



## **HUNGARY: REACHING OUT ALONG THE DANUBE TO HELP PROTECT OUR RIVER**

Hungary's Danube Day had a truly inclusive and international flavour this year, with events all along the Danube reaching out to partners in other countries along the river basin. As well as bringing people all over the region together to celebrate their river, connections to other Danube cultures and places were highlighted as Hungary hosted the 4<sup>th</sup> Danube Day Regional Meeting of Hungary, Serbia, and Croatia at Baja; the "Waters Unite" international canoe tour from Baja down the river to Backi Monostor and back; and a "Pilgrimage for the river Maros", from Szeged in Hungary to Máriaradna in Romania along the banks of the Maros.

The main Danube Day celebrations in Esztergom saw 3,000 people, mostly families, enjoying a bright and colourful day celebrating Danube cultures. There was plenty for all to enjoy, with adventurous activities by the river, dances and slide shows, tombolas, stalls, and games. There was also a chance to taste the food of the different Danube cultures, to listen to wonderful Hungarian folk music by the Vujicsics Orchestra, and to enjoy a grand evening performance of Händel's "Water Music", performed by the Esztergom Symphonic Orchestra. To round off a grand day out, the pop group "Zanzibar" played on the main stage till late.

In Győr, visitors could enjoy two fascinating exhibitions attended by more than 200 people each, and even more widely publicised by local media. An open air exhibition in downtown Győr focused on the Moson-Danube rehabilitation project, while at Lipót Spa, children and young people were fascinated by an exhibition commemorating the 1954 flood, with a presentation on World War 2 wrecks in the river as well as folk dancing and performances by pupils and youth groups.

In Nyíregyháza, a stunning photo exhibition, "Wonderful Upper-Tisza region" by Sándor Váczi, was enjoyed by several hundred visitors who left inspired by the beauty of the region and the need to work together to protect the river environment.

In Miskolc there was a fascinating exhibition of messages and art in PET bottles, sent down the river by Hungarian and Slovakian students, as well as a huge raft of PET bottles on display, which had been floated down the river Bodrog from Slovakia to Hungary. PET bottles are the most visible form of rubbish found on the river, and by focusing on them this event was aimed at inspiring students to get involved in a campaign for cleaner rivers. Also displayed at the exhibition were photographs of the area's Danube Art Master entries, one of which, "The Danube Fairy Starts her Boats", went on to win the national competition.

The Danube Art Master attracted more than 100 entries, and the standard was spectacular, with thought-provoking and beautiful natural sculptures and objects

made by children all across the region. The first, second and third prizes all went to art works with an important message: the need to clean up the river environment for us all, and live in harmony with nature.

As has now become traditional on Danube Day, Budapest residents were able to celebrate the Danube with the annual "Greet the Danube" ships' horn blast, organised by Global Water Partnership Hungary. There was also a giant poster hanging from the National Gallery walls, and Danube Day postcards given out to visitors to the gallery.

***"Danubius, Donau, Dunaj, Duna, Dunav, Dunarea- all along its course the river mirrors peoples, eras, cultures.***

***All we need is to recognize our task reflected"***

Gyula Reich, GWP Hungary

## **ORGANISERS AND PARTNERS**

Ministry of Environment and Water and regional units • Danube-Drava National Park • DEF Hungary • BITE-Baja Youth Nature Protection Society • CSEMETE/Maros Forum • HOLOCEN • Coca-Cola Hungary • Civil Association of Baja • GWP Hungary • Danube Museum, Esztergom • Nyari Fesztival Kht, Esztergom • Vujicsics Orchestra • Zanzibar Band • FETIKÖVIZIG (Upper Tisza Regional Environmental and Water Directorate, Nyíregyháza) • Museum Jósza András • Herman Otto Museum • Secondary Vocational School Vásárhelyi Pál • ÉDUKÖVIZIG (North-Transdanubian Regional Environmental and Water Directorate, Győr) • Municipality of Győr • Reflex Environmental Association • Architects Workshop of Győr • Diving Club Győr • Dance Group Szigetköz • Theatrical Group Lipót • Accordion Group Kimle • Mixed Choir of Lipót • Primary school Szigetköz • KDV-KÖVIZIG (Middle-Danube-valley Environment and Water Directorate, Budapest) • National Gallery, Budapest • Romanian Minority Local Government of Méhkerék • Bulgarian Minority Local Government of Budapest and Group Zornica • Sturovo (Slovakia) culture centre and museum • GWP Hungary • WWF Hungary • ÖKO Pannon Kht • 24 Óra regional daily • Esztergom city TV • Duna TV • Kelet-Magyarország (Eastern-Hungary) daily • Városkép TV, Nyíregyháza