Education and Culture DG
Lifelong Learning Programme

THERM2

# 3rd Newsletter

## Leonardo da Vinci Transfer of Innovation Project

## “Transfert de la Certification Européenne d’Agent de Soin Thermal (Projet Therm 134098 LLP 2007 BG LMP) THERM_2”

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# Thermalism and Health and Wellness Tourism

The growth of the health and wellness sector has been a reality since the year 2000 and the travel demand has increased every year. Europe is a world leader in Health and Wellness Tourism trips, which represent 39% (202.7 million trips) in a total of 524 million trips per year. In a global market that represents 3 trillion euros, the Health and Wellness Tourism sector represents 405 billion euros and provides 2.4 million jobs across Europe. Portugal ranks in the 9th position – the sector has an economic impact of 8.9 million euros per year, providing 92 400 jobs. These facts are strong evidence that the destinations that foster a tourism offer based on the Health and Wellness create business and job opportunities.

In Portugal, Thermalism is undoubtedly one of the main contributors to the Health and Wellness Tourism. Portuguese thermal spas, mostly located in the interior north and in the center of the country, have been motors for regional development and must be fostered in an integrated, distinctive and innovative way. After a period of demand decline, Portuguese thermal spas have been rediscovered and re-created, with renewed infrastructures and new products, so that they can direct their offer to new audiences and markets. In 2013, there were 41 thermal spas in Portugal, which welcomed 94 000 people; 54% of these customers were seeking wellness tourism experiences.

The fact that the number of customers in the wellness tourism sector has increased has compensated the stagnation that has been observed in the therapeutic sector. However, to meet this demand, it is essential that the service standards are maintained at levels of excellence. The training of human resources in this sector is, thus, of high importance and it is fundamental to adequate the already existing qualifications in the sector of Thermalism to the current needs of the market. The redefinition of qualification standards according to the Competency-Based Approach and the European Qualifications Framework, as well as the introduction of new training units, particularly related to aesthetics and cosmetics, are the way forward. The Therm2 project corresponds to an evolution in this context.

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# Project News

## Training of Trainers – Portugal

On May 1, 2014, the Training of Trainers program for Spa Therapists was held at the Grande Hotel das Caldas da Felgueira. This training was based on the explanation of the ECVET system, the presentation of the Professional Standards, the Competency Standards, the Knowledge Standards and the Certification and Training Units to a group of nine trainers. These trainers were carefully selected, taking into account their professional qualifications, technical skills and professional experience, considering the future monitoring of the training of a group of students and the future implementation of the adjustments made in the qualification standards.

## Training of Trainees – Portugal

The Escola Profissional da Serra da Estrela and the Caldas da Felgueira Termas & Spa have cooperated for 7 years with the apprenticeship period of students attending the Curso Profissional de Técnico de Termalismo (Thermalism Technician Professional Course), with a three-year curricular plan (EQF level IV). As far as the therapeutic area is concerned, Caldas da Felgueira Termas & Spa are specifically targeted for the treatment of respiratory diseases and musculoskeletal disorders; in terms of the spa area, it offers a set of diverse programs and treatments to provide wellness, while meeting the individual needs of the customers: relaxation (Anti-Stress), toning and moisturizing body and face (Toning, Duo Moisturizer, Moisturizing Renewal), including special conditions such as maternity (postpartum), aging (anti-aging) and acne (anti-acne).

Caldas da Felgueira Termas & Spa thus allow students to apply on-the-job the theoretical knowledge acquired during the 1180 theoretical training hours of the course, both in the areas of Thermalism and Health and Wellness. In this context, the Portuguese partners conducted the experimentation of the training offer developed according to the Competency-Based Approach, based on the existing qualification standards of the Spa Therapist – the practice in the workplace of sixteen trainees (with a total duration of 420 hours) was conducted and evaluated according to the matrix proposed by Therm2 project, with very positive results.

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### Training of Trainers – Turkey

The second phase of the Training of Trainers program for Spa Therapists of the Turkish partners was held on July 19 and 20, 2014, at the Süleyman Sah University, with six trainers, complementing the first stage designed for four participants. This training was based on the presentation of the project, the partners of the project and the ECVET system, as well as on the transfer of the developed qualification standards and on the presentation of the modular training offer structured according to the European Qualifications Framework.

### Training of Trainees – Turkey

The experimentation of the training offer developed by the Turkish partners was held in the period between June 30 and July 30, 2014, with a total of 260 training hours, at the thermal center of Tuzla Kaplicalari. The group of trainees included six employees of this center and a group of nine students from the hotel, tourism and health and wellness sectors, with different training schedules tailored to the operational needs of the thermal center. There was a theoretical training plan for all the trainees, aiming at strengthening the skills of the two groups integrating current and future industry professionals.

## Project Working Meetings

The Bulgarian partner South-West University Neofit Rilski went to Turkey on June 23, 2014, for a management support meeting with the Turkish partners. This meeting was aimed to verify the evolutionary status of the Turkish partners' productions, as well as the support to the productions to be accomplished and implemented in the project site, CD-ROM and brochures. The Turkish partners presented both the planning of the second phase of the training of trainers program and the list of people selected for the training.

The fifth transnational meeting was organized by the Portuguese partners – Escola Profissional de Espinho, Instituto Superior de Espinho and Caldas da Felgueira Termas & Spa – and was held at the Grande Hotel das Caldas da Felgueira, from 21st to 24th September 2014.

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In scope of work, there was a guided visit to Caldas da Felgueira, in order to contextualize *in loco* the various facets of the thermal spa and to clarify the professional tasks inherent to the experimentation that was held. This meeting was attended by Dr. Ana Isabel Cunha, representative of the Erasmus+ National Agency, who actively participated and emphasized the importance of Therm2 project in the national context. She concluded her remarks referring to key issues to be considered in the final report of the project, as well as the summary presentation of the Erasmus+ program and the various existing Key-Action.

In this meeting, the final productions of the Portuguese and Turkish partners were assessed, namely the qualification standard adapted according to the Competency-Based Approach. The reports of the training courses which took place in Portugal were also presented. The University of Aquila presented the quality reports no. 1 and no. 2. Caldas da Felgueira Termas & Spa prepared a thermal experience program for all partners so that these could benefit from the thermal treatments according to the procedures defined in the Portuguese productions and partly performed by students in their practical training in the workplace.

On December 10, 2014, the Portuguese partners Escola Profissional de Espinho and Instituto Superior de Espinho held the second scientific and management support mission with the Turkish partners at the University Suleyman Sah. This meeting allowed to analyze the Turkish productions, which had been reviewed after the first support mission. The documentation related to the second phase of the Training of Trainers program held in July and the documentation related to the Training of Trainees program streamlined in June and July, at the facilities of the partner Tuzla Kaplicalari Saglik ve Turizm Tesisleri, were both verified. The partners worked together in the validation of the contents available on the website, brochures, posters and CD-ROM.

This newsletter was prepared by:

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