



## Danube Day 2008 in Hungary

### **Celebrations in the Danube, Tisza and Drava Basins make for a great Danube Day**

Hungary's fifth Danube Day was celebrated along the country's three main rivers: the Danube (in Budapest, Győr, Baja, Szekszárd, Esztergom and Dunasziget); the Tisza (in Szolnok) - and its tributary, the Fehér-Körös (in Gyula) - and the Dráva (in the Duna-Dráva National Park). Official meetings along with fun activities spread the message to a huge audience.

The Danube provided the setting for events that got people thinking about, looking after and enjoying their river. More than 5000 residents celebrated with a family fun-day at Children's Island in Budapest. Learning about how water works proved to be very popular for children of all ages, who loved the water machines and mechanical devices such as the pedal-powered drinking fountain! Coming face-to-face with creepy creatures that lurk in the water was a hit, as was rowing on the river, whilst the youngest Danubians were thrilled by the paddle boats, paddling pools and splash tent. A Danube quiz, giant board games and art activities had everyone entertained. The event was covered heavily by the media and an interview with László Kóthay, State Secretary for Water, was televised on Duna TV. Earlier in June, teams of volunteers also cleaned up over 100 km of riverbank.

Baja kicked off its Danube Day with a four-day scientific conference, dedicated to the late Professor István Zsuffa. 29<sup>th</sup> June also saw a day of family events in the city culminating in the naming of the Danube Art Master. This Danube Environmental Forum competition encouraged youngsters to think about what their river means to them. 150 excited artists, their teachers and the general public crowded on-board a Danube ship to find out which 10 artworks had been selected as winners and to view films about the river.

Győr's fifth Danube Day took place at the confluence of the Mosoni-Danube and the Rába with an afternoon of "Together for Clean Water" events. 500 people came along to find out about their river and had a great time puzzling over Danube games; viewing giant river creatures in the video microscope; taking part in a river safari and watching diving and fishing machine demonstrations. Visitors also discussed pressing water issues and learned about water science.

In Szekszárd, 200 residents visited a 100 year-old pumping station, where experts advised on water usage and children enjoyed eco games. Awareness

raising events took place in Esztergom, and also in Dunasziget, a Danube village, where the festival attracted 300 people.

Further east, in the Tisza Basin, Szolnok was the setting for a Ministry organised Tisza Stakeholder Forum meeting to discuss the 2007 report on the Analysis of the Tisza River Basin. Attracting national media coverage, 120 participants from the governmental, NGO, water use and academic sectors met to discuss 'significant water management issues' and river basin management planning. In Gyula, 500 people took part in Danube information days: a photo exhibition, children's events and water quality measuring and nature workshops.

The Duna-Dráva National Park was the venue for the 'Danube Box School Competition Winners' eco-camp. The competition was announced in April during a Ministry press conference to launch the Hungarian version of the Danube Box - an innovative education tool for teachers, aimed at engaging the next generation of Danube users.

**"We are seeking your contribution in order to make a river basin management plan that responds to the needs of the Tisza Valley and also meets all the requirements of the EU Water Framework Directive at the Danube Basin level."**

László Kóthay, State Secretary in charge of water, speaking to the participants of the Tisza Stakeholder Forum.

### **Danube Day Partners**

Ministry of Environment and Water • Budapest Water Works • Danube Museum • Duna-Ipoly National Park • Coca-Cola Beverages (Magyarország) • Eötvös József College • Lower Danube Environment and Water Directorate • BITE-Baja • Danube Environmental Forum • Baja Water Directorate • North Transdanubian Environment and Water Directorate • Győr Municipality • Pannon-Víz Waterworks • West Transdanubian Public Health Institution • Fertő-Hanság/Neusiedler See National Park Directorate • Szigetköz Angler Association • Rábatext Angler Association • Győr Sport Diving Association • Transdanubian Environment and Water Directorate • Szigetköz Nature Protection Association • Central Tisza Region Environment and Water Directorate • Szolnok County local authority • Local media • Szféra Tisza Ltd • Öko-Pannon non-profit organisation • Körös-Region Environment and Water Directorate • Duna-Dráva National Park Directorate • Global Water Partnership Hungary.

## **The Danube rivers: let's use them – not abuse them!**

For general information about the 14-country Danube Day celebrations, view [www.danubeday.org](http://www.danubeday.org) or email the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River: [jasmine.bachmann@unvienna.org](mailto:jasmine.bachmann@unvienna.org).