

*“Innovative health solutions
for thermal spa regions”*

InnovaSPA
Interreg Europe



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund

Newsletter 4

October 2021

In this edition of the Newsletter:

- Details of the Study Visits organised in **Latvia** & **Slovenia**
- **Additional activities** approved under the 5th call of Interreg Europe



Study Visit in **Latvia** | 28th of April 2021



Natural resources in

Latvia: sulphur mineral waters, sea and white sand shore, peat and sapropel mud, sodium chloride brine with elevated bromine concentration, sulphide mineral waters with high hydrogen sulphide content, sodium chloride calcium mineral waters, geothermal waters, climate therapy.

The **seventh Study Visit** of InnovaSPA project was organised on **28th of April 2021** in Latvia, a country with a long and strong tradition in providing medical treatment based on natural and thermal resources. Virtually organised by the **University of Latvia**, the visit highlighted the diversity of the natural resources, the balneological resorts, the rehabilitation centres developed around those resources and the treatments the patients can benefit.



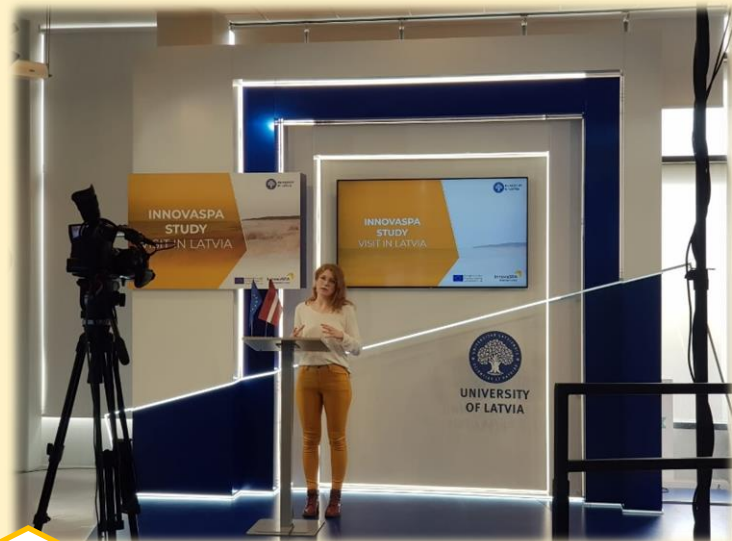
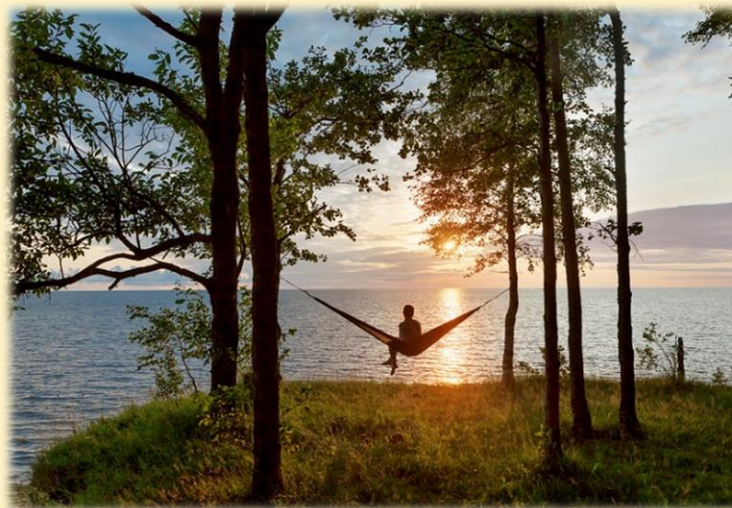
The **objective** of this interregional learning event was to present the potential for health resort development based on curative resources in Latvia.

During the visit, the InnovaSPA partners and stakeholders introduced with the availability of curative resources, resort areas, particular health resorts and medical rehabilitation traditions, as well as promotion of the health tourism. The participants had the chance to learn about good practices and innovative use of natural resources in medical rehabilitation and production of organic cosmetics and other medical products.

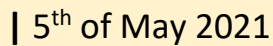
Policies related to the development of medical rehabilitation, health resorts and health tourism were discussed by the representatives of the **Ministry of Economics of the Republic of Latvia** (responsible for tourism policy development), **Ministry of Health of the Republic of Latvia** and the **Latvian Investment and Development Agency** (responsible for tourism policy implementation). The Latvian Health Tourism Cluster and the National Association of Resorts talked about the historical importance of resort areas for the development of health resorts and about development of new medical products based also on natural resources.

Two of largest and most experienced medical rehabilitation centres in Latvia, Resort Rehabilitation Centre **"Jaunkemeri"** and National Rehabilitation Centre **"Vaivari"**, shared their good practices in using natural health resources and innovative technologies.

The **Dean of the Rehabilitation Faculty of Riga Stradins University** presented the study programmes and provided information about the skills and knowledge of professional staff working in health resorts and medical rehabilitation establishments. The representatives of the **Nature Conservation Agency of Latvia** and **Riga Stradins University** presented the scientific evidence of the use of various curative resources in medicine and cooperation with the services providers.



Some of the resources, like mineral waters wells, which Latvia has are capitalised within resorts and rehabilitation centres located in **Liepaja, Jurmala, Baldone, Sigulda, Krimulda, Ligate, Cesis** and **Daugavpils**.



The thermal ecosystem (regional and national level) was presented by the most relevant actors: the representatives of the *Ministry of Economic Development and Technology, Slovenian Tourist Board, National Institute of Public Health, Development Council of the Savinjska region, Institute for Research, Education and Sustainable Development Celje, Public institute for tourism and culture, Association of Municipalities and towns of Slovenia, Turizem Podčetrtek, Bistrica ob Sotli, Kozje (Commercial association for the promotion of tourism; the Mayor of the Municipality of Rogaška Slatina and the representatives of several spas in the region.*



New additional activities

Sep. 2021 – Nov. 2022

New InnovaSPA additional activities approved to be finance under the Interreg Europe call for additional activities (5th call), launched in April 2021. The new application was approved by the Monitoring Committee in 8th of August 2021 with the additional activities starting in September 2021 and closing in November 2022.

The new application will provide the opportunity for the InnovaSPA partnership to further exchange experiences on the way the COVID-19 crisis impacted and impacts thermalism, the measures to be taken in order to face and recover from the COVID-19 crisis and the innovative care solutions aiming to further improve the regional development policies of partner regions to better face the current challenges.

Relevant stakeholders within each region or country will be strongly involved in the exchange of experience at interregional level and planned adaptation of policy instruments.

From InnovaSPA perspective, considering COVID-19 crisis, innovative cures and healthcare solutions for health prevention and rehabilitation post COVID are relevant subjects for the partner regions in the framework of this additional call.

Main activities and outputs: Seven policy instruments addressed (1 per region) all related to structural funds programmes. Basis for exchange of experience: **2 webinars** (one on policy instruments and one on good practices), **1 study** on traditional and innovative thermal offers existing on the European market showing that thermalism can help post COVID patient to recover, **1 onsite study visit** and experts' meetings in Latvia. **Newsletters** for an effective dissemination towards other territories in Europe.

Main expected results:

- several **good practices identified**
- 7 targeted **policy instruments improved** by the implementation of new projects and policy changes
- staff members and involved stakeholders with **increased skills and knowledge** from exchange of experience

Events & activities:

- stakeholder meetings
- webinars
- study
- exchange of experience & practices sessions
- study visit
- other international events

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