

The 71^o General Assembly and International Scientific Congress of the FEMTEC

Welcome Message

The three major industrial 18th century gave place to mechanical production and paved the way towards the new **industrial economy**; the introduction of electricity, of the combustion engine, and of oil as an energy source **revolutions** brought about significant economic and social changes all over the western world: the creation of the steam engine in the in the 19th century promoted the shift to **mass production**; the quick development of information and electronic technologies in the 20th century introduced digital information automation and processing in all fields of application, and gave origin to the new **ITC-based society model**. We are now on the eve of the **fourth industrial revolution (4.0)** – a subject that has been at the focus of the World Economic Forums since 2016 and was introduced with the release of the well-known report “**Mastering the Fourth Industrial Revolution**”.

Experts and observers are trying to guess **how manufacturing and economic activities will change**, which new professional skills will be required, and which ones will disappear instead. The study “**The Future of the Jobs**” highlights that technological, economic, and demographic factors will have a strong impact on the labour world in the next few years. Emerging web technologies, digital appliances, new iCloud-based applications, and flexible work are already changing the relation between man and his environment. Thus millions of new jobs will be created, while many others will disappear: **a net negative balance of over 5 million jobs** is predicted for Europe alone.

If this is the outlook for industry, one may wonder whether there can be a “THERMAE 4.0” and, if so, which actions and solutions can be envisaged. Facing this upcoming situation, which future can we expect for the Thermae, their role in national health care systems, the need for technological updates, human resources, research, data collection, and data analysis methods, the organization of hospitality?

The challenge will be to reconcile the new global socioeconomic and environmental conditions with the unique specificities of the thermal tradition, defined by the therapeutic and environmental characteristics of the “genius loci”, as well as by the concept of the patient at the heart of care and of the “search for the lost body”.

Moreover, how can the growing demand for health be integrated with infrastructures allowing sustainable development and tourism?

Skills and capabilities will have to change for the Thermae as they did for industry: while problem-solving will still be the most sought-after soft skill by 2020, critical thinking and creativity will also gain importance. The present challenges of modern and advanced society can be summarized into **development and environmental, human, and personal sustainability**.

Ever since its foundation 81 years ago, FEMTEC (www.femteconline.org) has been putting forward innovative subjects for discussion and practical solutions.

This year the 71^o FEMTEC congress will take place in Batumi (Adjara), in the Republic of Georgia (https://georgia.travel/en_US/adjara/batumi), a country of ancient cultural and historical traditions, where hydrotherapy has a well-established and deep-rooted scientific background.

The location was selected for logistic reasons, but also in order to introduce a land that is unique in terms of environmental, cultural, and thermal resources, integrated into an unusual geography.

Adjara is an historical, geographic, and political-administrative region of Georgia. Located in the country's south-western corner, Adjara lies on the coast of the Black Sea near the foot of the Lesser Caucasus Mountains, north of Turkey.

The Congress also provides for a rich cultural agenda including visits to thermal centres (Tzkaltubo, Kokotauri), the Batumi Botanic Centre, Natural Caves, etc.

The main topics of the Congress:

- Structure and organization of national and international thermal systems
- Economic and social strategies and policies for thermalism
- Environment, climate, thermae, and health
- Training and research as tools for knowledge and information. The new possibilities of ITC
- Approaches to care, health, and wellbeing. Complementary, integrated thermal medicine
- New methodologies in the field of balneorehabilitation
- The role of the thermal patient-user
- Telemedicine
- Traditional and IT communication and marketing
- New technologies and health safety
- Health tourism
- Organization of the hospitality

The Board and Executive Committee of FEMTEC thanks above all the Organizing Committee and **Pr. Ramaz Surmanidze**, President of the “Ajara Doctors United Community”, about hard work and great support to the Congress.

Welcome to Batumi (Georgia)!

Umberto Solimene
FEMTEC President