

PROTOCOL OF UNDERSTANDING

between the

ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP NETWORK

and the

EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF PATIENTS AND USERS OF THERMAL CENTRES

Whereas

Cittadinanzattiva onlus is a non-religious civic participation movement acting in view of the protection of human rights; of the promotion and practical exercise of civil, social, and political rights at national, European, and international level; of the struggle against waste and bribery and – within the framework of a broader consumer movement – of the protection of citizen rights, including of consumers and/or users, as well as of the protection and safeguarding of the environment, of the territory, of health, of individual and collective safety, of savings, of truthfulness of public deeds, and of public trust.

Through its European network, the Active Citizenship Network (hereinafter ACN), it aims at contributing to the development of active European citizenship and promoting the participation of citizen organizations in European and national public policies, focusing on such issues as: civic participation, health care, user services, and corporate social responsibility.

The **European Association of Patients and Users of Thermal Centres** (hereinafter EAPCT) aims at:

- Disseminating information on illness prevention in Europe and carrying out social promotion, including through care with natural elements and, particularly, with thermal waters (hydrotherapy) and sea water (thalassotherapy);
- Providing training courses aimed at wellbeing operators to promote the use of thermal and sea water as primary elements for prevention and care;
- Creating and participating in European networks to encourage the sharing of information and practices on prevention and thermal care, as well as to share consolidated experience and the results of the scientific research carried out on treatments;

Considering that

The European Charter of Patients' Rights is an expression of, among other things, the principles contained in the Nice Charter of Fundamental Rights, and identifies 14 rights that must be ensured to all the citizens of the EU countries, specifically:

1. the right to preventive measures
2. the right of access;
3. the right to information;
4. the right to consent;
5. the right to free choice;
6. the right to privacy and confidentiality;
7. the right to respect of patients' time;
8. the right to the observance of quality standards;

9. the right to safety;
10. the right to innovation;
11. the right to avoid unnecessary suffering and pain;
12. the right to personalized treatment;
13. the right to complain;
14. the right to compensation.

In consideration of the above preamble

the **ACN**, represented by Mr. Mariano Votta
and
the **EAPCT**, represented by Mr. Alceste Santuari

sign this protocol of understanding, whose preamble is an integral part hereof, and undertake to carry out all the deeds deriving from the statements contained herein.

In particular, the parties hereto jointly undertake:

1. To inform about, disseminate, and support hydrotherapy and thalassotherapy in Europe in order to disclose to the public opinion the healing properties of thermal and sea water, their therapeutic use for primary and secondary prevention, and the agreements in place with the national health service and the accredited thermal centres. Such awareness promotion activity can be carried out by means of *ad hoc* information campaigns;
2. To promote the rights of European citizens using hydrotherapy and thalassotherapy to ensure their ability to benefit from the right to health according to the rules set out in the charter of fundamental rights of the European Union and of the World Health Organization in the health and environment field;
3. To inform wellbeing operators about hydrotherapy and thalassotherapy activities to encourage their focus on citizen expectations and needs;
4. To stimulate a European benchmark through the sharing of experiences and the promotion of the existing good practices to valorize the sector and a millennia-old healing experience;
5. To analyze and monitor the scenarios, the challenges, and the opportunities for hydrotherapy offered by Directive 2011/24/EU on cross-border treatments.

This protocol of understanding shall not imply and charges for the parties hereto, nor any duties thereof to establish an exclusive relation with respect to the matters contained herein.

This protocol shall come into force on the date of subscription and shall be valid until any of the parties expresses the wish to withdraw.

Rome, July 18, 2016

Read, confirmed, and signed

Dr. Mariano Votta, Coordinator of the CAN

Prof. Alceste Santuari, Secretary General of the EAPCT