

The Great Spas of Europe

Mayors Steering Group meeting MSG 24.

09:00 Wednesday 4th and Thursday 5th December 2019.

At the Park Hotel, Baden bei Wien. Austria.

MINUTES:

Those present:

Mayors and political representatives	Representing	Group	Observers	Representing	Group
1.Margret Mergen	Baden-Baden	Chair MSG	12.Lisa Poetschki	Baden-Baden	SMG
2.Stefan Szirucsek	Baden bei Wien	MSG	13.Hans Hornyik 14.Klaus Lorenz	Baden bei Wien	SMG Msubg
3.Yves-Jean Bignon	Vichy	MSG	15.Anke Matthys		SMG
4.Sophie Delettre	Spa	MSG	16.Anne Pirard	Spa	SMG
5. Jan Kuchar	Františkovy Lázně	MSG			
6.Andrea Pfeffer-Ferklová	Karlovy Vary	MSG	17.Lucie Sochorková 18.Nora Dolanská	Karlovy Vary	SMG
7.Oliver Kreügel	Bad Ems	MSG	19.Hans-Jürgen Sarholz	Bad Ems	SMG
			20.Vladimir Kajlik	Mariánske Lázně	SMG
8.Kay Blankenburg	Bad Kissingen	MSG	21.Peter Weidisch.	Bad Kissingen	SMG
9.Beatrice Chelli	Montecatini Terme	MSG	22.Rafaela Verdicchio	Montecatini Terme	SMG
10.Sue Craig	Bath	MSG	23.Tony Crouch	Bath	Chair SMG
11.Paul Simons	Secretary General	SG			

Annexes:

1. The ICOMOS Interim Report.
2. Budget 2020, version 4.
3. KPMG presentation to MSG 24.
4. Spreadsheet; legal data from each GSE member spa town.
5. Marketing Presentation – Klaus Lorenz.

AGENDA:

1. Welcome from the Lord Mayor of Baden bei Wien; Stefan Szirucsek gave a warm welcome to all present and hoped for an informative and constructive meeting whilst in Baden.
2. Lord Mayor, Margret Mergen; as Chair of the MSG Margret gave her view of the recent meeting in Paris with the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel and her optimism for a good result following the evaluation of the GSE nomination dossier. The minutes of MSG 22 in Vichy were approved as a true and correct record of the meeting. MSG 23 had been held in Karlovy Vary on the 1st October with Mayors only present to discuss the future legal structure of the MSG and no official minute of the meeting was taken as the SG was not present.
3. An introduction of the MSG and SMG representatives present; a round table introduction of those present took place.
4. Any apologies received; apologies were received from Mayor Martin Kalina ML.
5. The GSE Evaluation Mission:
 - 5.1 A summary of the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel meeting in Paris, 21.11.2019; the Chair and the SG gave a verbal report on the nature and proceedings during the ICOMOS WHP meeting in Paris on the 21st November. A report had already been issued and circulated listing those present representing the GSE, those who spoke and the questions that were asked. An action plan had already been drawn up to prepare further information in support of the verbal answers given during the meeting as these questions will be reiterated in the ICOMOS Interim Report and require further written responses.
 - 5.2 ICOMOS Interim Report or other feedback if received; it was hoped that the ICOMOS Interim Report would be received by the start of the Christmas holiday period.
 - 5.3 The likely schedule of events from here on to the World Heritage Committee 2020; (To be held in Fuzhou, Fujian Province, SE China in 2020. Dates 29th June to 9th July).

The SG summarised the process between now and the WHCommittee:

 - GSE response to ICOMOS Interim Report by 28th February.
 - ICOMOS World Heritage Panel meets in March to agree its recommendation which is sent to UNESCO. (No GSE presence permitted)
 - UNESCO publish the ICOMOS recommendation 6 weeks before the WHCommittee meeting – approximately around the 11th May.
 - GSE can respond to this report only to point out any factual inaccuracies.
 - During the WHCommittee the new nominations will be discussed around the 5/6/7th July and decisions announced.
 - 5.4 Any outstanding information or issues; see ICOMOS Interim Report (receive on the 20th December, Annex 1)
 - 5.5 Potential ICOMOS recommendations; see next item.
 - 5.6 Scenario planning – 2020 positive/neutral/negative WHC decision; the SG ran through the range of possible recommendations to come from ICOMOS in March 2020. These were explained, (the comments in brackets and % points are the personal opinion of the SG):
 - Inscribe; 100% excellent result (highly unlikely).
 - Referral; 75% good result, potential delay (a possibility).
 - Deferral; 50% fair result, delay for at least 1 year, additional Evaluation (likely).

- Withdraw; 10% long delay, re-write nomination and re-submit (unlikely).
- Non-inscription; 0% will not accept a re-submission (will not happen).

Following discussion **Resolution 1, it was agreed** that these options would not be shared with the stakeholders in the spa towns until the ICOMOS recommendation was known. At that point a joint communication will be issued on behalf of the GSE following consultation with the ISG representing the States Parties.

Resolution 2, it was agreed that if the recommendation was inscribe or refer then a large delegation would attend the WHCommittee, if defer then a representative group would be agreed, if withdraw or non-inscribe then only the Core Team would be present. (NB, any spa town sending delegates to China will be required to cover their own costs. State Party representatives will be there in any case).

Resolution 3, it was agreed that if following receipt of the ICOMOS recommendation, an additional MSG meeting was deemed necessary then the 12th March would be held free for this, venue to be a meeting room at Frankfurt airport.

(NB – the SG notes that there is no guarantee that any recommendation will be known by this date and if this is the case the meeting will not be necessary. It may be better to hold this date for a telephone conference or to arrange for this later in the month, as and when we may have an informal indication of the recommendation).

6. 2019/2020 funding:

6.1 The current 2019 balance and outstanding payments; following an estimation of outstanding payments yet to be made it is anticipated that the balance at the end of 2019 will be zero or thereabouts following an exceptional year of expenditure and costs associated with the Evaluation Mission. The annual audit will take place in Baden-Baden on the 21st February 2020.

6.2 The agreed membership fees for 2020; these were agreed at the previous meeting in Vichy; small spa towns (BE, FL, ML, & Spa) will pay € 8,100, medium size towns (BK, BbW, MT & Vichy) € 10,800 and large towns (B-B, Bath & KV) will pay € 19,580. The SG will send invoices in January 2020 and all members were asked to pay promptly as the bank account is very low at present.

6.3 2020 staffing resources. The 2020 budget will not be sufficient to fund a part-time administrative assistant to support the work of the SG. This situation is to be kept under review.

6.4 Preliminary budget for 2020: the SG presented a draft budget for 2020 with minor revision following MSG 22 – see annex 2. This shows a total income of €134,340 and anticipated expenditure of €130,000. All marketing activity has been consolidated into one sum of € 30,000 available to the Marketing sub-group. This does not allow for any special events or publication to celebrate a successful nomination. In the case of first-time success the MSG will need to discuss and agree the extent of celebration and the nature of any series of events to be staged in each member spa town with associated new budgets to be provided. See item 9.5 below.

Resolution 4, it was agreed to approve the 2020 budget.

7. Constitutional matters and future management arrangements:

7.1 An update concerning future management structure; SS introduced a colleague, a partner in KPMG Austria, Dr. Eugen Strimitzer who presented a discussion paper concerning the workings of a transnational European association. See Annex 3 attached.

7.2 Corporate status; preferred options; during the discussion the following points were raised:

- GSE is a relatively small organisation, it is not necessary to get preoccupied with taxation/VAT issues at this early stage.
- A trading structure will be complex if GSE enters commercial activities
- A separate bank account with credit card facilities is needed
- Is the GSMB independent of the municipal authorities or is it speaking on their behalf? This relationship needs to be fully understood and clarified
- Consider liabilities of individual GSMB members.
- Which national law to follow in establishing the organisation?
- The matrix of the options could be prepared by KPMG to include;
 - Not-for-profit organisation
 - European economic interest association
 - An unlimited partnership
 - A limited European cooperation

7.3 Transition to Great Spas Management Board (GSMB) - 2020; KPMG were asked to prepare a proposal to pursue these matters and present a comprehensive options appraisal to the MSG. This will be coordinated by SS. SS & the SG will then prepare a 'key issues' paper for the next MSG meeting. See also spreadsheet of data sought from each member spa town. See Annex 4.

8. 2020 Action Plan:

8.1 Dates for future MSG meetings; see item 11 below.

8.2 Governance sub-group; implementation of a new legal structure and constitution.

Resolution 5; it was agreed that this matter is of such importance to all member spa towns that it cannot be dealt with via a sub-group but only at full MSG meetings when all are represented.

8.3 Marketing sub-group; see item 9 below.

8.4 Tourism sub-group; a spring meeting of the tourism officers to develop the framework for a sustainable tourism strategy in-line with the Property Management Plan is necessary.

Resolution 6; it was agreed that the tourism officers will meet in Berlin during the ITB event 4/8 March. KL will coordinate this meeting.

8.5 SMG; preparing for a successful nomination in each component site, this matter was not discussed but requires urgent attention. This was held over until a separate SMG meeting could be held on the morning of the 5th December.

(Those attending on the 5th were: TC, SC, JK, ND, LS, LP, H-JS, KL, VK, PW, KB, HH, SD, AP, AM, Y-JB, SS, RV, BC, + SG).

Continuing discussion: SMG meeting, 5th December 2019:

9. Marketing Strategy;

9.1 Terms of Reference for the Marketing Sub-group. See Annex 5, KL's

marketing presentation attached. SD wished to see this work progress rapidly into a Marketing Activity & Action Plan so the MSG would understand who is doing what. KL agreed.

9.2 Membership of the Marketing Sub-group; see Annex 4. No one is excluded but currently the membership is KL, PW, HH, AM, LP, VF and AP. However, the SG noted, with great respect to those present, that only one of these representatives is a tourism professional and this would need to change in the near future. The research element of this group's work needed to be split out into another self-contained group.

9.3 Marketing Strategy development; see Annex 5.

9.4 Communications coordination – externally and internally. This led to a discussion concerning the GSE brand, its protection and registration. All agreed how important this was and the SG was asked to clarify the status of this matter, and also that of the ownership and management arrangements for the website, with VF including associated costs, and to report back at the next meeting.

9.5 Preparing for a successful nomination and launch; **Resolution 6; it was agreed** to ask each GSE member spa town what their current plans are for celebrating a successful nomination. It is early days but these activities need a coordinated response in terms of timing, message, availability of promotional material and who is attending. The SG will circulate the SMG members with a questionnaire to follow-up on this matter early in March. The Marketing sub-group is also requested to make proposals for these activities and how to maximise the opportunities that they create.

9.6 Social media; no further progress to report.

9.7 Website; no further progress to report, see item 9.4 above.

9.8 Print; no further progress. Will each spa town producing any print, exhibition or digital material in their native or any other language(s) please ensure that the SG receives a copy of everything produced for the GSE archive. Pdf's and electronic files are acceptable.

9.9 Exhibition material; nothing further to report.

9.10 Research proposals; nothing further to report.

10. Any other business; the Marketing sub-group recommended that with a €30,000 budget available to them in 2020, that the spending priorities should be i) trademark and brand registration, ii) celebrations for a successful nomination and iii) the development of the website.

10.1 A discussion took place exploring the potential benefits of maintaining a close working relationship with the European Historic Thermal Towns Association, as 7 GSE members are full EHTTA members, 3 are associate members and 1 not involved. A joint stand will be held with EHTTA at ITB. This is an ongoing relationship.

10.2 There was nothing further to report.

11. Date and place of the next MSG meeting; **Resolution 7, it was agreed** that MSG 25 will take place in Františkovy Lázně on the 20 & 21st of May at which the ISG could also be invited to attend. This SMG will also be attending to hold a separate meeting to coordinate the GSE spa towns responses and planned activities in case of a successful nomination or if the nomination is delayed further due to WHCommittee recommendations.

MSG 26 will take place on the 17 & 18th July in Brussels when the UNSECO decision will be discussed and future actions agreed.

12. The meeting finish at 12:00 on the 5th December.