

Danube Day 2014 in Hungary

Celebration and commemoration

Danube Day in Hungary produced inspiring, entertaining and poignant events with river festivals in Budapest, Győr and Komárom and a ceremony to remember those who lost their lives in the 2013 floods.

Danube Day at **Kopaszi Dam in Budapest** brought games, yoga in the park, theatre, water experiments, fishing and great music in balmy summer sunshine. You could turn detective and solve a bloodcurdling crime; build a camera obscura or test your skill in the Great Bridge Building Game. Highlights for little ones included a water playground and 'Life of a Water Droplet' one-man-show, generating much laughter and smiles. The event was run by MindSpace NGO with Coca-Cola Hungary.

Anticipation built up in preceding months with MindSpace/Coca-Cola's **Danube Flow - Danube Calling festival** along the Heart of Budapest Trail. Regular events called upon residents to step away from the bustle of the capital to remind themselves of just how special their river is. A **Hug the Danube** action saw people line the banks in a huge Danube embrace.

The **Ministry of Interior** marked the day with a **seminar on river issues** and visit to the Gellért-hegy water cistern. Raising awareness of water issues among professionals and wider society, the seminar emphasized water's role as a vital strategic resource of social, environmental and economic dimensions.

Water resources constitute the common heritage of the nation. Their protection and maintenance for future generations is the duty of the State, and all of us."

Dr Imre Hoffmann, Deputy State Secretary for Public Employment.

Győr's events were entertaining, informative and moving. 1200 people crowded into Baross Mall for street entertainers, music, hands-on science and eco activities. In memory of the successful and heroic community flood defence actions during the June 2013 floods, a **commemorative plaque** was unveiled. Marking the height of the 2013 floodwaters - the highest ever recorded - it provides a permanent reminder of the Danube's destructive power. Béla Molnár, Director General of the Water Management Authority, and Győr's mayor, Zsolt Borkai, paid tribute to the emergency services and volunteers that had worked so tirelessly during the event. Entertainments in the city were organised by Győr city, MindSpace NGO, National Water Authority, North Transdanubian Water Directorate, Coca-Cola Hungary and other local NGOs and agencies.

Danube Day was also celebrated on the banks of the Danube at **Komárom**. The mix of music, football, BMX, a martial arts show and good food was a hit with the many visitors. The event took place besides the Erzsébet Bridge linking Hungary and Slovakia and was organized by Híd, a local NGO.

This year's Hungarian **Danube Art Master** crown went to Lili Csóti, Marcell Hajdu and Boglárka Jelinek from Zoltán Kodály Primary in Kaposvár. Their artwork 'Water Footprint or what should I choose?' highlighted the conflict between nature and littering and earned the children third place in the international final. 39 Hungarian schools entered this year's creative contest, organised nationally by Global Water Partnership (GWP) Hungary and internationally by GWP CEE and the ICPDR. To view the wealth of creativity inspired across the Danube Basin, see Facebook and Flickr.

Danube Day Partners

Ministry for Rural Development; Ministry of Interior; MindSpace Nonprofit Ltd; Coca-Cola Hellenic Hungary; City of Győr; OVF National Water Authority; North-Transdanubian Water Directorate; Danube Research Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences; Global Water Partnership Hungary; KOMA company; Jalagati Yoga Club; Híd NGO, Komárom.

Danube Day 2014: Get active for a living Danube!

For general information about the 14-country Danube Day celebrations, view www.danubeday.org or email the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR): benedikt.mandl@unvienna.org.