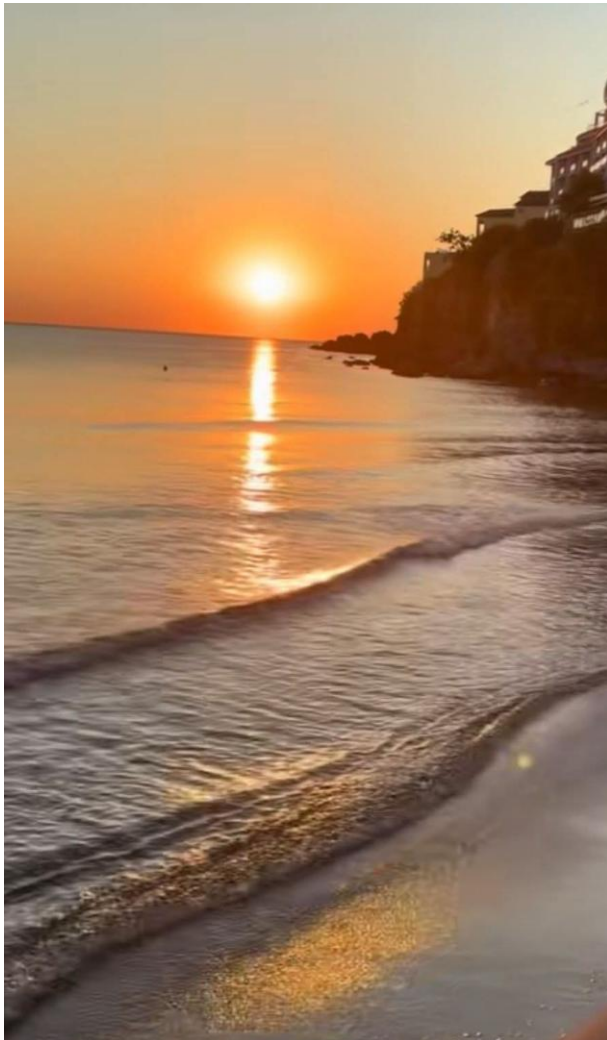


**DEAR DISTINGUISHED RESEARCHERS,
DEAR YOUNG SCIENTISTS AND DOCTORAL STUDENTS,
DEAR PARTNERS AND PROFESSIONALS FROM PRACTICE,**

*On behalf of the Editorial Board, it is my great pleasure to congratulate all authors, reviewers, institutional partners, and readers on the publication of the latest volume of the scientific journal **Smart Innovations in the Recreation, Wellness Industry and Niche Tourism**. This new volume represents another important step in strengthening our international academic platform and, particularly, in creating opportunities for young researchers and doctoral students to develop, present, and disseminate their scientific work. Supporting the next generation of scholars is one of the journal's central priorities. We believe that early-career researchers need not only opportunities to publish but also an academic environment that encourages critical thinking, methodological excellence, interdisciplinary dialogue, international cooperation, and the development of new scientific ideas.*



For doctoral students, scientific publication is an essential part of academic growth. It provides an opportunity to transform doctoral research into knowledge that can be discussed, evaluated, challenged, and further developed by the international scientific community. Through participation in the publication process, young scholars strengthen their research competencies, academic writing skills, professional networks, and ability to communicate the practical and theoretical significance of their findings. Our editorial priority remains the advancement of high-quality interdisciplinary research in which wellness culture, recreation, healthy lifestyles, healthy aging, innovation, and sustainable niche tourism occupy a central position. These rapidly developing fields offer particularly valuable research opportunities for doctoral students and emerging scholars because they connect health and wellbeing with tourism, sport and physical activity, technology, sustainability, entrepreneurship, education, social inclusion, and regional development. We therefore encourage young researchers to approach these

fields with intellectual curiosity and scientific ambition. Contemporary challenges require new questions, new methodologies, comparative and interdisciplinary perspectives, and stronger

connections between scientific evidence and professional practice. Doctoral researchers have an important role in this process. Their ability to explore emerging topics, apply innovative research methods, and question established approaches can generate knowledge with significant academic, social, and economic value. The studies presented in this volume demonstrate how scientific research can contribute to the development of healthier communities, responsible industries, sustainable destinations, and a knowledge-based society. We hope that the published findings will inspire further doctoral research and encourage young scholars to develop innovative models, services, technologies, and professional practices in recreation, wellness, spa, healthy aging, and niche tourism. Research should not end with publication; it should stimulate new questions, collaborations, applications, and opportunities for positive societal impact.

We are especially proud of the young researchers and doctoral students contributing to this academic community. Their dedication, creativity, scientific curiosity, and willingness to explore new research directions will shape the future of our disciplines. At the same time, collaboration with established scholars and experienced professionals creates an invaluable bridge between generations, allowing emerging researchers to benefit from academic mentorship while contributing their own perspectives, competencies, and innovative ideas. For this reason, we see the journal not simply as a publication venue, but as a platform for academic development, scientific dialogue, mentorship, networking, and international research cooperation. We encourage doctoral students and early-career researchers to participate actively in scientific conferences, collaborative projects, international research networks, academic mobility, and interdisciplinary initiatives. Such engagement is essential for building strong research careers and for ensuring that scientific knowledge reaches the communities, industries, and institutions that can benefit from it. We extend our sincere appreciation to our reviewers and partner organisations, including representatives of the Global Wellness Institute, the All-Russian Wellness & Spa Council, the World Cluster for Healthy Aging, the Balkan Cluster for Health, Wellness & SPA Tourism, universities, research institutes, public institutions, municipalities, non-governmental organisations, professional associations, wellness and spa organisations, tourism agencies, and businesses from Bulgaria and abroad. Their expertise, cooperation, and commitment help create an academic environment in which both experienced and emerging researchers can develop meaningful scientific and professional partnerships. Congratulations to all contributors on their valuable academic achievements. To our young researchers and doctoral students in particular: may this publication be not only an important milestone in your academic journey, but also an encouragement to continue asking significant questions, developing rigorous research, building international collaborations, and transforming innovative ideas into scientific and societal value. May this new volume inspire productive dialogue, interdisciplinary research, international cooperation, and further innovation in recreation, wellness, healthy lifestyles, healthy aging, and sustainable niche tourism. With best wishes for continued academic success, scientific curiosity, and professional accomplishment.

Founder & Editor in Chief:



Prof. Bistra Dimitrova, D.Sc.