

Dear Colleagues,

I am honoured to announce the "The 41<sup>st</sup> ISMH Congress" that will take place in Bucharest, Romania 2016, May, 19<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> at the Parliament Palace.

The congress will carry on the high scientific patronage of Romanian Academy, symbol of national spirituality, forum of recognition and space of fundamental research. The opening ceremony and the welcome cocktail will take place on May 18<sup>th</sup> in Aula Magna of Romanian Academy.

The logo of the congress is: „evergreen balneology - the way ahead”. Together with my colleagues, I choose this idea of logo to highlight the ancientness and modernity of balneology and to come into prominence its' added value within contemporary medicine given by the unity with physical medicine and rehabilitation. "The 41<sup>st</sup> ISMH Congress" will be a con-join congress with Romanian Society of Balneology and with Romanian Society of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine & Balneoclimatology.

There comes a time of reflection upon different aspects of balneology, after we have had congresses in Extreme Orient (Japan, 2014) and in Latin America (Brazil, 2015). We have seen and understood that there's a real world heritage and culture of thermalisme/balneotherapy whose cradle is Europe. Romania was dwelled since the beginning of the world history until today and archaeological remains of Greek, Roman, and Ottoman Empire culture are found all over the country together with archaeological remains our own culture.

So, we come back in our European home, this time in Romania, for the 41<sup>st</sup> congress, with new topics and approaches.

Romania is located in South-eastern and Central Europe, north of the Balkan Peninsula, on the Lower Danube, within and outside the Carpathian Arch, bordering on the Black Sea.

Romania has a huge variety of natural factors used in balneal/thermal stations: climate (including: relief, hydrology, vegetation and the microclimate of salt mine), mineral/thermal waters (for bathing and drinking cure), mud/peat and gases. Geographical disposal/spread out of natural factors (springs, lakes, mud/peat and gases) is an important characteristic of

Romanian balneotherapy meaning that on a determined area one can find diverse types of mineral waters which are indicated for patients suffering of associated illness.

Romanian scientific studies on mineral/thermal waters were started by Ladislau Pop in 1821 with the paperwork "About Mineral Waters from Arpâtaç, Bodoc and Covasna", continued by Ștefan Vasile Episcopescul with "Metallic Waters of Whole Romania" in 1837, and Anastasie Fătu, with "About Using Tap Water and Mineral Water in Moldavia" in 1851. The "father" of Romanian balneology is considered to be Al. Saabner Tuduri with his "Mineral Waters and Climatic Resorts of Romania" in 1906.

Prevention of diseases is a major objective of medicine and a very effective way to keep people healthy. Rehabilitation of health after different pathological conditions is the objective of treatment of all ailments. The increased number of degenerative illness of aged people needs softly, friendly way to treat them. At least, these reasons make balneology an important part of modern medicine of XXI<sup>st</sup> century.

Water is the oldest, cheapest and easiest to find therapeutic remedy known. No other drug has had ever such a long life and has been ever for so long time and in so many hypostasis source of inspiration for artists - musicians, painters, sculptors, writers and poets. Object and subject of religious rituals, known from antiquity for its' soul purifying, spiritual protector and body healing and cleaning roles, water is the most beautiful of the splendours of the world among the wonders of the nature. Water is living being, sky, Universe, Holy Spirit, immortality, threshold between death and life, uterus/womb and grave/shrine, source of Creation. Due to its' specific chemical and physical properties, water is essential for life on Earth. The signature of water molecules is also found in interstellar gas and dust clouds. Bathing into mineral/thermal water is bathing into the Universe itself, and drinking mineral water is feeding the body with/from Universe.

I imagine this meeting more than the „41<sup>st</sup> International Congress of ISMH”, I imagine our meeting like a festival celebrating the preventive and healing power of mineral/thermal waters.

Dear colleagues, I welcome you to join „The 41<sup>st</sup> Congress of ISMH” and enjoy Bucharest, the capital, Romanian Academy, the highest scientific forum and Romanian Parliament Palace, the venue of congress.

Bucharest is largest city, as well as the cultural, industrial, and financial centre of Romania. It is located in the southeast part of the country and lies on the banks of the Dâmbovița River, north of the Danube River. Bucharest was first mentioned in documents in 1459. It became the capital of Romania in 1862. Its architecture is a mix of historical (neo-classical), interbellum (Bauhaus and art deco), communist-era and modern. In the period between the two World Wars, the city's elegant architecture and the sophistication of its elite earned Bucharest the nickname of "Little Paris"

The Romanian Parliament Palace holds three world records: the largest (floor area of 360,000 square meter, 270 m by 240 m, 86 m high, and 92 m underground, 1,100 rooms, 12 stories tall, with four additional underground levels), the most expensive (updated total costs in 2006 are estimated at 4 billion USD) and the heaviest (700,000 metric tons of steel and bronze, plus 1 million m<sup>3</sup> of marble, 3,500 metric tons of crystal glass, and 900,000 m<sup>3</sup> of wood) administrative building in the world for civilian use. Nowadays it houses: the Romania's Chamber of Deputies, the Romanian Senate, the Headquarters of the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI), a massive array of miscellaneous conference halls, salons, etc., used for a wide variety of purposes.

Once again, dear colleagues and friends, I welcome you to the "41<sup>st</sup> ISMH Congress"!

Warmest regards,

Assoc. Prof. Olga Surdu

President of the 41st ISMH Congress"