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Chaves Manifesto on European Mineral Water Research, Innovation and Valorisation

This manifesto was prepared in the context of the “AQUAFORUM – European Mineral Water Research, Innovation and Valorisation Forum”, 18-19 June 2021, and the establishment of “AQUANET – European Mineral Water Research, Innovation and Valorisation Network”

Vidago Palace Hotel, Chaves, Portugal

<https://aquavalor.pt/aquaforum/>

June 18th, 2021

The undersigned call for a collective action throughout Europe towards a comprehensive research and innovation approach focused on mineral water and covering the entire research and innovation continuum, from fundamental mineral water research to market-driven research and innovation. This requires specific actions to strengthen the mineral water potential in terms of well-distributed and interconnected high-quality research infrastructures, ensuring that science-driven and social improvements benefit European citizens throughout the entire European Union.

We consider that such an European-wide development and implementation of scientific, technical and social knowledge on mineral water has the potential to help achieve the *digital twin* and *green* transitions in the upcoming decades, taking into account that:

- The pandemic we all faced over the last year demonstrated the importance that knowledge has in our ability to ask more accurate and challenging questions and to better understand the risks encountered. Hence, the **promotion and reflection regarding the impacts of thermalism on European national health services is required**;
- The generation of scientific and technical knowledge to effectively support the challenges of the green and digital transitions that are seizing opportunities across all disciplinary areas is urgently needed. The discussion of the **digital transformation focused on the mineral water sector** (i.e., “Thermal Water 4.0”) will benefit from opening this debate to research communities across the entire spectrum of thematic areas;
- Innovation across the current institutional landscape and with diversified stakeholder groups is essential in order to build the necessary economic and environmental resilience, to address the social context and, above all, the inequalities that persist across our societies. This will provide an European-wide application of well-coordinated innovative purposes of **mineral water as a geothermal energy source and a decisive asset for regional sustainability**;

- There is a need to improve the scientific culture and the public understanding of science, which will help guide our common future, create knowledge, share methodologies and deepen **people comprehension concerning the therapeutic use of mineral water**;
- The uniqueness of natural resources depends on the creation and the **development of knowledge and innovation on mineral water to revitalize the sector and European inherent regions**, through innovative forms of transdisciplinarity.

We acknowledge the enormous success at the European level of a few research and higher education institutions focused on innovation in thermalism, including entrepreneurial actions aimed at developing educational and research activities focused on improving personalised SPA treatments. In addition, the potential evolution of thermalism and its emerging convergence with the tourism sector requires effective innovative actions to foster new products and systems based on mineral water and their effective dissemination and valorization in global markets.

We recognise the important role of AQUAFORUM in triggering and expanding European networks on mineral water, as well as to act as a vehicle for the establishment of new partnerships that might lead to new knowledge, new developments and new applications and uses in different markets. These markets will leverage the regional and national European economies, as they are relevant for the society and can play a fundamental role in shaping a better future.

We recognise the complexity, transdisciplinarity and diversification associated with research and innovation activities related to mineral water and consider that an important step towards the increasing relevance of thermalism in Europe is the implementation of a **European network focused on leading mineral water research and innovation**. This European network is oriented towards collaborative and cooperative activities to foster the use of mineral water and of sustainable solutions that boost citizens wellbeing and regional development.

It is under this context that the establishment of the **AQUANET – The European Mineral Water Research, Innovation and Valorisation Network** considers a wide set of entities focused on further developing mineral waters and related products, systems and equipments, as well as their technical and social adoption throughout Europe and the world.

The undersigned agree to work towards the promotion of **AQUANET together with citizen-centered, research-driven thermal water innovation in Europe** and:

- Implement **cutting edge scientific research** in order to be internationally recognized as a network of experts on mineral water that has a powerful and cooperative ability to foster innovation and development of **novel solutions and uses of natural resources**;
- Foster **collaborative and multidisciplinary ventures** engaging thermal SPAs and associations, research and innovation centres, natural mineral water companies, medical hydrology societies, geothermal energy companies and digital transformation consulting agencies in a way to promote the **development of new and innovative European products, systems and equipments, as well as their technical and social adoption throughout Europe and the world**;

- Develop both theoretical and practical research and innovation activities and establish **thematic partnerships** to apply for funding, solve specific issues, and idealize potential future usages of mineral water.
- Foster **regional collaborative platforms among European regions with mineral water resources**, guaranteeing their inclusive and sustainable development based on knowledge-driven, research and innovation activities leading to sustainable job creation and the attraction of skilled human resources, in close association with sustainable economic activities.

The undersigned invite the European Commission to participate in this endeavour and work with the signatories to best support it at the EU level.

This Manifesto is open to be signed by citizens and institutions, at <https://aquavalor.pt/aquaforum/>.

It is launched at Chaves, Portugal, on June 18th, 2021, by:

Manuel Heitor, Minister for Science, Technology and Higher Education, Portugal: _____

Pedro Cantista, Sociedade Portuguesa de Hidrologia Médica e Climatologia/
International Society of Medical Hydrology and Climatology – ISHM, Portugal: _____

Umberto Solimene/Massimo Boaron, World Federation of Hydrotherapy and
Climatotherapy – FEMTEC, Italy: _____

Christian-François Roques, Association Française pour la Recherche Thermale –
AFRETh, France: _____

Marco Vitale, Fondazione per la Ricerca Scientifica Termale – FoRST, Italy: _____

Claude-Eugène Bouvier, Conseil National des Exploitants Thermaux – CNETH,
France: _____

Gerardo Fidalgo, Eurocidade Chaves-Verin, Portugal: _____

Manuel Baltar, European Historic Thermal Towns Association – EHTTA: _____

Ása Brynjólfsdóttir, Blue Lagoon, Iceland: _____

Müfit Zeki Karagülle, Istanbul Medical Faculty, Istanbul University, Istanbul: _____

Tamás Bender, Buda Hospital of the Hospitaller Order of Saint John of God,
Hungary: _____

Universidade de Vigo, Spain: _____

Francisco Maraver, Sociedad Española de Hidrologia Médica – Universidad
Complutense de Madrid, Spain: _____

Gisèle Kanny, Société Française de Médecine Thermale, France: _____

Antonella Fioravanti, Organisation Mondiale du Thermalisme, Italy: _____

Jacek Chojnowski, Polish Association of Balneology and Physical Medicine,
Poland: _____

Olga Surdu, World Federation of Hydrotherapy and Climatotherapy – FEMTEC,
Romania: _____

Thierry Dubois, European SPAs Association, ESPA, : _____

Massimo Caputi, *Federazione Italiana delle Industrie Termali e delle Acque Mineral e delle Benessere Termale – FEDERTERME, Italy*

Frédéric Bauduer, *Institut du Thermalisme de l'Université de Bordeaux, Campus Santé Dax, France:*

Direção Geral de Energia e Geologia de Portugal – DGEG, Portugal – a confirmar

L'Óreal, Portugal – a confirmar

Marisol Espiño, *Asociación de Balnearios de Galicia – BALNEGAL, Spain:*

Laboratoires Dermatologiques d'Uriage, Portugal

Miguel Mirones Díez, *Asociación Nacional de Balnearios – ANBAL, Spain:*

Fernando Queiroga, *AquaValor - Centro de Valorização e Transferência de Tecnologia da Água, Portugal:*

Victor Leal, *Associação de Termas de Portugal, Portugal:*

Joaquim Luís Galego Lopes, *Associação Portuguesa de Geólogos, Portugal*

EDA – Electricidade dos Açores, Portugal – a confirmar



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