard, that narrates the evolution of thermal water history from romans to nowadays. The main goal is to create awareness on stakeholders of the territory of Abano-Montegrotto by showing all potentials of the area as the largest area for preventive health in Europe.



**Hungary**

**Pilot action 3:**  
*Shifting towards nature-focused development of SPA potential*

Hungarian pilot action was also slowed down by the COVID-19. Group events and bilateral meeting took place during the summer in order to create a methodology for the Sustainable Spa Development Concept. The next step is to further develop and draft the sustainable Spa Development Concept. Furthermore, the joint agreement should be signed by all members (such as municipalities, spa institutions, cluster, tourism marketing agency, water management authorities and universities).



**Austria**

**Pilot action 4:**  
*Strengthening regional partnership in selected SPA regions in Upper Austria*

Within the pilot region 1 (Mühlviertel) an analysis of 8 so-called Heilbründle has been conducted and is already finished. Furthermore, the whole HealingPlaces project and progress has been presented on a regional development fair and further at Tourism Forum in Mühlviertel to foster the exchange with the Upper Austrian stakeholders. Also, within the pilot region 2 (Innviertel) the analysis of thermal water use and best practices on cascade use is finished. In order to promote the results of both pilot action analysis properly a video shoot has been done, which will be presented soon.





## Croatia

### **Pilot action 5:**

*Eco-friendly SPA management in region and guidance for sustainable use of local thermal and mineral groundwater resources*

The Croatian partners organised the 1st regional ECO-SPA conference in the beginning of September. The main issue was to discuss about how to use resources of thermal & mineral water in ecological way and how to do green business in SPA management. Besides that the partners are working on management plan of using mineral-thermal water resources in City of Križevci in sustainable and ecological way. You can watch the video of the conference here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f1PJv5eMNA4>



## Slovenia

### **Pilot action 6:**

*Sustainable management plan of thermal water use*

Also within the pilot action in Slovenia personal and public communication about the whole project and the progress in the pilot action took place and reached various stakeholders. The goal is to integrate environmental impact assessment, land use and environmental management in regional spa areas and cross-border and to prepare based on relevant vertical and horizontal sectors a sustainable management plan of thermal water use in Jugovzhodna Slovenija.





Italy

### *Pilot action 7:*

*Product Environmental Footprint testing in the Thermal District of Acqui Terme*

At the moment the main activities of the Italian partners LAMORO is to test the PEF (Product Environmental Footprint) methodology in order to assess the environmental impact of products and services in the Thermal District of Acqui Terme. Therefore, three products/services/potentialities on which to test of environmental assessment methodology has been identified: geothermal district heating, thermal muds and thermal inhalations / thermal gardens. In the end an action plan for environmental improvements with recommendations is created.

Czech  
Republic

### *Pilot action 8:*

*Testing participative tool for improvement of SPAs water deposits sustainable management in Jeseníky*

The Czech partners invited the regional working group to several events and meetings either online or physically. Based on meetings in focus working groups and during individual consultations from experts from practice, the quantities and factors that enter the process of protection, respective potential threat to natural healing resources - water in spa localities of Jeseníky spa are identified. Furthermore, a regional video is produced to foster the interest of stakeholders.





### 3. Integrated strategy for SPA sustainable development

The main objective of WPT3 is to establish a shared integrated strategy for the sustainable management of natural SPA resources in Central Europe, starting from the tools and information collected during the analysis and mapping phases and from the pilot actions implemented by all project partners.

The first draft of the integrated strategy has been developed and it has been designed as a sort of progress report containing the main evidences emerged so far from the project in terms of: existing pressures and potential threats on the SPAs CE system (derived from the analysis work of WP1), but also from the main consultations with stakeholders within the Regional Working Groups (established in each project's partner country) and from the results so far highlighted by the pilot actions.

This first draft is composed by four parts. The first one is dedicated to the presentation of the project's partner and their territories, as well as the strategic role that SPAs play in each one of these different contexts for local development. The main aim of this part is to highlight the value of the pilot areas as perfect laboratories where some of the key issues targeted by the project, as participatory governance model, interdisciplinary and holistic approach on sustainability, the innovation and their influence on sustainable SPAS development, have been experimented and addressed.

The second part illustrates the state of art of SPAs Natural resources in the area inherent with HealingPlaces Project by reporting the main evidences emerged by the Regional and Transnational analysis carried out within WP1. This part highlights also the existing pressures and potential threats for SPAs Natural Resources (that the Strategy is supposed to be able to mitigate) in order to guarantee a more sustainable development of SPAs resources.

Finally, the last two sections of the document will consist of the skeleton of the Integrated Strategy for the SPAs in Central Europe and some generic policy recommendations will be elaborate to ensure transferability of project methods and results.

At this stage, these final parts (3rd and 4th) have to be considered still as "working in progress". Indeed, a set of guidelines will be individuated thanks to the analysis carried within the WP1 and the main lessons learned from the pilot actions WP2, that then will be shared, discussed and possibly amended by the project's partners during the Workshop for the finalization and approval of the draft of the strategy scheduled.



## EVENTS

**04** of June  
2021

**Croatia (HR)**  
Realized by City of  
Križevci

### **HealingPlaces project at the international expert meeting themed “Thermal water - yesterday, today, tomorrow”**

On 4th June, Varaždinske Toplice, along with its partners, organized an international expert meeting themed “Thermal water - yesterday, today, tomorrow”. It was held in the unique ambience of the Roman basilica at the archaeological site Aquae Iasae in Varaždinske Toplice. The meeting gathered both national and foreign experts in the fields of archaeology, geology and engineering who presented their recent research, especially in time of the COVID-19 pandemic. Also, the Healing Places project was introduced as the project which combines geothermal sources with environmental protection and how it is nowadays important and significant in terms of achieving a sustainable environment.

More information about the event [here](#).

**Slovenia (SI)**  
organised by  
Razvojni center  
Novo mesto

**14-16** of  
June 2021

### **5th partners meeting with site visit in Jugovzhodna Slovenija**

On 14th, 15th and 16th of June 2021 Razvojni center Novo mesto as HealingPlaces project partner organised a site-visit for project consortium and regional stakeholders in region Jugovzhodna Slovenija. The event was also an opportunity to discuss with wider audience about management issues in spa areas in Slovenia and Central Europe. The event organised in hybrid form with participants present on site and online. The event’s programme was focused on presentation of HealingPlaces project activities in pilot region Jugovzhodna Slovenija with emphasis on locations Dolenjske Toplice, Novo mesto, Otočec, Šmarješke Toplice and Klevevž which are characterised by spa resources. The hosts were joined by local representatives to present and discuss challenges in different territories among different target groups, especially the environmental challenges.

More information about the event [here](#).



25<sup>th</sup> of June  
2021

Czech Republic  
(CZ)  
organised by  
Mendel University

## HealingPlaces at the general meeting of the Jeseníky Mountains - Tourism Association

On June 25, 2021, another of the project events within the solution of the HealingPlaces project took place in Rapotín (Jeseníky, CZ). The introductory part consisted of the participation of the project team and the presentation of project activities at the General Meeting of the Jeseníky Mountains - Tourism Association (associated project partner). The General Meeting was attended by almost 100 representatives of partners - members of the tourism association. It was followed by its own project event - a round table "MUNICIPALITIES AND SPAS OF JESENÍKY REGION". Approximately 10 people took part in it, and aspects of common procedures in the development of spa communities with an emphasis on the protection of natural healing resources were discussed and addressed. The meeting took place as part of a pilot action of the project partner - Mendel University.



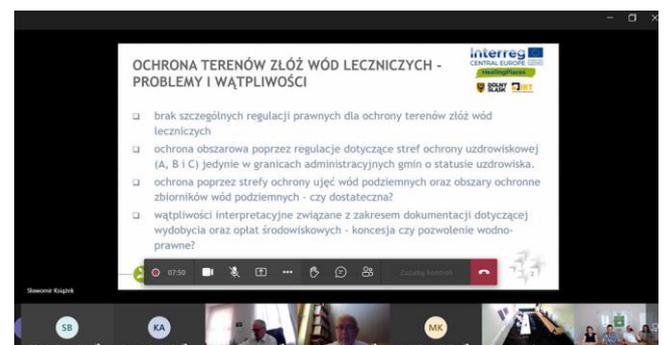
Poland (PL)

organised by  
Instytut Rozwoju  
Terytorialnego and  
Główny Instytut  
Górnictwa

13<sup>th</sup> of July  
2021

## Meeting of Polish Regional Stakeholder Group

It was a possibility for very effective discussion with experts from the Institute of Meteorology and Water Management, Wrocław University of Technology, The Marshal's Office, The Voivodeship Office of Lower Silesia and representatives of communes and health resort entities concerning necessary changes in the scope of protection of mineral and thermal groundwater deposits.



The workshop work also resulted in better adaptation of the tool for integrated assessment of environmental pressures in the field of groundwater vulnerability assessment to the specific conditions of the Lower Silesian Voivodeship.



**26<sup>th</sup>** of  
**August 2021**

**Austria (A)**  
realized by  
Business Upper  
Austriai

## Regional video for pilot action 4

The week of August 26 week was the start for the Upper Austrian partners with the first part of the video shooting in the pilot action Mühlviertel. The pilot action in Mühlviertel is about the analysis of healing places so-called "Bründle" and how to strengthening regional partnerships. In order to better understand the pilot action and the healing effects, various players within the region were interviewed. The second pilot action located in Innviertel was filmed in mid-September. We are looking forward to the final results!



**Croatia (HR)**

organised by City  
of Krizevci

**08<sup>th</sup>** of  
**September 2021**

## 1st Regional ECO-SPA conference

Project partner City of Križevci has hosted 1st Regional ECO-SPA conference on September 8th, 2021. - as an whole-day event, at the conference hall in Terme Sveti Martin. This event brought together representatives from local governments and enterprises in the SPA industry and business, but also a representative from the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Tourism and Sport of the Republic of Croatia. this event aimed at encouraging brainstorming and discussion about the thermal waters, involving scientists, academics, professionals, policy makers and the business world of SPAs in NW Croatia.



More information about the event [here](#).



23-24 of  
September  
2021

**Poland (PL)**  
organised  
Institute of  
Territorial  
Development and  
Central Mining  
Institute

## **Regional workshops focusing on “Spatial development and land use vs. potential threats to the mineral and thermal water resources in the Polish health resorts”**

The two events were held on 23rd and 24th of September in Łądek-Zdrój and Polanica-Zdrój. These two SPA municipalities are Polish pilot actions areas under the HealingPlaces project.

The aim of the workshop was to discuss issues related to the protection of thermal and mineral water in the context of planning and spatial development. The workshop was attended by stakeholders in the tourism and spa market.



More information about the event [here](#).



## FOR MORE INFORMATION - CONTACT US

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**Hajdú-Bihar County  
Government (HU)**

**You can also find us on the following platforms:**

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<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCPAASppx-rvXeVH64UL-g9w>