More than 5 million people in Europe (and more than one million in Italy) today use thermal treatments according to a variety of therapeutic approaches and forms, with positive results based on their health expectations (ISTAT 2014 data; Cneth data, France, 2015). However, only seldom was this great number of citizens involved in a critical and responsible evaluation of the services provided by thermal establishments, something that is crucial to ensure the future development of the sector. One of the purposes of the European Association of Patients and Users of Thermal Centres (EAPTC, www.eaptc.net), established in December 2015, is to promote the active involvement of users of thermal services and the awareness of the potentials of thermal treatments for patients with diseases eligible for treatment with thermal medicine.

In this context, what is the psycho-physical and behavioural profile of the typical patient/user of thermal establishments? What possible areas for contact and collaboration exist between thermal centres and the associations for the protection of patients/users? What input can thermal care provide to the welfare offering?

The above questions will be addressed at the European meeting organized by EAPTC, in cooperation with Terme di Riolo to analyze the role of patients/users of thermal care and help ascertain whether and how a patient/user-focused approach can trigger innovation and the change of therapeutic resources.