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# The Great Spas of Europe (Austria, Belgium, Czechia, France, Germany, Italy and United Kingdom) No 1613

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## Official name as proposed by the States Parties

The Great Spas of Europe

## Location

Lower Austria, Austria  
Liège province, Belgium  
Karlovy Vary Region, Czechia  
Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Region, Allier Department, France  
Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany  
Baden-Württemberg, Germany  
Bavaria, Unterfranken Region, Germany  
Tuscany, Pistoia Province, Italy  
Bath and North East Somerset, United Kingdom

## Brief description

The serial nominated property comprises eleven towns, located in seven European countries, which developed around natural mineral water springs and epitomise the grandest and most international resorts that are testimony to the European spa phenomenon that flourished from around 1700 to the 1930s. The components are: *Baden bei Wien* (Austria); *Spa* (Belgium); *Františkovy Lázně* (Czechia); *Karlovy Vary* (Czechia); *Mariánské Lázně* (Czechia); *Vichy* (France); *Bad Ems* (Germany); *Baden-Baden* (Germany); *Bad Kissingen* (Germany); *Montecatini Terme* (Italy); and *City of Bath* (United Kingdom).

These spa towns reflect an urban typology that functions around ensembles of spa buildings such as the 'kurhaus' and 'kursaal', pump rooms, drinking halls ('trinkhalle'), colonnades and galleries designed to harness the natural mineral water resources and to allow their practical use for bathing and drinking; related visitor facilities include assembly rooms, casinos, theatres, hotels and villas, and spa-specific support infrastructure. These ensembles are all integrated into an overall urban context that includes a carefully managed recreational and therapeutic environment in a picturesque landscape.

## Category of property

In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a serial nomination of eleven *sites*.

## 1 Basic data

### Included in the Tentative List

Austria: 11 July 2014  
Belgium: 3 July 2014  
Czechia: 17 June 2014  
France: 7 July 2014  
Germany: 11 August 2014  
Italy: 1 July 2014  
United Kingdom: 25 July 2014

### Background

This is a new nomination. A previous nomination focusing only on the *Spa of Luhačovice – area with a collection of historic spa buildings and spa-related facilities* (Czechia) was submitted in 2007. The property was deferred by the World Heritage Committee in order to allow the State Party to conduct a more thorough study of the nominated property, particularly in the framework of a global thematic study of thermalism. *Luhačovice* is not included in the nominated property nor has such a formal global thematic study been undertaken so far.

### Consultations and Technical Evaluation Mission

Desk reviews have been provided by ICOMOS International Scientific Committees, members and independent experts.

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the property from 10 September to 3 October 2019.

### Additional information received by ICOMOS

A letter was sent to the States Parties on 9 October 2019 requesting further information about the description of the property, the justifications for criteria (ii) and (iii), the comparative analysis – justification for a serial approach and criteria for selection of the component parts of the serial nomination, and information received about development projects.

An Interim Report was provided to the States Parties on 20 December 2019 summarising the issues identified by the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel. Further information was requested in the Interim Report including: terminology to consistently describe all the component parts; timeframe proposed; justification of criterion (iii); comparative analysis; boundaries; protection and management system; and monitoring.

Additional information was received from the States Parties on 31 July 2019, 13 August 2019, 2 September 2019, 11 November 2019 and 25 February 2020, and has been incorporated into the relevant sections of this evaluation report.

### Date of ICOMOS approval of this report

12 March 2020

## 2 Description of the property

Note: The nomination dossier and additional information contain detailed descriptions of this property, its history and its state of conservation. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this report only provides a short summary of the most relevant aspects.

### Description and history

The eleven towns that comprise the serial nominated property represent the grandest and most international spa towns among hundreds of towns that are testimony to the European spa phenomenon between ca. 1700 and 1930. These towns display common elements comprising a distinct spa quarter centred on the springs, from which other zones radiate outwards.

The component parts of this nominated series are the following: Baden bei Wien (Austria); Spa (Belgium); Františkovy Lázně (Czechia); Karlovy Vary (Czechia); Mariánské Lázně (Czechia); Vichy (France); Bad Ems (Germany); Baden-Baden (Germany); Bad Kissingen (Germany); Montecatini Terme (Italy); and City of Bath (United Kingdom).

Depending on mineral content and temperature, some water sources were suitable for drinking, some for bathing, and some for inhalation. Such applications determined the development of specific types of spa buildings popularised across Europe, such as the spring pavilion (for example in *Františkovy Lázně*, *Spa* and *Vichy*), and pump room/drinking hall or 'trinkhalle' (for example in the *City of Bath*, *Baden-Baden*, *Baden bei Wien*, *Bad Kissingen* and *Vichy*).

Gentle exercise was considered part of 'taking the cure', therefore grand colonnades were built, some incorporating spring fountains from which those 'taking the cure' could drink the waters as well as walk (for example the Mlýnská Colonnade in *Karlovy Vary*, the Colonnaded Temple at the Cross spring at *Mariánské Lázně*). Exercise could also include strolling in landscaped gardens and 'kurgartens', such as in *Baden bei Wien* or in *Bad Kissingen*, or gentle riverside walks, for example in *Vichy*, *Baden-Baden* and *Karlovy Vary*. In many of the spa towns, extensive landscaped gardens were laid out.

All component parts also contain substantial buildings and designed spaces for entertainment and recreation. These include the conversation house/assembly room (the earliest examples being the Assembly Rooms in *City of Bath*, the Waux-Hall in *Spa*, and the Kurhaus in *Bad Ems*). The development of casinos also played an essential role in spa life, with particular component parts hosting some of the earliest examples in the world (for example in *Spa*, *Baden-Baden*, *Bad Ems* and *Vichy*). Elaborate theatres, opera houses, concert and dance halls can also be found in all component parts.

To accommodate guests, hotels, lodging houses and villas were built, mostly within or in the proximity of the spa quarter. Some hotels are monumental in scale and architecture and numerous villas in most component parts display a wide range of international architectural styles. Infrastructure such as funiculars (for example at *Bad Ems*, *Karlovy Vary* and *Montecatini Terme*) facilitated access to lookout towers, restaurants and specific features of interest; railways were extended to all component parts, providing the main means of transportation for guests.

Roman remains and structures can be found in several component parts of the nominated property attesting to the long use of their mineral and thermal springs. Attempts to analyse mineral waters date back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century, which consequently led to the development of the first treatises recommending their curative effects. Drinking therapies became firmly established from the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and with them new approaches to medicine emerged. As bathing therapy made way for drinking treatment and its continued accompaniment of physical activity, new types of spa structures and new layouts of spa complexes were required.

In the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, structured and functional spa treatment establishments often became the biggest buildings of a spa town, requiring a reorganisation of the access roads and often the destruction of ancient medieval surrounding buildings, as in the case of *Vichy*, and in the *City of Bath*. The latter also became the first of the component parts to develop large-scale ensembles of lodgings close to the springs with their baths, pump room and assembly rooms, around the same period. The City Corporation promoted the city for pleasure as well as a place for healing. Terraces and squares were designed around parades, promenades, gardens and pleasure grounds. The Royal Crescent, built between 1767 and 1775, became a popular destination for visitors. Bath Street, laid out from 1791 to 1794 and which linked the King's Bath and Pump Room with the Cross Bath and the Hot Bath, provided a street of shops and shelter for pedestrians. There was a close relationship between the city and the surrounding countryside, which became all the more important when doctors and physicians started promoting exercise as a contribution to 'taking the cure' from 1720 onwards.

The thermal springs of *Baden bei Wien* were known from Roman times. From the 15<sup>th</sup> century onwards the town was popular with the Habsburg Emperors and more so from 1793 with Emperor Franz II; it became the leading spa for the Habsburg Emperor's family and attracted many fashionable guests and visitors. The Sauerhof, built in 1820, was the first freestanding great spa hotel in Europe and by 1870 *Baden bei Wien* had emerged as a world-class spa resort.

The international recognition of the city of *Spa* grew when Russian Tsar Peter the Great visited to take the cure in 1717 but its golden years began with the construction of the gambling house La Redoute in 1763. A fire in 1807 led to considerable destruction. An overall plan for the town was designed and, although never implemented, it had some influence on subsequent developments. New baths were created in 1868 together with a casino. The last important urban transformation was the construction at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century of the Casino complex, which is the result of successive modifications of the former Redoute following several fires.

The mineral water at *Františkovy Lázně*, protected at source from 1516, was used for export in the 16<sup>th</sup> century when it was sent to European courts. In 1793, the construction of a new town replaced the earlier cluster of buildings. It was laid out initially along a central axis (founded on Baroque principles of axiality and symmetry) within which the principal functions of the spa were concentrated. From the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the spa town was further expanded, based on the principle of ideal towns, to form a regular rectangular grid within which the principal functions of the spa were concentrated. Parallel streets were densely lined with Classical, Empire and Historicist buildings in architectural unity.

The origin of *Karlovy Vary* dates to around 1350 and by the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, its popularity as a spa expanded beyond the borders of the Bohemian Kingdom, with records of the spa's first prominent visitors dating from this period. The town was destroyed by a fire in 1604 and its reconstruction adhered to the original urban layout. Following another fire in 1759, the city was reconstructed according to late-Baroque principles. By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century the spa quarter spread along the entire length of the valley. Its connection to the European railway network in 1870 brought further growth but the town enjoyed its greatest economic boom especially during the period 1890-1914. This led to the construction of many prominent structures, and it can be considered the largest spa complex in Europe. The municipal theatre built by F. Fellner and H. Helmer between 1884 and 1886 became a model for the construction of other theatres in Europe.

In 1779, when the springs of *Mariánské Lázně* were entrusted to the Czech monastery doctor Johann Josef Nehr, the valley existed in its entirely natural state. The purposeful urban planning of constructing a spa began around 1815, when the Lobkowitz artistic gardener, Wenzel Skalnik, began to construct a spa park. Public green spaces became one of the most important elements forming the entire composition of the town, with the centre comprised of an expansive, natural landscape park. This spatial division of the town was completed in the 1820s-1830s by Josef Esch, forming a multiple hierarchy urban district of the spa centre, reminiscent of a classical Acropolis. The town, however,

experienced its greatest building development in the period from the 1870s until World War I, when the renown of the spa reached its absolute peak. This was based on recommendations of its mineral waters by a range of world-renowned doctors as well as visits of royal family members, of statesmen and of politicians, who took treatments there.

*Vichy* had gained a widespread curative reputation by the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and its popularity with the aristocracy was high until the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In 1785, following the visit of the daughters of King Louis XV, a bathhouse and arcade housing the springs were built. The Parc des Sources, which still exists, was created in 1812 by Napoleon Bonaparte. The dominant urban structure of *Vichy* was born after the visit of the Emperor Napoleon III in 1861. He became the greatest patron of the town, commissioning the construction of a church, parks along the river, building chalets and ensuring a high international reputation. By the 1880s, the town and its spa buildings had become inadequate for the number of visitors, leading to further renovation projects. This included the construction of the covered galleries in the Parc des Sources (1902) and the new opera and theatre designed by Le Coeur and Woog (1898-1903).

The origins of *Bad Ems* as a spa town can be traced back to the Middle Ages. By 1720, the town was among the most popular spas in Germany. But the town's prominence grew further from 1806 onwards, when the State pursued a methodical expansion including re-impounding of the springs, the construction of new baths and bathhouses, the refurbishment of the Kurhaus, as well as the laying out of footpaths and promenades. From around 1820, the new administration of the Duchy of Nassau set town-planning parameters and specifications for the design of new buildings. In the 1820s and 1830s, hotels and boarding houses sprang up in quick succession, and the spa town developed the structure and neighbourhoods it has largely retained ever since.

*Baden-Baden* was founded by the Romans, who used its mineral waters to cure war injuries. The town kept its spa function over the centuries but after the French burnt the city to the ground in 1689, the bathing system almost came to a standstill. The city was partly rebuilt and its resurgence as a spa town was initiated with the building of the Promenadehaus and the laying out of a chestnut-lined avenue outside the city walls west of the Oos River in 1765-66. By the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, increased number of visitors contributed to the southern urban expansion "Lichtentaler Vorstadt", incorporating the church buildings of different religious denominations (including Russian-Orthodox and Anglican), mansions and several hotel buildings, and the continuing development of the south-western villa quarter Beutig-Quettig. As a result of the Franco-German War of 1870-71, and the prohibition of gaming in 1872, the change from an international fashion bath to a spa and health resort took place. In the last third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century,

modern bathing palaces were created near the warm springs, replacing an old town quarter.

*Bad Kissingen* was known as a spa town from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards. A new Kurhaus and a spa garden were built in 1738, making it the oldest spa garden purpose-built to host promenading as part of the drinking cure, as well as leisure activities. The spa town developed methodically from 1814 onwards, contributing to it becoming a fashionable spa town, particularly in the 1830s. The central spa quarter was developed in two phases: first during the Biedermeier period in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century; then in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The foundation of the German Reich and the establishment of a link to the railway system in 1871 gave the spa town another significant boost, leading to further urban expansion and the construction of elegant residential areas. The town however never featured a purpose-built mansion district; rather the entire town was geared for the spa business.

*Montecatini Terme* illustrates the last great flourish of the European spa phenomenon in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The origins of the exploitation of the waters of *Montecatini Terme* goes back to Roman times but the first nucleus of urban settlement in the central area of the spa was sketched out by order of the Grand Duke of Tuscany Pietro Leopoldo, who also ordered the building of the baths from 1773 to 1783. These were built away from an earlier settlement and were built together with a wide avenue of elm trees. This axial promenade related the baths to the surrounding landscape and a focal point in the hill top town of Montecatini Alto. Completed in 1833, the avenue became the established feature of the town, posing challenges on how to incorporate the arrival of the railway twenty years later. In 1897, the construction of a funicular railway facilitated access from *Montecatini Terme* to Montecatini Alto, where spa guests went for leisure and pleasure and where villas for medical use were also located. The beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century marks its conversion from a “town of baths” to a “spa town”, largely under the influence of the architect Giulio Bernardini, following a tour to other spa towns in Switzerland, Bohemia and Germany, which included *Karlovy Vary* and *Baden-Baden*. He designed a series of emblematic buildings such as Tamerici Terme or the Excelsior Thermal Baths but above all the Public Park and many small villas, which were to be a feature of the new spa town.

The golden era of the Great Spas of Europe came to an end with the outbreak of World War I. Many spa towns found themselves unable to continue as before, following such an interruption. However, several prominent spa buildings inspired by pre-war architectural trends were built or adapted even in the 1920s and early 1930s. The impact of the economic depression of the 1930s, the devastation of World War II, and widespread competition from seaside resorts, led to a dramatic decline in spa visitors. After World War II, and with the rise in state welfare, spa treatment became commonly available under state medical systems, and

balneology, hydrotherapy and physiotherapy underwent major developments. Today, with the rise of modern medicine, such types of treatment are no longer covered by most national health services. However, thermal resources still contribute significantly to new approaches to wellness and to recreational and cultural tourism.

### **Boundaries**

As presented in the nomination dossier, the area of the nominated property comprising the eleven components totals 7,006 ha, with buffer zones of 11,327 ha.

Overall, the boundaries of the component parts have been drawn to include: the most important spa structures and buildings used for thermal related activities; the social facilities and buildings for leisure and pleasure; accommodation facilities such as hotels, guesthouses and villas; related spa infrastructure such as railway stations, funiculars, mineral water bottling plants and salt extraction factories; and the surrounding therapeutic and recreational spa landscape.

The combination of these elements varies considerably among the component parts of the nominated property, particularly in terms of the extent of the accommodation and recreational areas. Consequently, there is considerable difference in the size of the component parts.

While the boundaries of the nominated property have been drawn taking into consideration the mapping of the attributes that convey the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property, in some cases the boundaries of the nominated property only slightly differ from existing administrative and protective boundaries. Therefore, in its Interim Report, ICOMOS requested the States Parties to consider if the boundaries could be revised to coincide with existing designations in order to facilitate management. In the supplementary information submitted on 25 February 2020, the State Party of Austria expressed the willingness to improve the boundaries of the component part of *Baden bei Wien*; however, for legal reasons it was not possible to submit the revisions by the deadline of 28 February 2020. ICOMOS recommends that Austria adopt the revised boundaries of the property in the Mitterberg and Badener Berg areas in *Baden bei Wien* and extend the protection zone under the Construction Plan to include the entirety of the property in this component part.

ICOMOS also noted that some of the boundaries of the component parts of *Vichy* and *Montecatini Terme* were drawn along the axis of streets, hence it requested the respective States Parties to consider changing the boundaries to include both sides of the street to reflect the coherence of the street as an urban element. In the case of *Montecatini Terme*, the State Party of Italy confirms that the boundaries of this component that ran down the middle of main streets were moved in order to include both sides of the streets. However, ICOMOS notes that in the new maps submitted with the

supplementary information, the revised boundaries still exclude the buildings and building plots on the other side of the street. Therefore, ICOMOS recommends that the boundaries of the property that are still drawn along streets in *Montecatini Terme* be adjusted to include the building plots on the other side of the street and extend the protection statute to the entirety of the property in this component part.

In the case of *Vichy*, in addition to the issue of some boundaries drawn down the middle of streets, ICOMOS recommended that the boundary of the component be adjusted to include the railway station, since it served as a pivotal point in the extension of the town between the station and the river, and the central axis which connects the railway station with the town centre. The State Party of France submitted new maps, presenting the new boundaries incorporating the suggested urban elements. ICOMOS highly appreciates the efforts and notes that due to this change, the total area of the nominated property and buffer zones will need to be revised accordingly.

The *City of Bath* is already inscribed in its own right on the World Heritage List and its inclusion as part of the serial nominated property is based on the same boundaries. Hence, the area proposed is considerably more extensive than any other component part of the series but is also not closely defined in relation to the mapping of the attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, as in the case of the other components of the nominated property. Hence, ICOMOS' Interim Report requested further information on the rationale used for defining the boundaries of this component. The State Party of the United Kingdom responded that for reasons of effective management it is proposed that the two boundaries of the already inscribed property and the serial component are the same. While ICOMOS acknowledges the rationale for this choice, it underlines the fact that strict implementation of the protective measures to maintain the integrity of both the Roman structures and the attributes related to the Great Spa component should be ensured.

Buffer zones for the components of the nominated series are drawn both for the direct protection of the nominated property and for the specific protection of spring catchments and of important wider settings. A distinction was made on whether parts of the surrounding landscape are included in the nominated property or the buffer zone. Where the areas of spa forests or landscaped parkland contain tangible attributes such as structures and other features, these areas are incorporated in the property; where such forested and park areas represent mainly "protective" areas they form a buffer zone. In addition, the delineation of the buffer zones also takes into consideration existing boundaries of different levels of conservation and protected areas, resulting in some cases in a complex mosaic of protection and management arrangements.

All component parts include buffer zones (some quite extensive) with the exception of the *City of Bath*. However, this component is surrounded by a designated Green Belt which seeks to protect the open landscape around the City while the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty abuts the City to the north, east and south.

The ICOMOS technical evaluation mission noted that the northern boundary of the buffer zone of *Karlovy Vary* does not ensure sufficient protection from future development, particularly from a visual perspective, and suggested it should be extended. Therefore, in its Interim Report, ICOMOS asked about the possibility of doing so. The State Party of Czechia declared it would be prepared to revise the buffer zone; however, no new maps were submitted in this regard, as part of the supplementary information. ICOMOS recommends that the northern part of the buffer zone of *Karlovy Vary* be extended to ensure adequate protection from future development, particularly from a visual perspective.

The buffer zone of *Vichy* was also revised to take into consideration the changes to the boundaries of the nominated property in this component. The new delimitation takes into consideration the perimeter of the national designation as "*Site patrimonial remarquable*" (Outstanding Heritage Site). As a result, in some parts, the newly-defined boundaries now coincide with the boundary of the nominated property of this component. In the supplementary information, the State Party of France noted its willingness to further extend the buffer zone – based on the existence of protected perimeters around existing historic monuments (radius of 500m) – but that this was unfeasible by the deadline of 28 February 2020. ICOMOS recommends that the buffer zone around the train station in *Vichy* be extended, taking into account the protected perimeters of the surroundings of existing historic monuments.

#### **State of conservation**

Several component parts were destroyed by fires over the centuries leading to subsequent reconstructions that contributed to the development of the urban settlements as spa towns. In other cases, parts of the settlements were destroyed to make way for such developments. After World War II, there was a dramatic decline in spa visitors; however, in most component parts, spa functions endured, supported by upgrades and redevelopments in order to keep pace with standards of services and hygiene as well as a growing shift from a medical to a wellness approach in recent decades. Some components, such as *Vichy* and *Bad Ems* saw, nevertheless, a decline in the spa business, leading to neglect and inappropriate maintenance measures and conversions in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In recent years, in some component parts, spa functions have been moved to modern facilities and historic buildings and structures have undergone extensive conservation, sometimes to facilitate new uses. The need for regular updating of spa technology and practices sometimes creates tensions with the desired

conservation of historic spa buildings. Extensive works are planned in the coming years as attested by the number of development projects submitted as part of the nomination dossier.

A large proportion of the spa buildings and buildings related to leisure and pleasure retain their original function, following renovations and adaptations over the years. However, challenges of technical upgrading need to be cautiously addressed.

The adaptive reuse of the spa and leisure buildings has been carried out in some component parts: the Frauenbad baths and Josefsbad baths in *Baden bei Wien* have been converted to an exhibition centre and restaurant, respectively; the Casino in *Vichy* is now the Palais des Congrès; the Vier Türme bathhouse in *Bad Ems* is now used as a theatre and restaurant; and the Former Luitpoldbad in *Bad Kissingen* has been converted into an administrative building with exhibition rooms. Likewise, some hotels and villas have been converted into apartments due to a decline in demand from their heyday.

The poor state of conservation of some buildings, such as the Sommerarena in *Baden bei Wien*, the Waux-Hall (the interior part) in *Spa* and the Untere Saline in *Bad Kissingen*, needs to be mentioned and their conservation should be given priority.

Other buildings are currently vacant and await a new function, as in the case of the Anciens Thermes in *Spa*, Kavkaz Spa House in *Mariánské Lázně*, the upper station of the Malbergbahn funicular railway in *Bad Ems*, and the Neues Schloss in *Baden-Baden*. In *Františkovy Lázně* and *Mariánské Lázně*, the façades of several historic buildings have been painted in unsuitable colours, during the socialist period.

Despite some challenges, based on the information provided by the States Parties and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation of the built fabric is overall satisfactory. Formal gardens, urban parks and promenades are overall in a good state of conservation.

#### **Factors affecting the property**

Based on the information provided by the States Parties and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the main factors affecting the property are development and tourism pressures.

Concerns over the modification and reuse of historic buildings and structures, including changing the building height and other construction dimensions, are noted in several component parts. Health and security requirements and/or legal prescriptions can also lead to functional changes in the traditional use of some spa buildings and infrastructure, or even to their abandonment, with potentially undesirable consequences for the functional integrity and the state of conservation of typical spa elements.

Further densification and real estate pressure on unbuilt-upon plots are also reported in *Spa*, *Bad Ems*, *Baden-Baden*, *Bad Kissingen* and the *City of Bath*. The architectural quality of the design of new structures is also a concern in *Spa* and the *City of Bath*.

A considerable number of development projects were submitted as part of the nomination dossier. Hence, in its first request for additional information in October 2019, ICOMOS informed the States Parties that it could not analyse these projects in detail during the evaluation process nor comment on their potential impacts on the nominated property. The technical evaluation mission had an opportunity to analyse some of the proposed developments, although only at a superficial level, and made some recommendations. ICOMOS notes that the assessment of the different development projects and their potential cumulative impacts would need to be done through an ad-hoc process.

The adverse effects of car parking and traffic density are also a matter of concern in several component parts, namely *Karlovy Vary*, *Vichy*, *Bad Ems* and the *City of Bath*. Wind turbines outside the buffer zone of *Bad Kissingen* also pose challenges to the protection of the broader setting of this component part.

Although there is long-standing experience in visitor management in all component parts, tourism pressures still raise concerns, particularly following a potential increase in visitor numbers if the nominated property were to be inscribed on the World Heritage List. Several component parts do not yet have a consistent methodology for measuring visitor numbers, and other relevant statistical data is only available for nine components. In most cases, available data makes it difficult to distinguish between visitors visiting for therapeutic reasons, which involve longer stays, or wellness and tourism purposes.

Pressures for changing the use of residential buildings, such as homes converted to hotels and guest houses, as well as retail activity to cater for visitors, are also noted by the States Parties. However, the nomination dossier does not include any information on how such pressures are currently being dealt with.

### **3 Proposed justification for inscription**

#### **Proposed justification**

The serial nominated property is considered by the States Parties to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- The nominated property constitutes the only example of urbanisation around a medical practice, creating a new urban typology with a specific form, function and architecture that has no earlier parallel;

- The *Great Spas of Europe* epitomise the grandest and most international resorts of the many hundreds of towns that are testimony to the European spa phenomenon that flourished from around 1700 to the 1930s;
- The series illustrates the geographical spread of the phenomenon, through time, and continued function as the embodiment of a living tradition;
- The nominated property is testimony to the exchange of ideas and values in the development of balneology, medicine, arts and leisure activities. Developments within the nominated property also influenced the early development of sea-bathing, climatic, and gaming resorts throughout the world and played a significant part in the origins of modern tourism.

### Comparative analysis

The comparative analysis is presented in three parts. The first part explains the framework for comparison that was used and consists of a basic thematic study on geo-cultural areas of thermalism. It starts by analysing different bathing traditions throughout the world, such as the Japanese *onsen* and the thermal *hammams* in Turkey and North Africa. It then looks at the diffusion of the European spa phenomenon worldwide, namely in the Americas, New Zealand and North Africa. The influence of the spa phenomenon on the creation of other European health and leisure resorts (e.g. climatic health resorts and seaside resorts) is also examined. This part of the comparative analysis closes with further information on chronological aspects of the development of spa towns and the linkages between those towns during the period of around 1700 to the 1930s and in terms of their geographical distribution in the most dynamic regions of Europe.

The second part of the comparative analysis sets out the rationale for choosing the components by looking at principal spa towns in Europe that are already inscribed on the World Heritage List and on Tentative Lists, as well as sites not yet included in either of these lists. It also sets out the criteria for selection of potential comparisons, mainly by looking at 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century European spa towns with an international character. A detailed review was carried out by an international group of experts, which led to a first selection of around 40 spa towns, subsequently reduced to 16 and finally to the 11 component parts that constitute the series.

Comparisons are then presented based on the following criteria: completeness of attributes in terms of Outstanding Universal Value; international standing and influence; satisfactory degrees of integrity and authenticity; still-living tradition as a spa town; and significant contribution to the Outstanding Universal Value. Comparisons are presented in terms of European sub-regions, for a total of 47 sites, with brief explanations why certain towns were retained as part of the series and others not.

The third part of the comparative analysis presents the conclusions. It is considered that the nominated property fills a gap on the World Heritage List, as spa towns are essentially different from other urban settlements since they were intended, built and managed expressly for health and leisure. The use of mineral waters in other regions is also considered very distinct from that of the European spas.

ICOMOS requested further clarifications in relation to the justification of the serial approach and the selection of the components both in its request of 09 October 2019 and its Interim Report on 20 December 2019. The first request focused on the precise elements and benchmarks that were used to assess the international standing and influence of the spa towns, one of the main criteria for the comparative analysis; the second, on how the ranking against a set of defined criteria, considered quite broad, was made. The States Parties provided detailed information regarding the analysis of historical references as well as the methods used by the international group of experts to select the final series.

Whilst the methodology used could have been based on more detailed criteria, ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis presents a structured approach that clearly explains the rationale and the selection of the eleven component parts. ICOMOS also considers that the comparative analysis outlines the reasons that make the nominated serial property stand out in terms of the geo-cultural area (i.e. Europe) both for how those towns developed around the combination of medical use of the mineral waters with entertainment, social and leisure activities, and as the most international and complete representatives of how that spa phenomenon flourished from ca 1700 to the 1930s.

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ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List.

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### Criteria under which inscription is proposed

The serial property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (ii), (iii), (iv) and (vi).

Criterion (ii): *exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;*

This criterion is justified by the States Parties on the grounds that the nominated property is testimony to the exchange of innovative ideas that influenced the development of modern European towns from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, including pioneering urban planning and architectural prototypes, together with an intimately associated development of medicine, arts and leisure activities.

ICOMOS considers that the nomination dossier and the supplementary information provided present little evidence on what the innovative character of those planning ideas is or how those ideas are tangibly embodied in the attributes of the nominated property. Most of the spa towns evolved organically from earlier settlements, with consequent developments throughout the centuries, but only a few can be said to have been truly planned. Even in the component parts where major planned spa developments took place, it is unclear how they could be considered outstanding from a planning perspective.

On the other hand, ICOMOS considers that the nominated serial property presents an important interchange of human values in terms of developments in medicine, science and balneology, and that this is tangibly expressed in the physical attributes of the nominated property in terms of the spa architecture, town-planning and landscape design. In ICOMOS' view, the claim that some of these physical elements constitute architectural prototypes in their own right cannot be accepted as exceptional; instead, ICOMOS concurs that the spread of influences in terms of architecture between the components parts and between the nominated property and other spa and leisure resorts in Europe and other regions can be said to be outstanding in terms of the influence it had during the period of ca.1700 to the 1930s. Therefore, from this perspective, ICOMOS considers that criterion (ii) is justified.

*Criterion (iii): bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;*

This criterion is justified by the States Parties on the grounds that the nominated property bears exceptional testimony to the conscious care for human health that developed around natural mineral springs. This tradition was born of a remarkable cultural and social phenomenon which flourished from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and which continues to thrive today.

ICOMOS considers that if the cultural traditions expressed by the nominated property were the conscious care for human health that developed around natural mineral springs it cannot be considered that this tradition was born of the phenomenon that flourished during the timeframe considered but that it existed well before that. Moreover, the selection of the component parts would need to be different than the series proposed and could even extend beyond the geo-cultural area of Europe.

ICOMOS therefore considers that the cultural tradition that flourished from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century is the regime of 'taking the cure', including its associated leisure and social activities. In this regard, ICOMOS requested further information regarding the extent to which this tradition can still be considered to be

living and to reflect a medical use as opposed to wellness activities linked to a modern tourism industry. Despite the detailed responses provided by the States Parties, ICOMOS considers that there is a contradiction between the rationale presented for the selection of the component parts associated with the timeframe of ca.1700-1930s and the claim that the regime of 'taking the cure' can still be seen as a continuing living tradition in an exceptional way.

In addition, ICOMOS notes that in several components, the spa functions have been relocated to modern facilities, such as the *City of Bath* where there is no long-term thermal stay anymore. In their response, the States Parties also state that after the 1930s, the pan-European spa phenomenon was different and does not conform to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. In ICOMOS' view the continuous function and use of the spa facilities is important but cannot be said to be an attribute of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property justifies criterion (iii) but as an exceptional testimony to the regime of 'taking the cure' and the European spa phenomenon that flourished from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

*Criterion (iv): be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;*

This criterion is justified by the States Parties on the grounds that the nominated property is an outstanding example of a specific settlement type, a new urban typology centred on natural mineral springs and devoted to health and leisure, that flourished from around 1700 to the 1930s. This developed to include architectural prototypes that are spatially arranged according to the distribution of springs and the regime of 'taking the cure'.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property displays a defined type of mono-functional urban typology but that this typology cannot be considered to be of an outstanding nature, particularly since the size and urban layouts of the different component parts vary significantly. In addition, the timeframe proposed is unequally reflected in the dates of the urban forms in most of the component parts.

ICOMOS also notes that only some buildings like the 'trinkhalle' (drinking halls) and pump rooms, designed for drinking mineral waters, can be recognised as partly defined new types of buildings. For the most part, existing architectural forms were used and adapted and therefore cannot be considered as outstanding examples of a type of building. In terms of bathing, no new and clearly identifiable architectural forms emerged. ICOMOS also notes that the justification of this criterion repeats some of the arguments provided under criterion (ii) and that these arguments are better



captured by criterion (ii). ICOMOS therefore considers that this criterion has not been justified.

Criterion (vi): *be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance;*

This criterion is justified by the States Parties on the grounds that the nominated property comprised politically neutral nodes in an international network of health and leisure, in which these spa towns became vectors of a transnational culture. Elements of the nominated property are associated with, and directly linked to, social, political and cultural ideas that helped to shape European democratic traditions and ideals.

ICOMOS considers that some spa towns were already included as part of the Grand Tour in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and that places and structures entirely devoted to the leisure pursuits of the society were introduced in many other settlements from the 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards. Whilst spa towns became fashionable for the wealthy and influential as well as artists, writers, playwrights, poets and composers, these people also patronised and visited many other places as part of a nascent modern tourism industry.

ICOMOS considers that, individually, several of the component parts were associated with events, artistic works and social and political ideas. However, the nomination does not clearly set out how the same could be said for the series as a whole nor how those events and works could be considered of outstanding universal significance when compared with similar dynamics and the internationalism of leisure resorts in Europe in the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Therefore, ICOMOS considers that criterion (vi) has not been justified.

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ICOMOS considers that the nominated serial property justifies criteria (ii) and (iii) but that criteria (iv) and (vi) have not been justified.

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## **Integrity and authenticity**

### **Integrity**

The integrity of the nominated property is based on the evidence related to the European spa phenomenon expressed through the mono-functional urban typology of the spa town and distinctive characteristics of a 'great' European spa. As a serial nomination, integrity is also a measure of if the combination of component parts contains all the attributes necessary and how each component part contributes to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the property as a whole in a substantial and discernible way. Furthermore, it is necessary to consider the extent to which the nominated property is affected by adverse effects of development and neglect as well as how other pressures are managed.

ICOMOS considers that the concept of 'spa town' is at the centre of the definition of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property. Therefore, in its requests for supplementary information, ICOMOS noted that a number of different notions were used interchangeably throughout the nomination dossier, such as 'spa town', 'historic urban landscape', or 'urban ensemble of the spa town'. Therefore, ICOMOS asked the States Parties to clarify how the term 'spa town' could be used to consistently describe all the component parts, particularly since considerable differences exist between the component parts in terms of size and urban layout. The States Parties replied that the boundaries of all component parts correspond to the boundaries of the spa towns within the timeframe of ca. 1700-1930s but also that this is the term used for places known for their spa function, particularly amongst the local communities. ICOMOS considers the arguments presented are valid and that consequently this term should be reflected in the English title of the nominated property. At present, the English title proposed only refers to 'spas' which ICOMOS considers could be applied to a wider variety of places than those reflected in the nominated property. Therefore, ICOMOS considers that the English title of the property could be changed to 'The Great Spa Towns of Europe'. This change of the title in English does not imply changes in the French name proposed in the nomination dossier '*Les grandes villes d'eaux d'Europe*', which already take the urban dimension into consideration.

Assessing the integrity of the nominated property as an exceptional testimony to the European spa phenomenon, which gained its highest expression from around 1700 to the 1930s, is also a matter of gauging the geographical spread of the phenomenon, through time. ICOMOS notes that from a geographical perspective, the use of mineral waters within the geo-cultural area of Europe is much wider spread than what is reflected in the nominated property. Likewise, the use of mineral waters has its roots in antiquity, namely in some of the component parts such as *City of Bath* and *Baden-Baden* that have springs known to ancient tribes and the Romans. However, as the focus of the nomination is on the spa phenomenon that flourished within the timeframe defined and how these towns developed around a combination of health, leisure and social activities, ICOMOS considers that this phenomenon is indeed best represented by the series presented. The component parts represent the most international and influential places in terms of the flow of ideas of the medical use of mineral waters, balneology and related spa architecture, planning and landscape design. As a whole, the series demonstrates all stages of the development of the spa phenomenon, starting with the most influential spa towns in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (e.g. the *City of Bath* and *Spa*), to the development of model spa towns such as *Vichy* and *Františkovy Lázně*, to towns that are testimony to the last stages of the phenomenon in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, such as *Montecatini Terme*.

In terms of wholeness and intactness, all the component parts maintain the urban layout that emerged during the period concerned to a remarkable degree.

Individually, based on the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, none of the component parts is currently threatened by deterioration or neglect. However, as mentioned before, it is not possible for ICOMOS to assess the potential impacts, as well as their potential cumulative effects, of the different development projects submitted as part of the nomination dossier, during the evaluation process. Some of these developments were briefly discussed during the technical mission. It is considered that the reuse as a multi-functional complex of the Ancien Thermes in *Spa*, which includes new constructions, will affect the historic spa nucleus; however, given the challenging situation, it is seen as a narrowly accepted intervention. In *Bad Ems*, the intention to erect three apartment blocks in the south area near the railway station should be critically assessed in terms of the volumes, architecture, forms and materials. In *Bad Kissingen*, the extension and reuse project for the Fürstenhof and neighbouring Villa Gordon, which will involve the construction of a huge undulating tower of steel and glass, could have considerable visual impact. In the *City of Bath*, the execution of the Rugby Stadium plans in their current size and form is undesirable as they will clearly have a great impact on the integrity of the historic townscape.

From a functional integrity point of view, ICOMOS further notes that in several component parts, spa functions have largely been moved to modern facilities, that many historic spa buildings have already been adapted to new uses, and that more adaptations are planned. Some buildings remain vacant and await new functions.

#### Authenticity

The authenticity of the nominated property is based on whether the proposed Outstanding Universal Value is truthfully and credibly expressed, namely through form and design, materials and substance, use and function, traditions, and location and setting.

ICOMOS considers that in terms of form and design, the urban layouts of the spa towns as well as their therapeutic and recreational landscapes are to a high degree intact. However, in some component parts, some 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century constructions are of mediocre architectural quality and not well integrated with the historic built fabric. The adaptive reuse of some historic buildings has led to changes to their interiors which cannot be seen as fully authentic in terms of design, materials and substance. Some of the planned development projects also raise issues in this regard.

In terms of use and function, current health and security regulations contribute to the loss of the original function of some of the historic buildings. Mineral water sources continue to be used for spa functions and in some component parts, visitors can still freely serve themselves, drinking from continuously available sources.

The setting of the spa towns in terms of open spaces and surrounding recreational and therapeutic landscape has been retained.

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In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of authenticity and integrity have been met for the series as a whole and for the individual components, but that the high number of development projects received during the evaluation process raise some concerns about potential adverse effects on the conditions of integrity.

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#### Evaluation of the proposed justification for inscription

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis demonstrates that there is scope for the inscription of the nominated serial property on the World Heritage List, that criteria (ii) and (iii) have been justified, and that the conditions of authenticity and integrity for the selected components and the series as a whole have been met. However, the high number of development projects received during the evaluation process raise some concerns about potential adverse effects on the conditions of integrity.

#### Attributes

The attributes of the nominated property that convey the interchange of ideas related to the medical use of mineral waters, balneology and spa architecture, and the testimony to the spa phenomenon that flourished between ca.1700 and the 1930s, include the urban layouts of the spa towns and the buildings associated with the spa, leisure and social functions, as well as the related infrastructures.

Although the structure and spatial layout of each component part vary, they share common elements that define them as spa towns: namely their mono-functional typology, a distinct spa quarter centred on the springs from which other zones with specific features radiate outwards, and their surrounding therapeutic and recreational spa landscape. The location and topographical setting of each spa town influence its form and character.

The springs (mineral water sources/outlets), the qualities of the mineral waters (capacity/flow rate, pressure, purity, chemical composition, temperature, taste, and clarity) and the use of the waters both externally (e.g by bathing) and internally (e.g by drinking) for treating specific conditions are also important attributes. So is the duration of the treatments and the regimes associated with them.

Ensembles of spa buildings include the 'kurhaus' and 'kursaal', pump rooms, drinking halls ('trinkhalle'), colonnades and galleries designed to harness the natural mineral water resources and to allow their practical use for bathing and drinking. The attributes related to this spa architecture include both the physical structures as well as their traditional use and function.

The social facilities and buildings for leisure and pleasure include conversation, assembly and reading rooms as well as casinos, theatres, opera houses, concert halls and music pavilions associated with the timeframe defined. Similarly, the accommodation facilities dating from the same period, namely hotels, lodging houses and villas, help to convey the Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated serial property.

Attributes also include a range of supporting infrastructures that contributed to the spa phenomenon, such as railway stations, funiculars, spring water bottling facilities, salt extraction and production facilities, and spring water pumping stations and supply pipelines.

In terms of the therapeutic and recreational landscape, attributes include recreational parkland and pathways, designed woodland walks, rides and drives, hillside trails, restaurants, cafés and bars in the spa landscape, sports facilities (e.g. golf courses, tennis courts, horse racecourses) as well watchtowers, viewpoints and vistas.

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ICOMOS considers that the attributes are well identified and will be a solid basis for the management of the serial property.

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## 4 Conservation measures and monitoring

### Conservation measures

All component parts have well-established measures for the protection of springs and water sources. Regarding the buildings with spa functions, upgrades and redevelopments in order to keep pace with standards of services, hygiene and new spa technology can create tensions with their conservation as historic buildings. Challenges of adaptive reuse and technical upgrading of industrial structures (such as bottling plants, funiculars and railway stations) need also to be cautiously addressed. Again, ICOMOS notes that the high number of development projects submitted during the evaluation process will need to be addressed through an ad-hoc process.

As spa towns, conservation measures are linked with spatial planning measures and the designation of the urban ensembles as conservation areas. All component parts benefit from a wide range of planning instruments, which establish rules and regulations in terms of demolitions, what areas can be urbanised or not, scale, height and mass of new constructions, etc. Financial incentives to support conservation exist in some of the component parts (e.g. *Baden bei Wien, Spa, Karlovy Vary*); however, they are mostly limited to listed buildings.

ICOMOS considers that spatial planning measures that take a holistic approach to the spa town from a heritage perspective are also important to address densification, real estate pressure on still unbuilt-upon plots, growing

traffic pressures and demand for more parking areas. Such approaches should extend to the landscape level, and take into consideration the relationship between the nominated property, the buffer zones and the broader setting to consider potential visual (or other) impacts such as the installation of wind turbines (as in the case in *Bad Kissingen*).

### Monitoring

Monitoring at the level of each component part is based on existing systems in the respective State Party. ICOMOS understands that mineral springs are regularly monitored but that, at present, monitoring of the built fabric is mainly limited to listed buildings.

To monitor the nominated property as a whole, the States Parties have developed a common format for assessing the state of conservation of all the component parts. This format is structured around the desired state of conservation of the key groups of attributes and detailed in a number of measures, which in practice correspond to the monitoring indicators. ICOMOS in its Interim Report noted that some of these indicators seem quite difficult to assess, such as *“character of spa historic urban landscape to remain unchanged”* or, in relation to the therapeutic and recreational landscape, *“links to remain unchanged”*. Similarly, concerns were raised in relation to monitoring indicators related to tourism. The proposed periodicity for some of the monitoring measures (e.g., twice within each Periodic Reporting cycle) also looked insufficient.

The States Parties' reply acknowledges the need to develop further the monitoring methodology, and that this is already included as one of the actions planned in the Management Plan.

ICOMOS considers that the proposed common monitoring format for all component parts is well conceived and structured, and welcomes the States Parties' willingness to detail it further. Hence, ICOMOS recommends expanding the monitoring indicators in relation to the main factors affecting the property, namely re-use of historic buildings and the densification of the urban fabric. In terms of the attribute called *“continuing spa function”*, an indicator such as *“number of people taking the cure and duration of stay”* from a therapeutic and medical perspective could provide better information than just the number of accommodation units. Although tourism is a well understood activity within the spa towns that constitute the nominated property, ICOMOS considers that the potential effects from increased visitor numbers, if the serial nominated property were to be inscribed on the World Heritage List, should not be underestimated. Therefore, ICOMOS advises to monitor changes in use of residential buildings and take into account the potential social effects of phenomena such as Airbnb; likewise, changes from traditional commercial uses to tourism activities should also be taken into account.

Recalling the number of development projects submitted during the evaluation process, monitoring the “*number of applications for consent for new developments*” is critical but the quality of the projects should also be a key point; particularly since this was noted as a factor affecting some of the components.

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ICOMOS considers that present conservation measures are appropriate and that the monitoring programme proposed is well structured but should be further developed, namely by detailing some of the monitoring indicators to make them more measurable and by expanding the indicators in relation to the factors affecting the nominated property, the continuing spa function, and the potential effects of increased tourism.

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## 5 Protection and management

### Documentation

Comprehensive archives and records are maintained for each spa town. These include building surveys and inventories, spring inventories and collections of maps, plans and photographs. Most information is available in databases from the national heritage authorities and the municipalities. Older documents can be found in local building archives and local museums.

The nomination dossier builds extensively on historic records, namely maps and photographs. Accurate and detailed maps were provided for all component parts.

### Legal protection

The nominated property is composed of eleven towns in seven European States Parties, some governed on a federal basis with laws and regulations relating to heritage and environmental protection being determined at the Länder level, or on a regional basis rather than a national one. Therefore, there is considerable diversity among the legal frameworks in place for each component part. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this section only provides a short summary of the most relevant aspects.

Because the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated serial property is linked to the definition of the components as spa towns, ICOMOS considers that the legal protection of the urban ensembles in their entirety is essential. ICOMOS noted that while the three Czech components are protected in their entirety as Urban Heritage Reserves and that the component part of Vichy is part of the *Site patrimonial remarquable*, the other component parts did not seem to be protected in their entirety in similar ways. Therefore, in its Interim Report, ICOMOS asked the States Parties if legal protection could be extended to the entirety of all or most component parts.

In the supplementary information provided, the State Party of Belgium has agreed to extend the urban conservation area (ZPU – *zone protégée en matière d’urbanisme*) of Spa. The State Party of Germany

mentioned the existence of a cultural monument zone ‘Historic Spa Bad Ems’ and that it protects the entire developed area of the component part in accordance with the Protection of Cultural Heritage Act. Similarly, it is noted that the municipality of *Bad Kissingen* is currently considering the possibility of expanding the ‘Ensemble’ to include the entire building stock of the component, which would therefore be included under the legal status of monuments. No information on this request was received in relation to the component parts of *Baden bei Wien* and *Montecatini Terme*, which posed similar issues. ICOMOS acknowledges that this type of request may require lengthy administrative procedures and can be challenging to achieve within the deadline for submitting the supplementary information, but considers that this should be implemented at the soonest.

ICOMOS in its Interim Report also noted that in a number of component parts, their buffer zones seemed to be mainly protected by a mosaic of environmental and natural designations and instruments. Therefore, it asked for a concise explanation on how the buffer zone of each component part is protected, from a legal and cultural heritage perspective, and if such measures cover the buffer zone in its entirety. Based on the detailed responses of the States Parties for each component, ICOMOS considers that given the variety of national, regional and local protection systems, it is acceptable that different approaches exist. Overall, the legal and planning measures for the buffer zones are considered satisfactory; however, it is important to ensure that the entire area of the buffer zones is covered by the existing measures and that no legal or planning gaps exist.

### Management system

The States Parties have established an overall management system for the nominated property as a whole, with a Property Management Plan (PMP) complemented and supported by Local Management Plans (LMP) for each of the eleven component parts.

This overall management system is overseen by an *Intergovernmental Committee (IGC)*, made up of representatives of the States Parties. The IGC will be responsible for coordination with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies and will meet once a year. A *Great Spas Management Board (GSMB)*, composed of the most senior official from each component part, will be responsible for the operational coordination and overall management of the property in close consultation with the IGC. The *Board*, which will meet at least twice per year, sets up the annual budget for the overall management of the property and establishes and employs the *Secretariat* to support the whole system. The work of the *Board* and the *Secretariat* is funded centrally through annual contributions received directly from the participating spa town authorities known as the ‘common budget’. A *Site Managers Group* drawn from the site management of each component will oversee the implementation of the Property Management Plan and its harmonisation with the Local Management Plans; this group is expected to meet at least three times per year.

The status of the Overall Management System is to be agreed, updated and approved by the GSMB on a six-year basis. The GSMB must be consulted on the development of the action plans contained in the Local Management Plans and each component part is to report on their implementation annually, with the revision of the LMPs being formalised on a six-year cycle.

Work on the nomination began in 2011 and the experience gathered throughout the process provided a firm foundation for further development of a comprehensive management system for the nominated property. However, the overall management system remains untested, and partly still “under construction”. Consequently, as acknowledged by the States Parties in the nomination dossier, it might need to be modified and developed as further experience is gathered. ICOMOS considers that from a conceptual viewpoint the overall management system is well conceived but its effectiveness will need to be evaluated in the future, not only as a coordination structure but also in relation to the overall management effectiveness of the nominated property as a whole.

Responsibility for the protection and management of each of the component parts of the property rests with the national/regional government and local authorities of the respective State Party. Local Management Plans for each component part were submitted as part of the nomination dossier, some still as draft documents. Therefore, ICOMOS in its Interim Report requested the States Parties for further information on the current status of the development of the LMPs, when they were expected to start being implemented as well as their legal status and articulation with other existing planning documents. The supplementary information provided by the States Parties in this regard presents quite a diverse array of situations. LMPs are already being implemented at *Baden bei Wien, Spa, Baden-Baden, Bad Kissingen* and *Montecatini Terme*. At *Vichy* and *Bad Ems*, the LMPs have been approved but implementation is yet to start. The LMPs for the three Czech components are still waiting to be approved. Thus, in practice, the implementation of the LMPs will follow different management cycles. ICOMOS also notes that not all the action plans included in the LMPs follow the six-year cycle proposed for the Property Management Plan that applies to the nominated property as a whole. As such, it is important to establish a date to harmonise the management cycles for all component parts in order to implement the Property Management Plan and the LMPs in a coordinated way. This approach should also take into account the periodicity of the common monitoring programme.

A draft LMP has been prepared for the *City of Bath*, in line with the other component parts. However, since this component is already inscribed in its own right on the World Heritage List, it already has a management plan, currently in its third iteration (2016-2022). ICOMOS therefore considers that to facilitate management, and as suggested in the supplementary information submitted in February 2020, if the property were to be inscribed, the

two management plans should be merged and the component part managed for both Outstanding Universal Values it conveys, particularly since the argument to propose the same boundaries was to facilitate management.

ICOMOS notes that the content, quality and legal status of the LMPs vary significantly. Given that the component parts are located in seven different countries, it is understandable that the legal requirements are different. However, ICOMOS considers that, where possible, LMPs should have a legal status and where not, they should be formally approved by the respective authorities. Independently of their legal standing, all plans should be fully articulated with existing planning documents, and necessary human and financial resources for their implementation should be allocated.

ICOMOS in its Interim Report also asked the States Parties for an update on the appointment of the site managers/coordinators. The States Parties' reply is unclear as to whether site managers are already in place for *Baden bei Wien, Bad Ems* and *Montecatini Terme*. In *Bad Kissingen*, the position has been created but is not occupied yet and in *Františkovy Lázně* and *Vichy*, site managers are in place but only on a part-time basis. ICOMOS considers that site managers/coordinators should be appointed as soon as possible to ensure daily management for the sites.

As mentioned before, ICOMOS is concerned with the high number of development projects received with the nomination and has informed the States Parties that it cannot assess these projects in detail nor their potential impacts on the nominated serial property during the evaluation process. In addition, the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission expressed concerns over intentions to develop a new rugby stadium together with an urban rearrangement of the *Western Riverbank* in the *City of Bath*. Again in this component part, the mission also noted potential dangers deriving from Policy B4, which determines that where development has a demonstrable public benefit, this benefit will be weighed against the level of harm to the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site. The potential visual impacts of wind turbines in the broader setting of *Bad Kissingen* and potentially in the broader setting of *Baden-Baden* were also mentioned by the technical evaluation mission. ICOMOS considers that Heritage Impact Assessment procedures should be introduced into the management system of each component part to address the potential impacts of development projects.

ICOMOS considers that the potential impacts of the development projects should be carefully examined, both individually and for their potential cumulative effects on the nominated property as a whole. ICOMOS suggests that mechanisms in this regard are set-up within the overall management system developed for the whole property, potentially by requesting the involved States Parties to submit potential projects to the examination of the *Great Spas Management Board*.

### **Visitor management**

All component parts have long-standing experience of providing services to large numbers of domestic and foreign visitors. Not all components have visitor management plans *per se* but their Local Management Plans include objectives and actions on the welcoming and management of visitors. The nomination dossier recognises that a more coherent approach to visitor management across the whole property is needed, if the property were to be inscribed on the World Heritage List.

The Property Management Plan specifies five management objectives in relation to tourism, namely: to establish a standard format for the collection of tourism and spa user data across the component sites on an annual basis; to monitor the impact of changing social welfare and public health services; to monitor the provision of new visitor accommodation in the spa towns; to create a multi-language website for promotional purposes; and to create a forum for the spa town tourism officers to share best practice and experience. These objectives are detailed through specific actions included in the action plan of the Property Management Plan. In addition, the *Site Managers Group* has a dedicated sub-group to deal with tourism issues.

The Property Management Plan also includes actions related to the implementation of overarching interpretation strategies and the production of a common guide. ICOMOS notes that the needs and expectations of health visitors might be different from those of tourists in general and that this should be taken into consideration when developing tourism and interpretation strategies.

### **Community involvement**

Throughout the nomination process, events have been organised in all component parts to inform the local communities of the nomination. ICOMOS' technical evaluation mission confirmed the States Parties' efforts to inform the public periodically and through a variety of communication approaches.

The aims of the Property Management Plan, structured around the five strategic objectives of the World Heritage Committee adopted in the Budapest Declaration to guide the future implementation of the World Heritage Convention (commonly known as the 5Cs), include a number of objectives related to communities. These include awareness-raising objectives as well as local communities' engagement in the management of the nominated property, namely through their involvement in *Local World Heritage Steering Groups*; these groups form part of the overall management system for the nominated property.

### **Evaluation of the effectiveness of the protection and management of nominated property**

ICOMOS considers that overall the boundaries for the component parts and their buffer zones are adequate with only a few minor modifications needed, that could not be put in place within the timetable available for the supplementary information. This is the case with *Baden*

*bei Wien*, where the boundaries of the nominated property should be slightly extended in the Mitterberg and Badener Berg areas; and *Montecatini Terme*, where the boundaries that are still drawn down the middle of streets need to include the building plots on the other side of the street. ICOMOS also considers that the northern part of the buffer zone of *Karlovy Vary* should be extended to ensure adequate protection from future development, particularly from a visual perspective. In *Vichy*, the buffer zone around the train station also needs to be extended and legal protection granted, taking into account the protected perimeters of the surroundings of existing historic monuments. New maps will need to be submitted to reflect the necessary changes for the four component parts mentioned above.

From a legal perspective, in *Baden bei Wien*, the protection zone under the Construction Plan should be extended to include the entirety of the nominated property in this component part. Similarly, as agreed by the State Party of Belgium in the supplementary information, the ZPU of *Spa* should be enlarged to cover the entirety of the component part. The State Party of Germany should confirm that the component parts of *Bad Ems* and *Bad Kissingen* are likewise legally protected in their entirety as urban conservation areas. In *Montecatini Terme*, in addition to the required change in the boundaries of the nominated property, the protection statute should be extended to the entirety of the component.

The overall state of conservation of the nominated property is considered good; however, ICOMOS notes that adaptive-reuse of historic buildings as well as necessary alterations, upgrades and redevelopments of historic spa buildings in order to keep pace with standards of services and hygiene, needs to be carefully balanced with the conservation of their architectural, artistic and historical values.

Conservation measures in place are considered adequate; spatial planning measures are also important to address densification, real estate pressure on still unbuilt-upon plots, growing traffic pressures and demand for more parking areas. All component parts have satisfactory planning frameworks; however, ICOMOS notes that approaches should be considered at the landscape level to take into consideration the relationship between the nominated property, the buffer zones and the broader setting, to help address potential visual (or other) impacts, such as the installation of wind turbines (as in the case in *Bad Kissingen*).

ICOMOS considers that the potential impacts of the development projects received during the evaluation process as well as the potential construction of a new rugby stadium in the *City of Bath*, should be carefully examined both individually and for their potential cumulative effects on the nominated property as a whole. Therefore, ICOMOS suggests that mechanisms in this regard are set-up within the overall management system developed for the whole property, potentially by

requesting the involved States Parties to submit potential projects to the examination of the *Great Spas Management Board*.

ICOMOS considers that from a conceptual viewpoint the overall management system is well conceived and if the nominated property were to be inscribed, should start being fully implemented as soon as possible. The effectiveness of this system should be evaluated as further experience is gathered, and the system revised if necessary, based on the results of such an evaluation. Likewise, the LMPs that have not been formally approved yet should be approved as soon as possible and where possible should be given legal status. ICOMOS considers it important that the implementation of the Property Management Plan and the LMPs is done in a coordinated way, following the same management cycle to facilitate the management of the property as a whole; this should also take into account the periodicity of the common monitoring programme.

ICOMOS considers that the proposed common monitoring format for all component parts is well conceived and structured but agrees with the States Parties that it needs to be further detailed. ICOMOS recommends detailing some of the monitoring indicators to make it more measurable and to include more indicators in relation to the main factors affecting the property.

Site manager coordinators need to be in place for all component parts. ICOMOS considers it important that the role of the site coordinators is clear and adapted to the needs of managing a World Heritage property, if the nominated property were to be inscribed.

While all component parts have long-standing experience of visitor management, ICOMOS considers that coordination is needed in relation to the property as a whole and that overarching tourism and interpretation strategies should be developed. These strategies should balance the needs and expectations of health visitors and those of tourists in general, since they might be different.

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ICOMOS considers that the requirements for protection and management are generally adequate. Nonetheless some aspects of the overall management system and the management systems for the individual components are not yet fully in place or could be reinforced.

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## 6 Conclusion

The serial nominated property exhibits an important interchange of human values and ideas related to medicine, balneology, spa architecture and planning, landscape design and leisure facilities that influenced the development of spa towns throughout Europe and even other parts of the world. It also bears an exceptional testimony to the regime of 'taking the cure' and the European spa phenomenon that flourished from

around 1700 to the 1930s. Therefore, ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criteria (ii) and (iii).

ICOMOS also considers that the serial approach and the selection of component parts are justified and that the comparative analysis ascertains that there are no comparable properties in the same geo-cultural area. The nominated property meets the conditions of integrity both at the level of the components and for the nominated property as a whole. ICOMOS stresses that this entails that the nominated property includes all elements to express the proposed Outstanding Universal Value and is of adequate size to ensure the complete representation of the features and processes which convey the property's significance; as a serial nomination this should be equated to meaning that the selection of component parts is complete.

At present, the nominated property is not affected by adverse effects of neglect that could undermine the conditions of integrity. However, ICOMOS notes that the high number of development projects received with the nomination dossier and that could not unfortunately be analysed, will need to be addressed through an ad-hoc process in the future.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets the conditions of authenticity and that the requirements for protection and management are overall satisfactory. ICOMOS notes that some of the aspects of the overall management system for the whole property are not yet fully in place and that at the individual level of the components some measures need to be reinforced.

ICOMOS considers that the English title of the nominated property should be changed to include the term 'spa towns', instead of just 'spas', which applies to a wider variety of places; therefore, it suggests amending the English title to: '*The Great Spa Towns of Europe*'. This change of the title in English does not imply changes in the French name proposed in the nomination dossier '*Les grandes villes d'eaux d'Europe*'.

## 7 Recommendations

### Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that The Great Spas of Europe, Austria, Belgium, Czechia, France, Germany, Italy, United Kingdom, be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of **criteria (ii) and (iii)**.

### Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

Brief synthesis

The Great Spas of Europe bear an exceptional testimony to the European spa phenomenon, which gained its highest expression from around 1700 to the 1930s. This transnational serial property comprises

eleven spa towns located in seven countries: *Baden bei Wien* (Austria); *Spa* (Belgium); *Karlovy Vary*, *Františkovy Lázně* and *Mariánské Lázně* (Czechia); *Vichy* (France); *Bad Ems*, *Baden-Baden* and *Bad Kissingen* (Germany); *Montecatini Terme* (Italy); and *City of Bath* (United Kingdom). The series captures the most fashionable, dynamic and international spa towns among the many hundreds that contributed to the European spa phenomenon.

Whilst each spa town is different, all the towns developed around mineral water sources, which were the catalyst for a model of spatial organisation dedicated to curative, therapeutic, recreational and social functions. Ensembles of spa buildings include baths, pump rooms, drinking halls, treatment facilities and colonnades designed to harness the water resources and to allow its practical use for bathing and drinking. 'Taking the cure', externally and internally, was complemented by exercise and social activities requiring visitor facilities such as assembly rooms, casinos, theatres, hotels, villas and related infrastructures (from water piping systems and salts production to railways and funiculars). All are integrated into an overall urban context that includes a carefully managed recreational and therapeutic environment of parks, gardens, promenades, sports facilities and woodlands. Buildings and spaces connect visually and physically with their surrounding landscapes, which are used regularly for exercise as a contribution to the therapy of the cure, and for relaxation and enjoyment.

**Criterion (ii):** The Great Spas of Europe exhibits an important interchange of innovative ideas that influenced the development of medicine, balneology and leisure activities from around 1700 to the 1930s. This interchange is tangibly expressed through an urban typology centred on natural mineral springs and devoted to health and leisure. Those ideas influenced the popularity and development of spa towns and balneology throughout Europe and in other parts of the world.

The Great Spas of Europe became centres of experimentation which stayed abreast of their competitors by adapting to the changing tastes, sensitivities and requirements of visitors. Other than physicians, the principal agents of transmission were the architects, designers and gardeners who created the built and 'natural' environments framing spa life. As a result, the property displays important examples of spa architecture such as the 'kurhaus' and 'kursaal', pump rooms, drinking halls ('trinkhalle'), colonnades and galleries designed to harness the natural mineral water resource and to allow its practical use for bathing and drinking.

**Criterion (iii):** The Great Spas of Europe bears exceptional testimony to the European spa phenomenon, which has its roots in antiquity, but gained its highest expression from around 1700 to the 1930s. 'Taking the cure', either externally (by bathing) or

internally (by drinking, and inhaling) involved a highly structured and timed daily regime and a combination of medical aspects and leisure, including entertainment and social activities (e.g. gambling, theatre, music, dancing) as well as taking physical exercise within an outdoor therapeutic spa landscape.

These parameters directly influenced the spatial layout of spa towns and the form and function of spa buildings or 'spa architecture'. Urban parks and promenades allowed people taking the cure "to see and be seen" by others.

#### Integrity

The eleven component parts that comprise the serial property represent the most exceptional examples of European spa towns. All component parts share a set of determining characteristics formed during the most significant "culture-creating" phase of their history and development, the heyday period from around 1700 to the 1930s. Each and every one continues to function for the purpose for which it was originally developed.

The series illustrates the main stages of the development of the spa phenomenon, starting with the most influential spa towns in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, to the development of model spa towns in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, to towns that are testimony to the last stages of the phenomenon in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Boundaries are determined in relation to the mapping of the attributes that convey Outstanding Universal Value, namely: the most important spa structures and buildings used for thermal-related activities; the social facilities and buildings for leisure and pleasure; accommodation facilities; related spa infrastructure; and the surrounding therapeutic and recreational spa landscape. Buffer zones are drawn both for the protection of spring catchments and important setting.

All component parts and their constituent elements are generally in good condition. Elements requiring conservation either have works already planned, or are awaiting alternative uses, with their current state of conservation maintained. Upgrades and redevelopments made to keep pace with standards of services, hygiene and new spa technology, can create tensions with their conservation as historic buildings, and need to be carefully addressed. Challenges in the adaptive reuse and technical upgrading of industrial structures pose similar challenges.

#### Authenticity

The property meets the conditions of authenticity in terms of form and design, materials and substance, use and function, traditions, and location and setting.

All component parts express the Outstanding Universal Value of the property through a variety of common and highly authentic attributes: mineral springs, of great diversity, which maintain their natural physical qualities,



including substance, location and setting; a distinct and highly legible spatial layout and a well-maintained location and setting that combine to retain an enduring spirit and feeling; spa architecture, that remains authentic in form and design, original materials and substance, even though some buildings have experienced change of use; the spa therapeutic landscape, which retains its form, design and function, and continues to be used for the purpose for which it was designed; spa infrastructure, much of which is either original or evolved on original principles and remains in use; continuing spa use and function despite the need to meet today's standards.

The veracity and credible expression of attributes embodied in structures that date from around 1700 to the 1930s, the principal period of contribution to Outstanding Universal Value, is further evidenced during substantial and sustained conservation works that are informed by expansive archival collections of plans, documents, publications and photographs held at each component part.

#### Protection and management requirements

Responsibility for the protection and management of each of the eleven component parts of the property rests with the national/regional government (in the case of Germany, with the government of the Länder, and local authorities of that State Party). Each component is protected through legislation and spatial planning regulations applicable in its State Party or individual province, as well as by a significant degree of public/charitable ownership of key buildings and landscapes. Each part has a property manager or coordinator and a Local Management Plan in place conforming to the overall Property Management Plan.

An overall management system for the whole property has been established, with a Property Management Plan and Action Plan agreed by all stakeholders. An Inter-Governmental Committee, made up of national World Heritage Focal Points and/or a representative of the highest monument or heritage protection authority, keeps track of matters relating to the property. A Great Spas Management Board (GSMB), made up of the Mayors of the eleven components, is responsible for the operational coordination and overall management of the property in close consultation with the Inter-Governmental Committee. The Board sets and manages the budget for the overall management functions, monitors and reviews the Action Plan, approves and publishes an Annual Report, employs the Secretariat, and directs other activities for the property as a whole.

The Site Managers Group includes site managers for each component, the Secretariat, and any specialist advisors. The Site Managers Group is essentially an expert group for debate and exchanges of experience and to advise the GSMB on relevant management issues. The international structure is supported and serviced by a Secretariat jointly funded by all the components.

An important concern will be to continue to develop cooperation and collaboration between the individual components and to ensure that the property as a whole is effectively managed and the overall management system is adequately resourced. Development pressures may be an issue since these are living cities which will need to continue to adapt and change to maintain their role as spa towns. Managing tourism so that it is truly sustainable may also become a challenge. A management approach at the landscape level, which considers the relationship between each component, the buffer zone, and the broader setting is also needed to maintain views to, and from, the picturesque wider landscape.

#### Additional recommendations

ICOMOS further recommends that the States Parties give consideration to the following:

- a) Adjusting the boundaries of the property in the Mitterberg and Badener Berg areas in Baden bei Wien and extending the protection zone under the Construction Plan to include the entirety of the property in this component part,
- b) Adjusting the boundaries of the property that are still drawn down the middle of streets in Montecatini Terme to include the building plots on the other side of the street and extending the protection statute to the entirety of this component part,
- c) Extending the northern part of the buffer zone of Karlovy Vary to ensure adequate protection from future development, particularly from a visual perspective,
- d) Extending the buffer zone around the train station in Vichy, taking into account the protected perimeters of the surroundings of existing historic monuments,
- e) Confirming that the component parts of Bad Ems and Bad Kissingen are legally protected in their entirety as urban conservation areas,
- f) Extending the ZPU in Spa to cover the entirety of the World Heritage property in this component part,
- g) Formally approving and implementing the Local Management Plans for the three Czech components and ensuring their articulation with existing planning documents,
- h) Implementing the Local Management Plans at Vichy and Bad Ems,
- i) Reviewing the management plan of the City of Bath so that its fourth iteration takes into account both its inscription on the World Heritage List in its own right and its inscription as one of the component parts of The Great Spas of Europe,

- j) Appointing site managers for all component parts that have not yet done so and ensuring that their role is clear and adapted to the needs of managing a World Heritage property,
- k) Extending and further detailing the monitoring programme for the property as a whole,
- l) Introducing Heritage Impact Assessment procedures into the management system of each component part to address the potential impacts of development projects,
- m) Considering how the role of the Great Spas Management Board might be refined to allow full understanding by all States Parties of major development proposals in all component sites, in relation to their potential cumulative impacts on the property as a whole,
- n) Submitting a State of Conservation report by 1st December 2022 in order to provide progress and/or clarification on the above-mentioned recommendations for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 46<sup>th</sup> session;

ICOMOS further recommends that the name of the property in English be changed to: "*The Great Spa Towns of Europe*". This change in English does not imply changes in the French name suggested in the nomination dossier "*Les grandes villes d'eaux d'Europe*".



Map showing the location of the nominated components