

8th European Shiatsu Congress 2026

Shiatsu Supports Life

If I were to give this Congress a title, it would be:

“From Heart to Heart”

The 8th European Shiatsu Congress took place in Frascati, near Rome, bringing together approximately 300 people from many European countries, as well as from the United States. Eight of us attended from Greece.

Our Italian colleagues created a Congress with heart. They reached out their hands to us — and we joined the dance. Speakers and participants alike took up this thread and, through our diverse experiences and expressions of Shiatsu, wove a shared tapestry. A tapestry created within a safe space that embraced the diversity and different expressions of Shiatsu as it exists today. Truly invaluable qualities!

Shiatsu Supports Life.

The history of the European Shiatsu Congress dates back to 2004 and is closely connected to Wilfried Rappenecker's vision of creating a European Shiatsu network. Rappenecker was director of the Schule für Shiatsu Hamburg (until 2017), the Internationale Shiatsu-Schule ISS Kiental in Switzerland (until 2016), and the European Shiatsu Congress organisation until 2014.

An Event Created with Heart

Special recognition goes to Gabriella Poli and the entire Italian organising team.

It was clear that an enormous amount of preparation had gone into the Congress. Yet what participants experienced above all was a sense of hospitality, care, and the joy of coming together. It is worth mentioning that the website, online communications, and interpretation during the workshops were provided in three languages: Italian, English, and German.

Gabriella shared with us that she had dreamed for many years of bringing the European Shiatsu Congress to Rome. Her emotion, both at the opening and at the closing of the Congress, conveyed her deeply personal connection with Shiatsu and its European community.

The setting itself also contributed to the overall experience. The olive trees, the woodland, and the natural surroundings of the workshop spaces became part of our experience during those days.

Many Voices, Shared Roots

For a few days, a vibrant European Shiatsu community came into being. People from different schools, backgrounds, countries, and ways of practising gathered in one place, united by Shiatsu.

The programme featured 32 speakers from the Shiatsu field, as well as physicist Fabrizio Coccetti and Guidalberto Bormolini, an anthropologist, theologian, and specialist in accompanying people at the end of life. Together, they highlighted the many different expressions and directions of Shiatsu today.

Movement Shiatsu, Sei-Ki, Trauma and Self-Regulation, Oncology, Pregnancy and the Cycles of Life, Mindfulness, Resonance, Shiatsu in hospital settings, working with animals, Quantum Shiatsu, and Spiritual Care all entered into dialogue within the same Congress.

Among those present were also teachers well known and much loved within the Greek Shiatsu community, including Cliff Andrews, Carola Beresford-Cooke, Nicola Ley, Bill Palmer, and Teresa Hadland.

At the Shiatsu Clinics, experienced Shiatsu practitioners demonstrated their work through actual sessions, allowing participants to observe not only techniques, but also each practitioner's way of thinking, observing, and approaching their work.

Perhaps one of the greatest values of a Congress such as this lies precisely here: in celebrating the diversity and differences that emerge from shared roots.

We can encounter different approaches, recognise where resonance exists and where it does not, revisit what we take for granted, and return to our practice with new questions and renewed confidence.

“Because a living tradition cannot remain unchanged.”

The Greek Presence

The participation of Antigoni Tseggeli as one of the Congress presenters was particularly significant.

In her workshop, “The Rainbow Within – Shiatsu in Trauma Therapy,” she explored how Shiatsu, combined with Focusing, can support a sense of safety, nervous system regulation, and resilience in people who have experienced trauma.

She also participated in a Shiatsu Clinic alongside Pia Staniek.

Her presence was a meaningful representation of the Greek Shiatsu community at this major European gathering.

Thank you, Antigoni!

Healing with the Heart

One of the most remarkable talks of the Congress was given by Guidalberto Bormolini, entitled “Spiritual Care and Shiatsu.”

“It is the act of caring that makes us human.”

He spoke of a form of care that does not focus solely on symptoms, but meets the person in their physical, psychological, and spiritual dimensions.

His talk also brought an important question to the forefront for all of us: how do we use concepts such as holistic approach, care, and body-mind-spirit today?

Perhaps the challenge is not to abandon these words, but to give them substance through knowledge, ethics, clear boundaries, and responsible presence.

Where Does Shiatsu Stand Today?

This question seemed to run through many moments of the Congress.

Today, Shiatsu is called upon to find its place in a changing world. People’s needs are changing, the ways in which they seek support are evolving, and the broader landscape of complementary approaches is also shifting.

Not by trying to prove that Shiatsu is something it is not. Not by remaining attached to its past. But by continuing to develop its knowledge, education, and practice, without losing its roots or identity.

If Shiatsu Supports Life, then Shiatsu itself must also remain in a living relationship with life.

Alongside the Congress programme, a meeting took place between the two European networks that, each in its own way, represent and support Shiatsu in Europe: the **ISN – International Shiatsu Network** and the **ESF – European Shiatsu Federation**. Greece is a member of the European Shiatsu Federation (ESF).

The needs of our time make cooperation between these two organisations more important than ever. Through the knowledge, experience, and networks they have developed over the years, they can make a meaningful contribution to **increasing the visibility of Shiatsu, strengthening collaboration among European Shiatsu communities, sharing knowledge and good practices, and promoting the professional recognition of Shiatsu and Shiatsu practitioners at a European level.**

What Can We Take Away from This Gathering?

The Congress reminded us of the importance of continuing professional development, personal work and research, exchange among colleagues, and engagement with different schools and approaches.

It also reminded us that Shiatsu is not merely a collection of techniques. It is a way of seeing, listening, touching, and relating to the person before us.

Ki moves.

Life moves.

Shiatsu needs to remain alive.

There is still so much life in Shiatsu.

Shiatsu Supports Life.

And for Shiatsu to continue supporting life, it must allow life to move within itself, too.

A heartfelt thank you to Gabriella Poli and the entire Italian organising team for the care, generosity, and heart they brought to this gathering.

From Heart to Heart.



Ki Synergy

The Art of Being Present on the Journey

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*"In the beginner's mind, there are many possibilities,
but in the expert's mind, there are few."*
— Shunryu Suzuki Roshii

