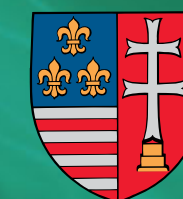


TÓVÁROS.



TATTA



TATA 2017

Another memorable year



Piarist monastery



Dear Reader,

2017 has been challenging at times, but has also been a wonderful year in many respects for the town of Tata, as so much has happened within our community over the past year! For a start, we won nearly 10 million euros through various grant applications, most of which were aimed at supporting specific development projects, while the remainder concerned projects of a more social nature, such as promoting women's rights, and the integration of small communities and social groups in the town. We also submitted a

proposal for the purpose of strengthening our local parishes, communities and NGOs.

The arrival of new companies at our industrial park has clearly benefited the development of our town as well. These companies include MooWa Kft, which has built new premises, creating employment opportunities for over 100 women in the manufacture of IT-related products. Tata's largest company, Güntner-Tata Hűtőtechnika Kft., also embarked on a major development project. All of these developments have contributed to ensuring that Tata and the Tata District maintain their positions among the top ten in the rankings of the 174 Hungarian districts. Obviously, this achievement cannot be attributed to our economic successes alone, but also to numerous other cultural, educational, conservational, social and institutional development projects that have been implemented across other sectors.

Tata played an active role in the protection of both Hungary's and Europe's borders last year, as roughly 100 members of personnel from the soldiers of the local military barracks and Tata's police force regularly assisted border patrols; defending Tata and our country, as well as Europe as a whole.

Last year, we were also very pleased to be able to celebrate a number of anniversaries. The twin town relationship between Tata and towns beyond Hungary's borders turned 20 years old with Szőgyén, 15 years old with Szováta and 5 years old with Magyarkanizsa, which was celebrated at the Mária-búcsú Festival in Csíksomlyó. In addition, we also celebrated the 30th anniversary of our oldest twin town relationship, between Tata and Gerlingen.

Last year, the daily life of our town was mainly characterised by stability, as nearly all of our residents of working age are employed, with unemployment now under 3%, although four thousand residents continue to commute to work in other locations every day. Therefore, one of our priorities for the coming year is to provide commuting residents with full-time local employment.

And as we bid goodbye to such a challenging yet inspirational year, in the course of which the difficulties we faced were the result of the hard work and effort that went into every single accomplishment and step forward, overcoming these difficulties has helped us to build a stronger and healthier community in Tata.

We will continue our efforts in 2018 with the same goal, to ensure that, above all, our development projects and investments serve the interests of local people. It would be a great joy for the town if these new developments were to also help strengthen positive tourist experiences, by providing visitors with pleasant lasting impressions of the town, as we look forward to welcoming future guests in 2018!

József Michl
Mayor

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TATA RECEIVES A NEW COAT OF ARMS

Heraldry experts believe that a coat of arms is history presented in the form of symbols. The Hungarian word for coat of arms, "címer", originates from the French *cimier*. It is presumed that this word was first used by the Capetian House of Anjou in the 13th century, with immigrants from Lothringen helping its usage to spread during the 12th century. Of course, there is earlier evidence of coats of arms being used, but these had specific names. The history of Hungarian towns can easily be tracked by analysing the history of their coats of arms, as they so often depict links between the town and noblemen, or even the king. To determine when Tata was founded and how the town got its name, the simplest approach is to consult the *Chronicon Pictum*, or Vienna Illuminated Chronicle, which claims that the Benedictine monastery of Tata was established and consecrated by Deodatus. *"It was he [Deodatus], together with Bishop Saint Adalbert of Prague, who baptised King Stephen. As King Stephen would not call him by his full name, but instead called him*

Tata, he named the town Tata after him out of respect. The name Deodatus was consequently forgotten and Tata remained, thus the monastery came to have its name."

Some of the names of documents from that era can help shed light on the situation. The earliest names included: Tota, Thota, then later Thata, Thota, Dotis and Totis. Ignoring the charming explanation of the Vienna Illuminated Chronicle, and taking into account the naming conventions used at the time, it is perhaps more likely that the town was named after a member of the Miskolcz family, known as Tota.

A property survey compiled by Pannonhalma Abbey in 1093 fails to list Tata, however it does include Saint Peter's monastery among the recorded items. The abbey functioned as both a religious and economic centre, helping the settlement of its serving parish. The number of inhabitants in Tata at the beginning of the 13th century is estimated to have been around 150-200 people. By the end of the century, population levels rose further. Around this time,

a document first mentions "Újfalu", which was supposedly formed where Tóváros stands today, hence, the current double town centre layout dates back to the early Middle Ages.

Following the Mongol invasion, part of the settlement was acquired by the Csák family, who owned other estates in the area. During the subsequent period, from the beginning of the 14th century onwards, estates and properties were taken over by the King and later given to selected noblemen. This played a decisive role in the town's development. Charles I of Hungary bestowed a mill to the castellan of Gesztes, as well as a significant part of the Tata estate to his most important supporters, the Lackfi family. This family, one of the most influential and richest families of the time, started to build a centre in Tata as well. The second half of the 14th century saw the construction of the first building of the castle complex alongside the lake, which linked the two settlements together.

Documents refer to these settlements as hamlets and villages up until 1357. However, in 1387, a doc-

ument talks of Tata citizens (cives) and guests (hospes). The hospes were free citizens who were settled by the king, and were usually engaged in industrial or commercial activities. In a letter sent to the abbey in 1388, King Sigismund addressed Tata as "civitas" i.e. a town. In 1397, King Sigismund reclaimed the estates of the Lackfi family, due to their acts of treason. He was primarily attracted to the town due to its surrounding hunting areas in the Vértes, and close proximity to Buda. In terms of development opportunities, royal properties had huge advantages over communities owned by local noblemen, hence, the town developed rapidly.

Market towns were a typically Central European phenomena, since they represented the transition between villages and towns. Such communities started to develop in Hungary from the middle of the 14th century onwards. The famous Hungarian historian, Elemér Mályusz, first outlined the most general and fundamental criteria for market towns: *"Market towns are settlements and communities which characteristically have a market and a number of craftsmen. Despite these characteristics, agriculture remains the most important production activity."* Aside from the right to stage a market, market towns gained other economic, legal and administrative rights which were also documented. However, most of these town documents have been lost, and Tata is no exception in this regard.

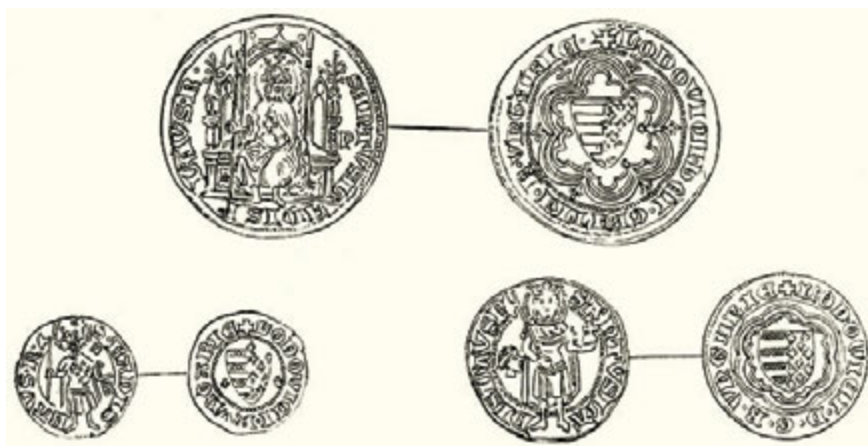
According to historical sources, Tata received the rights to become a market town between 1357 and 1388. The market town rights obtained in the 14th century are proven by a seal found on a document dating from 1490. (Picture 1) The coat of arms on the seal is a typical Anjou era coat of arms, indicating that the town received its coat of arms and rights from the king. The fess on the left side depicts three Anjou fleur-de-lis symbols, with a double cross on the right side. The striped fess represents the House of Árpád, the fleur-de-lis the House of Anjou, and



Picture 1



Picture 2



Picture 3

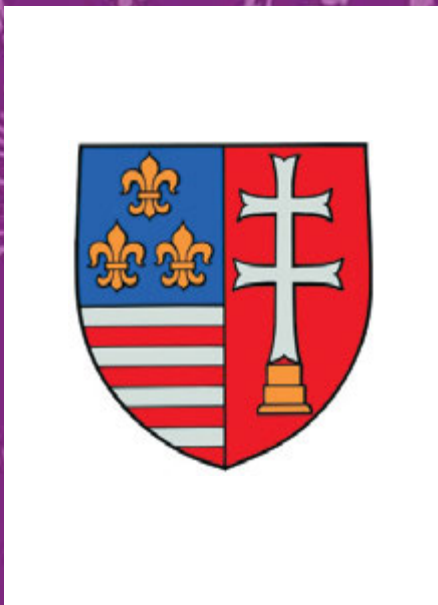
the double cross refers to the king. As far as its structure and shape are concerned, the coat of arms resembles the arms given to the town of Kosice in the second half of the 14th century. It is also similar to the arms visible on the seal and coins of Louis I of Hungary. (Picture 2) (Picture 3) Seal text: "SIGILLUM CIVITATIS DE TATA" meaning: seal of the town of Tata. Medieval town development reached its peak during the reign of King Sigismund and King Mathias.

The arms of Tóváros were created after 1646, in the wake of new property acquisitions made by the Csáky family, when the two communities no longer belonged to the king. The Tóváros coat of arms: A sheep

walking to the right while holding a cross with its right front leg (lamb of God). During the Turkish occupation, Hungarian communities lost the majority of their populations, and their development came to a halt. Town development was further restricted by the Esterházy family's estate acquisition in 1727. In his 1888 study entitled "The history of Tata", Miklós Rohrbacher states that there were attempts to unify the coats of arms of the two towns with the arms of the Esterházy family, but he viewed this as a misguided initiative. In 1908, with the King's approval, town notary László Csizmadia had the original Anjou coat of arms reinstated. This coat of arms was also used with a



Picture 4



Picture 5



Picture 6

crown above the shield.

In 1936, Zoltán Magyary managed to unify the administrative functions of the two towns. This move obviously opened up many development opportunities, although the Second World War halted this process. When Hungary's administration was fully reformed on 1 January 1950, a Cabinet decree reorganised Hungary's regional structure; of the previous 25 counties, only 19 remained, and at the same time, county and town rights to use the old coats of arms were revoked. Presidential Council Decree 1006 of 28 January 1954 declared Tata to be a town, and a revised coat of arms was assigned to the town at the beginning of the 1960s. (Picture 4) The peaked shield is divided in the middle, with eight stripes on the left side and a bastion on the right side, above which a five-pointed star is positioned. This coat of arms was taken out of use in 1990. A combination of the old and the new coat of arms was slightly modified and finally approved by faculty of fine arts. This coat of arms received the approval of the Local Government of Tata in Decree 2/1991. (II.8.). (Picture 5)

Medieval seals and coins usually depict the shield, and the Tata seal is no exception. Shield holders, helmets and rank signs and symbols also frequently appear. As the coat of arms was developing, text, such as battle cries, mottos, family or town names appeared on the arms. A new coat of arms for Tata was then designed, taking into account all historical events and relevant aspects. A heraldic crown was added at the top of the coat of arms and was approved by the local government in 1991, while the bottom was amended with the name TATA in ribbons. (Picture 6) This new coat of arms strengthens the sense of community and boosts the morale of town residents by emphasising its historic roots. The new coat of arms will be introduced in January 2018; the old one can still be used until 20 August of next year.



PROCEEDINGS OF THE STATUTORY MEETING OF TATA TOWN COUNCIL OF 22 OCTOBER 2014

Act CLXXXIX of 2011 on the local governments of Hungary states the following:

“2 § (1) Voters maintain the right to self governance, whether it be of their village, town, or county, whereby they are able to enforce their responsibility as citizens, resulting in effective cooperation within the local community.

(2) The local government expresses and enforces the will of the people in local public affairs in a democratic manner by ensuring wide-ranging publicity.

3 § (1) The right to self governance is granted to voters in villages and towns (local governments) and counties (regional local governments).

(2) Local governments shall operate in villages, towns, district towns, county towns, as well as districts in the capital of the country.

(3) The Budapest municipal local government is both a city and a regional local government.

(4) The voters maintain the right to exercise their self governance rights through their elected representatives, and by participating in local referenda.

The representatives and mayors of local governments are elected by the

public, based on the universal right to vote, for a period of five years.

The Constitution of Hungary stipulates that the head of state, namely the president of the Republic of Hungary maintains the right to set the date for the election of local government representatives and mayors.

The most recent election of local government representatives, council representatives, and mayors was held in Hungary on 12 October 2014.

In accordance with Act L of 2010 on the election of local government

representatives, council representatives, and mayors, the representatives are elected using a mixed system – single-seat constituencies and compensation list seats – in towns with a population of between 10,001 and 25,000 (Tata being such a town).

This means that 8 representatives win their seat in single-member constituencies whilst 3 representatives win compensation seats.

The compensation list is formed from party candidates that are nominated in more than half of the sin-



gle-member constituencies of the town.

The election is a single round system, in which the candidate receiving the majority of the valid votes will become mayor.

The same principle applies to candidates running in single-member constituencies; the candidate who receives the majority of the valid votes will become the representative.

Votes cast for the candidates of a nominating party, that do not result in a seat of a single-member constituency, are called single transferable votes.

The single transferable votes for the same nominating party are calculated for the whole town and the compensation list seats are allocated based on a particular method of division.

Based on the above, on 12 October, 2014, the joint candidates of Fidesz – Magyar Polgári Szövetség and the Kereszténydemokrata Néppárt (Fidesz – Hungarian Civic Alliance and Christian Democratic People's Party) won the seats in all 8 single-member constituencies.

Specifically: Ágnes Czégény Viczenáné in constituency 01, Attila Kovács in constituency 02, Balázs Nágel in constituency 03, who resigned on 30 June 2017 and was replaced by Zoltán Purgel, also a joint candidate of the two parties in the interim election on 15 October 2017, Zsuzsanna Schönfeld Robozné in constituency 04, Lóránt Horváthy in constituency 05, Dr. Henrietta Beró in constituency 06, József Michl in constituency 07, and Dr. András Varga in constituency 08.

Three representatives earned their seats on the compensation list: Ákos Gerébi and Beáta Sasvári as joint candidates of the Hungarian Socialist Party and the Democratic Coalition and István Király as the candidate of the Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom (Jobbik, the Movement for a Better Hungary).

The 11-member municipal council is led by Mayor József Michl.

The statutory meeting of Tata Council on 22 October 2014 saw rep-



resentatives elect Dr. Henrietta Beró as Deputy Mayor to substitute for and assist the work of the Mayor.

The representatives also decided to establish two permanent committees to facilitate the work of the local council: the Human Resources and Statutory Committee and the Financial and Urban Development Committee. The members of these two bodies were elected at this meeting.

In accordance with the relevant laws, the majority of the members must be representatives, while the minority may be experts who are knowledgeable in the specialised areas pertaining to the committees.

The committees initiate and prepare the decisions of the council, as well as making decisions on matters that the council transfers to them.

These areas include but are not limited to the following: tasks pertaining to asset management; announcing calls for grant applications and assessing the submitted proposals; decisions on the operation of institutions run by the local govern-

ment; allocation of rented flats.

Act CLXXXIX of 2011 on Hungary's local governments states that the council shall hold meetings as specified in its statutes, with at least six meetings annually, as appropriate, which are convened and chaired by the Mayor or, if absent, by the Deputy Mayor.

As of the statutory meeting of the council on 22 October 2014, and up to 15 November 2017, 31 regular and 18 additional meetings have been held on a total of 49 occasions, at which 830 proposals were discussed and 1,499 decisions and 88 decrees made.

In accordance with the provisions of the Constitution, the next general election of council representatives and mayors is expected to be held in October 2019.



At the Tata Joint Local Government, Orsolya Heidekker works full time as the town's registrar. Due to its lovely surroundings, Tata is highly popular with young couples wishing to get married, thus an extra registrar, Márta Jenei, has been taken on to assist with weekend marriage ceremonies.

In the first six months of 2017, a total of 21,624 marriages were registered in Hungary. The number of people getting married has been on the increase for the last five years. This is an important change as this number was on the decline at the beginning of the 2000s. The lowest figure was recorded in 2010, when just 35,000 marriages were registered for the entire year. Our registrars are more than happy to see this growth in the number of marriages. Young couples now travel from all over the country to get married in our picturesque town. Tata held many marriage ceremonies even during those years, when other locations were lagging behind in terms of marriage figures. During the first ten months of 2017, 253 marriage ceremonies in all were held in Tata. Of this figure, 103 people were Tata residents. 178 couples were getting married for the first time. Although there are a number of young couples, we have seen, however, quite a few people wishing to get married around the age of 60. Lately, we have mainly been seeing those who were born in the 1980's getting married.

The increase in the marriage figures can be put down to the introduction of measures by the government, e.g. family tax allowance, home building support and tax allowance for first-time couples; all these initiatives have successfully encouraged people to get married. This is confirmed by our registrars too as they have met a number of couples who claimed they wanted to get married due to these new regulations.

Young couples have to make their intention known at least thirty days prior to the planned date of the ceremony. All necessary documents, including personal IDs, birth certificates and residence IDs must be presented, while they must also confirm

THE IMPORTANCE OF TATA'S REGISTRARS

Many people believe that the main task of registrars is to handle marriages. It is undoubtedly the most visible part of their job, especially here in Tata, which has become a popular wedding venue of late, with many young couples wishing to get married here. Obviously, aside from marriages, registrars deal with many other responsibilities, as they are present at all of the important stages of our lives, from birth right through to death.

their marital status as well. In the case of unmarried persons, registrars can easily check this themselves in the personal and address registration system. For the divorced, the decree absolute for the divorce must be presented, while for widowers the death certificate of the deceased spouse must be shown. In case there is an emergency or the parties' medical condition justifies such a claim, the notary can exempt the young couple from the thirty-day submission deadline. When the medical condition is considered to be terminal and death is imminent, it is possible to get married immediately.

On Tuesdays and Thursdays, people can get married free of charge during office hours in the Town Hall. The basic fee for ceremonies held in the office main hall on Friday afternoons and at the weekends is 15,000 forints. External marriage ceremonies held within Tata's administrative region cost 50,000 forints. These fees are stipulated by local regulations. Marriage ceremonies held outside the office require permission from the notary, who will issue an official permit for the event. Only locations which prove fitting to the significance of this important event can be awarded the notary's approval. In most cases, requests are made to hold the ceremony at restaurants, however, there has been a marriage held in the courtyard of Tata Castle. The restaurants and hotels in Tata do their utmost to make these special moments truly unforgettable. Couples are al-



ways satisfied, as is clearly shown by the fact that they readily recommend our locations to others.

Of course, registrars have many other duties alongside leading marriage ceremonies. They are present at every important step of our lives; they document our birth, our marriages and death. Data and any changes to the records are logged in the Electronic Registrar System which was created on 1 July 2014 by the government in order to promote fast and efficient data provision. Registrars deal with name changes, parental approvals, preparing citizenship oaths, and if need be, assist in wedding anniversaries.

In all, 827 marriage certificates were issued in Tata during the first ten months of the year. In spite of the fact that the town's hospital has

lacked a proper obstetrics department for a long time, and as such, birth certificates are seldom issued, the town leaders welcome all newborn babies into their Tata home with a special certificate. This initiative clearly shows just how delighted we are at the good news. Until the end of October 2017, two babies had been born who were registered in Tata. One of them was born at home, while the other was born unexpectedly. The town recognises senior citizens who are celebrating their 90th, 95th and 100th birthdays in a similar manner. Upon request, Deputy Mayor Dr. Henrietta Beró, presents the certificate to the individual concerned in person.

During the first ten months of the year, 109 deaths were registered at our office. 8 births and 85 name change requests were also registered and processed, and requests for 21 registrar-related events outside Hungary were transferred to the main office in Budapest. Until the end of October, six individuals had taken an oath of citizenship before the town's Mayor.

In addition, our registrars continuously provide data to the Immigration and Asylum Office, the Hungarian Central Statistical Office, the Komárom-Esztergom County Government Agency and the Public Administration and Electronic Services Central Office.



A WINDOW ON EUROPE



Tata has been inhabited since pre-historic times, playing a vital role in the region due to its geographical location, special natural features, and architecture. It has been home to a number of economic, intellectual and cultural initiatives over the centuries, gaining both national and Europe-wide renown.

King Sigismund, King Mátyás, Tata Castle, the Eszterházy estate and the development of the 20th century are all elements in history that have shaped the life of a small town that remains true to its cultural heritage, whilst benefiting from continuous change and development. While Europe is facing tough challenges today, such as the continuation, strengthening and cooperation of nations, the question we must ask ourselves is how can a small town from Transdanubia contribute to life at the European level? In the 21st century, what can Tata learn from Europe and what can Europe learn from us?

What part do we play on the continental stage?

Together with Altötting (Germany), Tata won the Europe Prize on 26 April 2013. The official press release for the awarding of the Europe Prize stated: *"The town of Tata, located in Komárom-Esztergom county, has developed an extensive and diverse exchange network with its 9 twin towns. More than 60 events organised in 2012 enabled many cultural, sports, and educational exchanges, making Tata an example for the promotion of the European ideal at a local level in Hungary."* To that point, Szeged had been the only Hungarian

ever win the prize, which was established in 1955. The prize is awarded to local and regional governments that play a particularly active role in international relations, strengthening European unity. The award process consists of four stages. First, there is the European Diploma, then the Flag of Honour, the Plaque of Honour and lastly the Europe Prize itself. Tata won the European Diploma in 1999, the Flag of Honour in 2000, the Plaque of Honour in 2004, and has become a member of the Association of Europe Prize Winning Towns.

With time, more opportunities for mutually beneficial partnerships presented themselves.

In order to use EU grants more efficiently, the European Union presented its members the opportunity to form legal entities known as European Groupings for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) in 2006. EGTCs allow for both transnational and inter-regional cooperation. In Hungary, non-profit organisations that allow

local governments, or regions of two or more member states, to achieve improved cooperation have been formed since August 2007. There are 63 EGTCs in the European Union. Hungary can be considered a leading force in EGTCs as there are 21 nationwide, cooperating with regions in Slovakia, Romania, Croatia, Slovenia and Ukraine. One of them is the Pons Danubii EGTC which was founded by the local governments of 3 Slovakian (Komarno, Hurbanovo, Kolárovo) and 4 Hungarian (Komárom, Tata, Kiskbér, Oroszlány) towns. Pons Danubii EGTC was officially founded on 15 December 2010. It represents the approximately 270,000 citizens of the 7 towns. The association aims to follow a non-discriminatory policy in order to provide the same opportunities to local players at national and cross-border levels. The reason for cross-border cooperation in the form of an EGTC is to achieve better access to grants, which can then accelerate the development of border regions. The main fields of cooperation are the following:

- transport
- economy
- tourism
- energy (especially renewable energy)
- culture
- life and environment
- human resources, education (especially higher education)
- cooperation between public institutions
- sport
- healthcare
- disaster management

As part of the cooperation, Pons Danubii EGTC pays special attention in joint programmes and measures to:

- the promotion of entrepreneurship
- the protection of natural and cultural resources
- strengthening relations between town and country
- reducing isolation through better access to transport, information, news services and cross-border water, energy, and waste management systems and facilities



- cooperation in terms of infra-structural development

Tata undertook an important role in both the completed and ongoing projects of the Pons Danubii EGTC. The completed projects include an online television station, the organisation of training courses and job fairs, and the bicycle route between Komárom and Kolárovo. Recently, a major project-meeting was held in our town after the EGTC submitted an application to the two-round Interreg EU Strategy for the Danube Region. The main aim of the IN-SiGHTS (Integrated Slow, Green and Healthy Tourism Strategies) project is to develop eco and health tourism based on the partner regions' natural and cultural heritage to make them become more attractive as tourist destinations. President of Pons Danubii and Mayor of Tata,

József Michl said: *"Our town is aiming to play an increasingly important role in the development of tourism along the Danube and the surrounding region. Consequently, cycle paths have been built and the rehabilitation of the Által-stream has been carried out. Through this project, we would like to gain greater know-how and experience that can then benefit all seven member towns of the Pons Danubii EGTC."*

To increase cooperation at organisational level, Tata is "represented" in person in the Council of Europe, a regional and international organisation based in Strasbourg. It is open to all European states that uphold the rule of law and ensure their citizens benefit from fundamental freedoms and basic human rights. The most important achievement of the Council was the 1950 ratification of



the European Convention on Human Rights and the subsequent formation of the European Court of Human Rights. One of the most important institutions of the Council is the Congress (Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe). Dr. Henrietta Beró was appointed as Deputy to the Spokesperson on Children's Rights. The Deputy Mayor of Tata was nominated for a year and a half by the Government of Hungary on the recommendation of the Association of Local Governments of Small Towns (Kisvárosi Önkormányzatok Országos Szövetsége).

The aims of the Council are the following:

- to settle disputes through negotiation
- protection of human rights
- better working conditions
- producing reports on migration
- supervision of the language charter
- protection and utilisation of natural resources

Any issues concerning children's rights are brought before the Spokesperson and their two deputies, to conduct the process and presentation of the issue. Dr. Henrietta Beró said: *"It is a great honour and responsibility to have become a member of such a prestigious community at such a young age. I have to work hard for myself, my town and my country, because I am also representing Tata and Hungary."* The Deputy Mayor added: *"I am glad to be able to deal with children's rights, as I have also written my thesis on this subject. This is a very complex field touching on a number of different issues. For example, the Council has launched a campaign called One in Five because one in five children in Europe becomes a victim of sexual abuse. It is an appallingly high number. The campaign was preceded by thorough research and an action plan was consequently developed. The Council aims to devise possible solutions that help solve problems at a local level and provide guidelines to legislators on a number of issues."*

And what does this mean for Tata?

EUROPE

According to Dr. Henrietta Beró, the most important thing in this joint work is putting forward good examples and practices that can later be used and realised on a local level. She can, of course, present the practices in Tata. "A while ago, we were discussing the relationship between young people and politics. The involvement of young people in society and public life has become an important issue across the continent. I told them about the Tata Students' Council and the annual public hearing, which has been a great success, as it helps communication between the generations and trains the leaders and politicians of the future. They believe in what they do and understand that working in politics is a service. This unique example in Tata has sparked great interest in the Congress."

Good ideas, practices and development does not necessarily depend on how big an organisation, town or project is. Honest work, experience and knowledge can be learned and taught, from Tata to Strasbourg.



TATA ENJOYS SUCCESS IN EU ENERGY SAVING COMPETITION

The participation of Tata Joint Local Government was a great success in the 2017 EU energy saving competition, "Spórolunk@kiloWattal". The Local Government achieved strong positions in multiple categories, whilst managing to significantly reduce the building's energy consumption by introducing a number of environmentally-friendly measures.

In the spring of 2016, the "Spórolunk@kiloWattal" energy saving competition was announced by the Green Dependent Institute for the public sector, in nine member states. In Hungary, 9 towns took part with 19 buildings, including Tata Joint Local Government. The objective of the programme was to combat climate change by altering energy usage habits in the office environment.

Alongside the Local Government office building at Kossuth tér 1, a further 180 buildings Europe-wide competed in three different categories. The three categories were changing bad habits in energy use; the organisation of a creative energy saving campaign; and the development of a sustainable energy saving action plan. Alongside the three main categories, there were two other competitions for the greatest number of surveys completed. As the public sector has an important role and responsibility in

environmental efforts, Tata Local Government found it important to spread a positive message in the town by setting a good example.

As part of the programme, a so-called Energy Committee was set up in Tata, to organise and coordinate the campaign. The committee drew up an action plan, which was used to conduct the overall campaign, while continuously monitoring the results. Participation in the competition led to a number of significant changes to the work of Local Government employees. During the programme, a number of issues were addressed. For example, increased awareness of computer use such as completely powering down the machines instead of using screen savers and the promotion of online administration to reduce paper consumption. Other solutions included printing on both sides of the paper, separate waste collection, optimal use of lamps, and the conscious, weather-appropriate use of heating and A/C. In addition, employees were advised in a number of practical ways. Table lamps were provided when it was deemed necessary to reduce

energy consumption; new plants were placed in the office building to achieve higher humidity levels; switches were placed at desks to facilitate the powering down of computers; new, modern printers and photocopiers were acquired; light bulbs were replaced with LED lights; refrigerators were inspected and calibrated; selective waste paper bins were placed next to photocopiers; recyclable office supplies were ordered; and awareness-raising posters and stickers were placed throughout the building.

The competition ended last year with great success, as the Local Government was given 2 first place awards, 1 second place award, 1 fourth place award and 1 sixth place award. Both first places were achieved by completing the surveys. 80% of employees completed the basic survey, while 90% completed the final campaign survey, which demonstrated the dedication of the employees to the campaign. The prize for the first places was native Hungarian fruit trees, to be planted in the gardens of employees who want them. The prizes for second place were gift cards each worth

100,000 HUF, to be spent on organic products. The Local Government achieved an overall energy saving of 3.4%, which landed them 6th place in the competition.





NEW TATA SPORTS HALL OPENS

At the end of 2016, just a few days before Christmas, a new 2,700 m² town sports hall was opened. The new sports hall was named after its biggest sponsor, Güntner. A total of 1.15bn HUF was invested in the project, 70% of which was won by Tata Athletics Club through a TAO (corporate and dividend tax for companies) grant, while the remainder was provided by the local government.

The Hungarian Parliament amended the sports act on 27 June 2011, which also altered Act LXXXI of 1996 on corporate tax and dividend tax. The new act enables companies to support the five most popular branches of spectator sport (football, handball, basketball, water polo and ice hockey) with up to 70% of their corporate tax liability. This support may be provided by any profitable Hungarian company that pays corporate tax (except those owned by the state which are subject to TAO). The amount of the contribution is seen as a cost arising from conducting business activities, as additional expenditure, thus it does not increase the company's corporate tax base. The companies which take advantage of this opportunity can obtain corpo-

rate tax relief and a small tax base allowance.

Tata Athletics Club (TAC) took advantage of this act in 2012, when it submitted an application to the Hungarian Handball Association to build a sports hall. However, 30% of the investment still had to be funded by a contribution from the applicant. As TAC were unable to come up with this amount by themselves, they turned to the local government to support their initiative. The town welcomed the idea, and undertook to provide funds for the contribution, allowing the sports hall to be built in a green area owned by the town, in front of Kőkúti Primary School. In December 2013, the Hungarian Handball Association approved TAC's application and granted nearly 500m HUF from

TAO payments, in support of the first stage of the project.

Once the Club had gained the approval of the Hungarian Handball Association, they contacted businesses in Tata and the nearby area to request contributions from their corporate tax to put towards the construction of the sports hall. The idea was positively received by many businesses. The largest amount in TAO contributions was put forward by Güntner-Tata Hűtőtechnikai Kft., Gedia Hungary Kft., Gyermelyi Élelmiszeripari Zrt., M-Environ Kft., L&P Kft., Pannon Biomassza Energetikai és Általános Kereskedelmi Kft., PCE Paragon Solutions Kft., Rotte Group Kft., Tatai Környezetvédelmi Zrt., Terra-Log Mélyépítő Kft. and West Hungária Bau Építőipari Szolgáltató Kft. Together with these companies, around twenty more Tata-based and local firms offered their TAO payments, ranging from a couple of hundred thousand forints to five million forints for the construction of the sports hall.

The first phase of construction began in winter 2015. The total investment of 650m HUF covered the construction costs of the 2,100 m² sports hall with a 1,500 m² arena and changing room. The mobile stand

in the hall is able to accommodate over 500 spectators. In addition to these facilities, the sports hall also includes a gym, a sports equipment storage room, a reception area, a snack bar and a cloakroom. The area around the building has also been renovated; a car park has been built, and a direct connection with Május 1. út has been established to make the new sports hall easily accessible from the main road.

The need for expansion of the sports hall already arose during the design phase, and was implemented in the second phase of construction. In order to finance the second phase, the Club submitted a new TAO application to the Hungarian Handball Association. The town undertook once more to provide 30% of the total budget. 70% of the investment was again financed by TAO payments from a number of companies. In the second phase, the Club requested a total of 500m HUF for new locker rooms with disabled access, as well as other functions to enable the sports hall to host town and cultural programmes in addition to sports events. With the new application, the building was extended by means of a closed bridge-type corridor which connects the hall to the building of Kőkkúti School.

The sports hall is used by the students of the school for morning PE classes. Special partition walls make it possible to hold three classes simultaneously. In the afternoons, TAC's handball and volleyball teams hold their training sessions there. At the weekends, the hall hosts the league matches of the men's and women's handball teams who play in League I/B and League II of the national championships, respectively. For the rest of the time, the sports hall hosts a wide range of cultural events.

The hall was transferred to local government ownership free of charge, with TAC then renting the space as needed. In return, the local government undertook to provide long-term financial support to TAC activities by supporting the club with an annual 45m HUF. On signing



the agreement, the local government requested that TAC increase its club member figures in Olympic sports from the current 700 to 800, and ensure that the club will continuously have men's and women's teams in the national second division. The sports club promised to increase club membership figures until the end of 2019. The club's men's handball team maintains its position in the second division, and the women's team is striving to get promoted

to the second division soon.

In addition to PE classes, training sessions and matches, the sports hall hosted a variety of other events in 2017. To mention just a few, it hosted an exhibition on Tata's handball history, the 15th "Farsang Kupa" Gastronomy Championship, and the 6th Wedding Fair were held at the hall, while the award-giving ceremony for Tata's most prominent sportsmen also took place there.



BUILDERS' PARK TO BE RENEWED

Last year, a few days before Christmas, Mayor József Michl announced in a video on his Facebook page that the “Build a Green City” grant application they had submitted as part of the Area- and Settlement Development Operative Program (TOP), had been deemed worthy of a grant. Our town was awarded 449m HUF to renovate Builders’ Park (Tata’s largest park by the Old Lake).



Over the last few years, the town has started renovations of the local parks, using its own funds. The area by the cafés was reconstructed, a promenade was built, a new children’s play area was created, and an outdoor gym was constructed for adults. Town management realised that the developments were welcomed not only by Tata residents, but also by those living in the surrounding areas. If the weather is nice, the park attracts large crowds wanting to relax and unwind on afternoons and at weekends. Last year, a grant programme invitation to

support the development of green urban areas was published as part of TOP. The invitation inspired the local government to consider further projects for the renewal of the area’s infrastructure. The businesses and local residents affected were also involved in drafting the project details. A residents’ forum was held, a survey was conducted, and business owners were negotiated with in person. The survey revealed that more than half of the respondents (almost two hundred and fifty people filled out the questionnaire) visit Builders’ Park on a monthly basis, most often with

their families. 90% of respondents consider the present condition of the area to be inadequate, and suggest the modernisation of green areas. Three-quarters of the respondents support the expansion of the recreation and sports facilities. The survey also reinforced the idea that the proposed community area, to be built as a result of the development, would be used recreationally by residents in their free time.

Based on the local government plan and the locals’ needs, a grant programme application was submitted early last summer, with the aim



of increasing the number of available activities in the 17 hectare park by the Old Lake. They envisioned a sustainable venue for a wide range of outdoor entertainment and sports. The development is closely linked to the town's Magyar Plan, the Integrated Area Development Strategy (ITS), the county's Integrated Area Programme (ITP) and to the Komárom-Esztergom County Area Development Concept. These all aim to preserve the quality of green areas, expand the scope of services and events, support sustainable development, grow tourism, boost so-

cial engagement, promote inclusion and creativity and retain residents. The local government received the news of the grant programme application's acceptance just before last Christmas.

The funds will be used to carry out a number of infrastructural developments. The size of the toddlers' play area will be doubled, and new playground equipment will be purchased. The area will be extended towards the car park, allowing easier access to visitors with prams. For older children, a ninety square me-

tre adventure park is planned. The outdoor gym will be relocated to a little further towards the shade of the trees bordering the park, supplemented by further safe, heavy-duty equipment that can stand wear and tear. Next to the Borostyán-ház, a 2,000 m² artificial sports field will be built, which can also easily accommodate a tent for large-scale events. Within the framework of the project, the drainage of rainwater will also be diverted down to Deák Ferenc utca, turning local residents' fears of heavier rains into a thing of the past. Street lights will also be modernised by fitting them with energy-saving light fittings. Public toilets are to be renovated, which is essential for a recreational park serving crowds on this scale. Further benches and rubbish bins will be installed. Cycle storage is also planned, while the local government is also negotiating with regard to a bike rental agency. The project also covers the introduction of new plants.

Alongside the project, renovation of the Borostyán-ház in the park is also expected. As the owner of the building, the local government already has an agreement with Vértési Erdő Zrt. for this purpose. It will be home to a trade and service outlet which sells local products.

The local government envisages the development of the Builders' Park in a sophisticated manner, which means that renewal of the area would also include modernising the adjacent car park. As the present grant programme does not cover this, renewal of the car park and installation of CCTV in the park will need to be financed using the local government's own funds, possibly from another grant programme.

Construction works are expected to start in winter and to continue until mid-next year. The town leadership is primarily aiming to favour local families with the development, but of course, everyone is welcome to use these facilities.

A NEW SOURCE OF FUNDS

The town has received a government grant of 327.7m HUF to alleviate damage caused by rises in the levels of karst water. By utilising the available amount, the local government will start taking action in the areas requiring immediate intervention, and then spend the remaining amount on further tests. Springs appearing at a number of locations throughout the town have been causing problems for the people of Tata as these natural resources pose a threat to the historic and residential buildings, as well as to transportation. Unfortunately, the Esterházy Palace is also affected by the problem.

BACKGROUND

The town's most important natural resources are these ubiquitous springs. There are numerous lakes, creeks, springs and brooks in the town's administrative area which have been used for a variety of purposes over many centuries. Recent decades have brought significant changes in the town's environment, especially in terms of karst water springs. Due to the extremely intensive coal mining activity in the 1950s, and the resulting water pumping in the Tatabánya region, karst water levels decreased significantly to the point where all Tata's springs had dried up by the 1970s. The karst water level slowly started to rise again when mining stopped. The first springs to return were low-lying; for instance, Fényes Springs reappeared as early as 2001, followed by other springs at higher locations. The returning springs meant significant challenges to the town, especially in areas where buildings had been erected after the springs had dried up. At the same time, these water sources represent massive potential for the town as many of them are lukewarm and provide large amounts of water. Some years ago, the Local Government of Tata signed an agreement with the Geological and Geophysical Institute of Hungary (MFGI) to launch a research programme. The programme's objective is based on a hydro-geological model, geological threat surveys, and town/building structure analysis, in order to map potential methods for alleviating the threats posed by returning springs and to propose methods for their utilisation. The MFGI prepared a study to summarise their findings, then drafted an action plan to ensure sustainable management of the spring water.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

A 2014 survey confirmed that the karst water level under the town is at approximately 136 m, and by 2018 it would most likely reach as high as 140 m, which is supposedly

very close to the karst water level equilibrium. Changes in precipitation conditions or extreme precipitation volumes, similar to those of 2010, may cause a rapid increase in karst water levels. The expected water yield of these springs could not be determined as the data available were insufficient. However, it is estimated that yield figures will be close to the original values. Water chemistry tests have shown that the springs and water wells are of karst origin. Local pollution was found in the Palace Garden Spring and in the well dug next to the Kismosó Creek. In the former case, a number of toxic elements were found in the foaming water, present along the edges of the bed, with the toxic concentration level exceeding environmental limits. These toxic elements are assumed to originate from either a polluted landfill or industrial pollution. Research has found that most of the endangered areas are those located above main sub-surface water drain zones connected to soil failure zones. The problem may potentially be aggravated further by the mixing of karst and subsoil water, especially at locations where the clay layers separating these water systems were disturbed during building construction. Town and building structure surveys established that the elevation of the subsoil water level and the reappearance of water springs may cause structural building problems (sinkage and slippage), heavily impact the usability of underground cellars (due to rotting and corrosion), and the wet/damp walls can have a detrimental effect on human health (arthritis, respiratory problems, allergies). Seeping water destroys roads (collapse, underwash, sinking), threatens the safety of line network infrastructure (underwash, pressure-induced breakage or seepage, sewage water infiltration), and can draw out polluting substances from underground tanks or wells. The tests conducted clearly identified which town areas face the biggest threat. The study also listed a number of solutions for how to utilise these reappearing springs. The

MFGI suggested solutions which incorporate conventional and modern methods, making it possible to use complex processes, which are at the same time in line with the objectives of the Magyar plan. These solutions aim to make water resources visible, foster ecology-oriented water use, promote small-scale local utilisation, and facilitate power, drinking water and industrial use of water (for agriculture, tourism, industry, recreation).

INTERVENTIONS RECOMMENDED BY THE MFGI

The MFGI defined two levels of intervention. Problems first need to be solved in the most vulnerable areas, while in the least threatened areas, preparations ought to be made to counter any possible damage. The former areas require detailed geological tests and surveys; a special engineering geology map describing soil and construction relations needs to be compiled for these areas. The MFGI suggested the preparation of a detailed and precise 3D water and soil model, which would enable experts to forecast the expected effects and share information, in case of emergency measures. Water channel failure locations need to be pinpointed as soon as possible, as springs are most likely to reappear at these locations in the future. Furthermore, a database of building construction plans needs to be compiled. If no such database is available, the technical parameters of buildings should be surveyed to ensure that technical documentation is readily accessible in case of problems. Individual surveys are recommended in the most vulnerable areas for buildings which, due to their weight or size, may pose a threat from a structural point of view. It has been deemed necessary to uncover pollution sources surrounding Kismosó Creek, as the increasing water level may have covered layers or objects, which could allow polluting substances to be released and spread further. These polluting agents not only harm the soil, surface and underground wa-

ters, but can also indirectly endanger the local fauna and flora, and can cause human health problems as well. Unburdening the precipitation and sewage water systems, and the separated drainage of spring water are also listed among the critical mission objectives. In order to avoid pollution, it is necessary to ensure that spring water does not mix with precipitation and sewage systems. Furthermore, documentation should be compiled, which takes into consideration the current systems and their technical condition, the technical limits of separation, and current water drain system survey data and information.

For the future, the following general measures are recommended. Urban planning and environmental protection-related documents (Magyary plan, environmental protection programme) need to be reviewed in order to better focus on spring water utilisation options. Updating the Water Damage Mitigation Plan is considered to be of utmost importance. Establishing a single monitoring system is recommended, to seamlessly follow up and track the

impact of environmental changes. Creation of a single, unified database which contains spring-related technical and geographical data, building and technical infrastructure data, risk area information, etc. is also suggested. It would also be important to create a digital 3D model of the region to replicate how and where water flows. In addition to this, it would be useful to model karst water and spring water yields, by taking climate changes into consideration. Finally, a status check of critical infrastructure elements and an update to the public utility network map are also recommended.

REQUESTING STATE ASSISTANCE

Over the past couple of years, the local government has managed to drain spring water at several locations, based on the MFGI's recommendations, using its own funds or with grants. For instance, in the English Park, at the 8 Réti Lakes, and at Fényes Lido. As there are billions of forints at stake, the local government, supported by local MP János Bencsik, filed a request at the relevant

Ministry to request that the government allocate a set amount from the 2016 central budget to alleviate local damage. Last year, the local government urged an intensified state role be taken at the Ministry of Interior. The Minister of the Interior, Sándor Pintér, asked Deputy Undersecretary Imre Hoffmann, to set up an operative board to handle the issues in connection with water springs reappearing in communities located in the karst water system of the Central Transdanubian region. The operative board was formed in the summer of 2016, with the incorporation of relevant representatives from the National Directorate General for Disaster Management, the Győr Department of the General Directorate of Water Management and the Geological and Geophysical Institute of Hungary. In July, the National General Directorate of Water Management conducted an on-site visit to the town, during which a number of life-threatening situations were uncovered. Some months later, the town requested a further report and recommendations from the MFGI, to cease the problems encountered in the Kismosó Creek vicinity and to

Grófi Lake



János Bencsik, MP, Dr. Miklós Dukai, Deputy State Secretary for Local Government and József Michl, Mayor on the bank of the Kismosó Creek



drain the water from Május 1. út. The local government filed a vis major request at the Ministry of the Interior. This request was rejected as the regulations and rules stipulated in the vis major decree are not suitable for handling this situation. The Ministry then requested detailed information from the town, and asked the local government to outline the most important measures which need to be implemented immediately in order to avoid any damage to properties or life.

THE MOST URGENT MEASURES

In the spring of 2017, the town clarified which areas are most at risk in terms of the springs. In light of this, the government awarded a state grant at the end of August in the amount of 327.7m HUF to alleviate the problems. Of this sum, 46.7m HUF has been allocated to the preliminary tests recommended by the MFGI. A detailed geotechnical survey will be conducted and an engineering geology map drafted. Moreover, the exact location of water channel failures will be identified, and a database of building construction plans compiled. Where necessary, buildings' technical parameters will be assessed as well. The town allocated 3m HUF for planning, and a total

of 278m HUF for implementation. The latter amount will provide sufficient funds to restore the Kismosó Creek's water transport capacity and improve its bed. These steps are necessary as properties in the affected area are flooded; some cellars have water permanently standing in them. Springs stemming from the Esterházy Palace gardens and the surrounding neighbourhood will also be channelled, and previous water drain beds restored. Currently, there are two springs in the palace garden. The one at the rear of the garden actually feeds a small lake on the surface, and thus poses a massive threat to the palace itself, as well as to neighbouring family homes. As gravity-aided drainage of this spring to the Old Lake is not possible, a similar system will be put in place to drain the water away through the plots of the neighbouring family homes towards the local government-operated water drainage system located in adjacent Hajdú utca. This solution will ultimately alleviate the threat to the palace and surrounding buildings. The Lo Presti Spring, which surfaces on the plot next to Fürdő utca kindergarten, will be channelled into a tank in Hajdú utca using money from the sum allocated for water management. The Romans built a

bath on this spring, and this spring also provided water to the fortification at Brigetio (Ószőny). Later, a Benedictine monastery was built on this spot, which was followed by a nunnery, before being used by the water management company as a reserve resource, until it dried up. As the karst level was continuously rising, the well filled up, and rose to the surface following a particularly wet May. The floor of the workshop built on the plot is just centimetres away from disappearing under water; the low lying patch of land in front of it is constantly wet. Any further increase in the water level would threaten the adjacent buildings and kindergarten as well. The town has already made plans to drain the water. The aforementioned measures have already been taken, and are planned to be completed by the end of 2018.

This current aid only covers the most necessary steps which cannot be postponed any longer. When new funding becomes available to the local government, town management plans to continue damage mitigation, and will aim to ensure that the residents of Tata will consider these reappearing springs as huge possibilities rather than problems.

THE RENOVATION OF THE ESTERHÁZY PALACE IS TO RESUME SOON



The Esterházy Palace in Tata is being renovated as part of the National Palace Programme. Over the centuries, the Palace has been the site of a number of important historical events and its renovation is long overdue. A state programme launched in 2015 will ensure that this magnificent building is returned to its former glory.

The 250-year-old building will be renovated as part of the National Palace Programme. The programme, launched by the Hungarian government in 2015, aims to renovate a total of 35 palaces, all of which are a key part of the country's national heritage. The programme budget amounts to 55bn HUF and is funded by the European Union and the central budget of Hungary. The latter supports the initiative through targeted budget allocations in the period 2017 to 2019. The buildings are to receive new roles, in order to meet the modern expectations of tourism. The renovation will ensure that the palaces can operate efficiently to ensure profitability and be in line with

local demands. The programme is supervised by the ministerial commissioner, who is responsible for the National Palace and Castle programme.

The state-owned building has been awaiting this renovation for a long time now. The local government made considerable efforts to ensure that the state would not let the building fall into ruin. The building is currently managed by Nemzeti Örökségvédelmi Fejlesztési Nonprofit Kft. The local government welcomed the Hungarian government's initiative. The first phase of the programme concerns the full-scale reconstruction of the Tata palace. Renovation work began in May 2016, starting

with the roof structure, which was restored using domestic funds. The second phase is soon to be launched, during which the main building and the southern wing of the Small Palace will be fully rebuilt using EU funding. The project will involve renovation of the roof structures, heating and waterproofing systems. Moreover, the facade doors and remaining baroque windows will be restored, together with a major overhaul of the building's interior. Under floor heating will be installed on the ground floor, while central heating will be installed on the first floor. The former chapel has also been restored, in which the Head of the Kapuziner monastery held mass for Charles I of Austria and his wife during their stay at the palace, following the 1921 Battle of Budaörs. The restoration will incorporate the renewal of stuccos, paintwork, rails, door and window hinges, wooden finishes and parquet, to name a few. Lead-glass windows in the chapel and marble bathroom finishes are to be renovated as well. The park will be partially restored; primarily, the inner courtyard between the Small Palace and the main building, including the lion fountain, are to be renovated based on the original designs. One of the project's most visible elements is the colour of the palace facade. Research has unveiled a white facade hidden beneath six layers of yellow paint, thus the palace is to be restored to its original colour. Once the renovation is complete, the exterior building

walls will be white and the roof will be red. The roofing of the small towers adorning each end of the building will be copper-plated. The total cost of the investment amounts to 1.5bn HUF, however, for the entire palace to be fully restored, an additional 3bn HUF is required.

There are also plans to set up a visitors centre and an events room in the southern wing. The latter will host a broad range of events such as weddings and family gatherings. An exhibition on the female members of the Esterházy family will be on display in the palace rooms, as well as a special exhibition presenting the palace's role in the history of Hungarian diplomacy. The building, designed by Jakab Fellner between 1760 and 1776 in the late Baroque style, has served as a location for many important events throughout history. When Captain Miklós Esterházy (1711-1765) received properties in Tata and Gesztes, he commissioned the architect to perform the design work. The single-storey main building is the most important feature of the 3,500 m² structure, as it borders the Small Palace and its connecting buildings from the west. These buildings connected Chief Supervisor Ferenc Balogh's flat, which was built in 1751, to the palace. This flat and the small barn was also designed by Jakab Fellner. The palace garden covers a total of 16,000 m².

In 1809, Austrian Emperor and Hungarian King Franz I and his wife Maria Ludovika of Austria-Este

sought refuge from Napoleon within the palace walls. The Emperor also signed the treaty of Schönbrunn, which ended the Napoleonic wars, in this palace. During the 1848-49 Hungarian revolution and war of independence, Generals Alfred Candidus Ferdinand of Windisch-Grätz and Julius Jacob von Haynau slept at the palace. On 2 May, 1849, Artúr Görgey launched his attack to retake Buda from his headquarters in the Palace. In 1897, Franz Joseph I of Austria and Wilhelm II, the German Emperor, slept in the building during a combat drill organised in the vicinity of Tata, codenamed the "Kaiser Manoeuvre". Following their unsuccessful attempt to take back the throne, Charles I of Austria and his wife were captured in October 1921. After WWII, the palace was repossessed by the state and functioned as a mental institution. A major Budapest-based mental hospital was relocated here when the Soviet troops took over its original facilities in Buda. The building was left completely empty when the hospital moved out of the building at the beginning of the 1990s.

A key objective of the restoration is to preserve the current state of the palace, to breathe life into its walls, and to establish a working relationship between the town and the building, which will be open to local residents and visitors alike. We sincerely hope that the first results of these grand restoration works will be visible as early as next year.



Esterházy Palace Design Plan

GO FISHING IN TATA!

Fishing and angling in our town

Due to its unique natural resources and outstanding location, Tata is often referred to as "The Town of Water" as the town boasts a massive 300 hectares of water surface. Our largest lakes are: The Old Lake, Cseke Lake, The 8 Réti Lakes, Derítő Lake, Asszony Lake, and Városi Lake, all of which attract a huge number of visitors all year round, and ensure a fixed location for fishing and angling activities.

Early written sources confirm that Tata's relationship with water and fishing goes back many centuries. Interestingly, in a registry of Vladislaus II of Hungary dated 1490, there are details of the purchase of 3 fisher-

man's carts for the 3 fishermen employed on Lake Tata, for 10 gold coins. Tata was also a key venue for royal hunting parties, for instance, it was a favourite hunting ground of Matthias Corvinus. Aside from many other events, Matthias Corvinus organised fishing celebrations by the Old Lake, which was designated by King Sigismund as a place to store his fish. The excellent water quality allowed for ample fishing, which reached its height during the Esterházy era. The Old Lake was established well before the Hungarian conquest of the Carpathian Basin, through the construction of a small dam across a section of the Által stream, making the Old Lake

one of the oldest artificial lakes in Hungary. The lake was subsequently used and extended during medieval times. Tata was an estate centre for the Esterházy family from 1727 onwards, and the current lake system was created by draining the neighbouring wetlands during the 18th century. The original shape of the Old Lake was initially based on the plans of Sámuel Mikoviny, a renowned water engineer. As a part of the Esterházy lands, the lake was used as a fishing lake for centuries. From the beginning of the 1900's, hauling in fish from the Old Lake became a real community event, despite the fact that nobody had actually celebrated this fishing festival for centuries. As of 2001, Mezőgazdasági Zrt. restarted this local event which is becoming increasingly popular with a wide range of spectators. The lake was in fact owned by Tatai Mezőgazdasági Zrt. between 1990 and 2016. Surrounded by the town on all sides, the lake has been protected by the Ramsar Convention since 1989.

The English Park was built by engineer Ferenc Böhm in 1783. The local spring water, picturesque natural surroundings and Lake Cseke, named after the owner of the Jenő Mill, made the location ideal for the new park. The park's unique lake has a friendly atmosphere. It covers 23 hectares and has two small islands, making it a real paradise for anglers. Similarly, Lake Derítő, formed in 1961 by the mining authority to protect Old Lake, also serves as a prime location for angling. The main objective was to ensure that the Által stream deposits its river wash into the lake. As the lake was formed without felling any of the surrounding trees, all of the natural hideaways remained on the lake bed, thus creating a perfect habitat for fish. In its present form, the lake bed is home to a huge amount of natural habitats, with confirmed reports in the 1980s of a carp weighing more than 20kg, and a catfish of over 40kg being caught in Lake Derítő. In addition, the lake is also known for its high numbers of bass. Lake Derítő currently serves as a prime location for sports fishing, as it is very popular

among keen anglers.

Vocational training in fishing has a long history in the town. Fishery training first started in Tata in 1970, with the first graduating fishery class, which had been relocated from Majk. The training commenced in the Diófa utca building of the Agricultural and Food Industry Vocational School, which hosted full-time, part-time, and evening courses until June 2006, when full-time fishery courses were phased out as a result of national policies. In the first years, the teaching schedule comprised three weeks of classroom courses followed by two months of practical training. The students spent the practical period in nearby fisheries, close to home. It is worth noting that this system is considered to be a predecessor of today's dual education system. From the middle of the 1970s onwards, the school implemented a full-time education system; initially two weeks of classroom teaching followed by a week of practical training. From the 1980s, this was altered to a system of three days of classroom teaching and just two days of practical training. In the meantime, despite the intense protests of teaching staff, the local

communist party committee decided to rename the school to István Dobi Agricultural and Food Industry Vocational School. The school held this name until 1990. Classroom courses were taught by István Lajkó, while practical classes were mostly led by Mr Gábor Károly. For larger groups which needed to be split, Zoltan Maknics and László Tóth also joined the teaching team. During this period, Tata was the only town providing fishery training in Hungary, with the majority of students coming from families who had been fishing for many years. There were a number of cases where the grandfather, father and son had all been trained in Tata. From the end of the 1970s, the bulk of the practical training was conducted on Tata State Farm, at Lake Réti, Lake Ferencmajori and the Old Lake. In 1988 and 1989, practical training took place at Lake Agostyáni (currently Lake Római) and from 1991 onwards, the 8 Réti Lakes served as the school's practical training facility. The students participated in a complete fishery course, with all tasks performed independently, under proper teacher supervision. Any topics which were impossible to teach locally (fish mat-

ing in tempered water, eel and trout farming) were taught at different locations such as Dinnyés, Százhalombatta, and Balaton Fishery, based on a co-operation agreement. 2002 saw the unification of the Agricultural and Food Industry Vocational School and Jávorka Agricultural Vocational School. Jávorka Sándor Agricultural and Food Industry Vocational School was given the green light to teach full-time fishery courses, however, due to the lack of interest, the course unfortunately had to be cancelled.

The Old Lake Fishermen's Festival first appeared in the news as early as the beginning of the 1900s. It clearly shows that fishery was always the focus of attention, and both professionals and laymen preferred this type of activity. Net casting became a real community event and since 2001, this tradition has been revived once more. Thousands of visitors come to the Old Lake Fishermen's Festival every October to celebrate the history and traditions of Tata fisheries and to enjoy the cultural and gastronomic festivities. A major feature of the event is a spectacular fish "harvesting", whereby a 400 m long net is drawn across the lake. This type of fishing is not prac-

Famous Tata artist Lajos Dobroszláv's painting "Halászat" (Fishing) (1950)



ticed anywhere else in the country.

The Hungarian state launched an open tender for three Old Lake fish farming permits in April, 2016. Tatai Öreg-tó Halászati Kft. and the Tata Sports Fishing and Environmental Protection Association submitted a joint application. In order to improve the chances of success of the initiative, a legal agreement was concluded between the parties, to establish a civil law partnership. The civil-law partnership was successfully awarded the rights, obtaining a fish farming permit valid for 15 years. In 2017, after receiving technical assistance from Aranypony Zrt., Tatai Öreg-tó Halászati Kft. started to conduct the farming of fish. Hajnalka Haris Karsainé, the company's managing director, emphasised that the Local Government of Tata had previously undertaken, through the Magyar Programme, to foster and promote the town's historical heritage and traditions, and thus, to conduct fishery training as a means to create new employment opportunities. This was one of the main reasons Tatai Öreg-tó Halászati Kft. was established. The foundation of this company was beneficial for Tata for a number of reasons:

- An indirect effect of fish farming is the improvement in water quality of the lake.
- The establishment of a river watch programme has made the lake shore safer. All illegal fishing activities are reported to the police.
- The castle's moat was also connected to the fish farming ecosystem, thus, moat reconstruction began by dredging the bed and relocating plant life. Pipework, bridges and other installations will also undergo a major overhaul.
- In October 2017, the Old Lake Fishermen's Festival was organised in the spirit of old local fishing traditions. The festival was also a great opportunity to buy fish at discount prices. The Managing Director outlined the future tasks as follows: – The objective is to harvest the fish as efficiently as possible, and to establish a permanent possibility to buy fish. In addition,

more resources are to be allocated for moat maintenance and renovation, as the Old Lake is a real treasure both of Tata and the country as a whole.

Restarting fishery activities on the lake has greatly improved the water quality and reinstated ecological balance during the summer season. Fishing has undoubtedly had a beneficial effect on water quality. In relation to the above, Mr Ferenc Lévai, CEO of Aranypony Zrt., highlighted the following: – once they were awarded the fishing rights, they had two key objectives. One of them was to conduct traditional fish farming, and the other was to improve the water quality. If there are no fish in a lake, the lake is doomed as it will be void of both life and ecosystems. In addition, the Old Lake can be tricky to deal with, due to the quantity of organic material deposited in the lake by the wild geese nesting here over the wintertime. In order for the lake to fulfil its role in terms of nature conservation, the water quality must be of a high standard. A prerequisite for good water quality is a single ecological system in which the plants growing in the water are consumed by animals living in the lake, thus the amount of organic materials diminishes and the water becomes cleaner. As consumers, fish play an essential role in this natural cycle. They constantly keep the lake bed in motion, which prevents the build-up of gas in the silt, and in doing so, help to maintain water quality.

While I was writing this article, co-ordinated fish harvesting at the Old Lake was well under way, with current figures showing that the founding year of Tatai Öreg-tó Halászati Kft. promises to be a successful one. Healthy good-sized fish, mainly carp, are served in many Tata homes as the Christmas dinner.

The 21st century will open the door to a new chapter in the history of Tata fisheries. The Town of Water is proud to be able to celebrate its traditions by safeguarding its heritage for future generations.



INTERVIEW WITH GYULA FEKETE, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF BARINA KFT., THE DEVELOPER AND OPERATOR OF TATA INDUSTRIAL PARK

When and why did you decide to establish Barina Kft.?

In 1998, five private companies, in partnership with the local government, founded Tata Industrial and Logistics Park and started to develop the site just south of the town. Four businesses, namely Transpoint Kft., Sulikönyv Kft., Gabler-Mirelta Kft. and FTK Kft. which were operating in Barina utca, established their sites there. These companies covered all of the implementation costs to allow development of the industrial site. They installed public utilities and built the roads. However, due to the lack of funds, construction work at the industrial park site had to be suspended, and nothing happened for years. This was exactly the period when there was very intensive interest in Hungarian industrial parks. Unfortunately, we were unable to offer an area that could meet the needs of foreign companies. Therefore, at the initiative of the four private owners, and including Mezőgazdasági Rt., Barina Kft. was founded in 2006 with the aim of developing the industrial park. The first serious foreign company showing interest was the German Gedia Kft, which eventually moved here. They believed in our vision, that the farm land and corn field could someday be converted into a functional industrial site with proper infrastructure. They trusted in us and purchased a seven hectare site to establish a production facility. After that, we started to build the roads and public utilities. We were able to show interested parties the areas where they could start building their own facilities. From then on, we were able to accelerate the sale of real estate.

Initially, you had to convince both investors and locals that



someday there would be an industrial park here with advanced infrastructure, as many people thought Tata should just focus on developing tourism.

Tata realised fairly late after the political changeover that industry also needs to be developed. Previously, the development of tourism had been given priority and very few people supported the industrialisation of the town. It was difficult to convince the leaders of that time that the development of industry could be initiated at a location well-separated from the town, without disturbing residential and recreational areas too much. Tata Industrial Park lies directly beside the Budapest-Vienna motorway, so neither heavy lorries nor commuting workers place a strain on the town's traffic. In order to ensure that a town operates efficiently and has enough funds for performing community tasks, you need 21st century industry. Industry needs to be developed, as this is the sector that creates jobs and provides livelihoods for the people of Tata.

What extra services can Tata Industrial Park provide, compared

to neighbouring towns?

It is hard to compare our Park to other sites. We do not wish to and cannot compete with the neighbouring industrial parks. For example, the smaller developments in Tatabánya have been implemented on five to ten hectares and the larger ones on thirty to sixty hectares. In our Park, the largest sites have five to eight hectares, while the smaller ones have just three to five thousand square metres. Currently, the largest, eight hectare site is owned by NHK Spring Kft. They have already built on half of their site and are planning to finish the remainder next year. We have been constantly seeking out ways to excel and offer more than the neighbouring industrial parks. We are also offering a town in addition to an industrial park. We guide all our investors through the town and show them all the attractions, restaurants and hotels. They can find numerous opportunities for recreation and sport after work. We are also keeping an eye on the small and medium-sized enterprises in our town. Our Mayor knows the managing directors of most of them and

meets with the heads of the largest businesses four times a year, and visits them from time to time. The businesses greatly appreciate this.

How do foreign investors find Tata? Do you advertise your facility?

We have partners, including companies and private persons, who represent Tata Industrial Park and the town of Tata in countries such as Germany and Spain. We are in contact with a number of trade and industry chambers, as well as the National Investment Agency.

Is there any serious foreign interest at present?

I cannot talk about those interested, as we have made a confidentiality agreement with each of them. The companies want to remain active in the market and compete with their rivals, and so they disclose their business secrets and development plans as late as possible.

The Industrial Park is also home to numerous Hungarian businesses. Who are the newly arrived companies?

We have numerous businesses with relatively small sites. Last year, three small halls were built and this year five businesses built on sites with four to five thousand square metres. This year, the number of employees within the Park increased by three hundred in total; last year, the total number of workers exceeded one thousand.

How much space is still free in the Park?

An area of seventy-three hectares has already been developed and we have an additional 46.6 hectares available for development and use. We signed a joint development agreement with the local government at the end of last year. Under this agreement, we replaced the overhead lines that were in the way and are building three new roads in the Park, two of which have already been completed, with the third still in progress. Over the course of next

year, we are planning to install the main rain drainage duct for the entire Park. We have been on good terms with the local government from the very beginning, both in connection with the alteration and approval of the town's detailed development plan, as well as the implementation of development projects. The town also played a key role in sales. Our Mayor either attended the negotiations and meetings in person or sent his authorised representatives. This was the case with the Japanese investors too. They later said their decision was largely based on the fact that they could see the town's leadership was as committed to the development and operation of the Park, as Barina Kft.

If you manage to sell all the sites within a few years, will your job be over?

It is hard to foresee how long it will take to sell all the sites that are still available. It is possible that three buyers will take all the available

space and then our work will come to an end. But perhaps we will be able to sell only ten small sites in ten years, in which case we will still have a lot to do going forward. We hope that the economic recovery will last another few years and Tata will have an industrial site that can contribute significantly to the development of the town.

You don't just sell space in the Industrial Park, you also operate it. What does that involve exactly?

This year, the Park has grown to a size that requires an organised environment for the businesses operating here. We have reached an agreement with all the companies that have moved in here, under which we perform maintenance work for the public spaces managed by Barina Kft, including the maintenance and cleaning of the roads and rain ducts, snow removal, managing the green areas, lawn-mowing and much more.

**ADVANTAGES OF
TATA INDUSTRIAL PARK**

- An industrial site in the Central European axis right next to a motorway
- Great location and convenient transport links
- Sound ownership for green-field investment
- Quick administration and a wide range of services for new partners
- Extensive local government support in the administration of official matters
- Pollution-free sites

**DEVELOPER OF
INDUSTRIAL PARK**

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EXPANSION AT MOO WA KFT.

A new production hall has been built in Tata Industrial Park. The investor, MooWa Assembling Kft., spent a total of 800m HUF on the project, which created many new employment opportunities for the town in 2017.

The company began its operations in Tata on 4 January 2011. It provides services such as die casting, moulding, cutting, and packaging cabling products, however its core activity remains the manual assembly of computer and telecommunication cables. The hall that the company had previously leased (which operated in the town) proved to be insufficient in terms of size, thus they decided to relocate their business out to the industrial park.

Mayor József Michl commented on the new hall as follows: - The company bought the construction site from the local government and we are very glad it is now owned by a company that is already well established in Tata, which has provided so many local residents with employment, and is creating even more jobs with this new development. The construction of the new hall was entirely funded by MooWa, proving that the company is committed to our town in the long term.

The company received the permit allowing them to build the production hall at the industrial park at the end of 2016, with construction work starting last summer. MP

János Bencsik stated the following with regard to the investment: - It was a good decision on the part of MooWa as it is useful for a company with a constantly growing business to have its own property. It is also perhaps worth mentioning that MooWa can be seen as the exception among the industrial companies in the region, as it operates in IT, rather than in the car industry, although its main line of business is still electronics.

The company has also increased its workforce. Previously, it employed 75 people, but, following the relocation, this number has now risen to over 100. The owners of the company, Werner Moosbauer and Walter Moosbauer, confirmed that they intend to double the number of staff over the next three years. It is important for the owners to ensure that their employees are motivated and feel at home in the workplace. Consequently, a bathroom for disabled employees has been installed, as well as under-floor heating throughout the building, while a flexible working schedule is now in force for employees, between 6 am and 6 pm. The building has 3,300 m² of usable floorspace, and to maintain environmental efficiency, geothermal energy is used to heat the building, while solar energy is employed to power the manufacturing equipment.



PANNON LÉZER MŰHELY KFT. CELEBRATES ITS 10TH ANNIVERSARY

Pannon Lézer Műhely Kft. celebrated the 10th anniversary of its foundation at the end of November. The company is 100% owned by Hungarians, and was established by Endre Paulik and his wife, Beáta Bargel, in 2007. The company's history is a real success story, as they started the entire business without any technical knowledge or orders from a huge loan, and only six months after founding the company, the first signs of the credit crunch appeared. Every penny made was reinvested into the business, they took out a new loan and their persistent and industrious approach made it possible for them to steer the company towards a brighter future which has brought continuous development.

The company is engaged in plate machining and welded structure manufacture. They work with carbon steel, aluminium and stainless steel materials, but their product portfolio includes super duplex material processing and welding as well. The company utilises state of the art laser cutting, die cutting and welding equipment. However, none of these new machines are of any use if they are not operated by experts, therefore, the company owners emphasise the importance of making sure that all staff are highly qualified. This, in

turn, guarantees that only the best quality products are delivered to clients. The company's main clients are General Electric, Knorr-Bremse, Tungsram and Siemens.

The company's slogan is: Honour, value and quality. Regrettably, these values have been on the decline in the business sector, yet the owners of the company insists that these values will pay off in the long run. They believe that businessmen should provide good quality products to the agreed deadline to make clients satisfied. If these basic rules are kept to, revenue will solve itself. Business partners value this approach, their reliability and precision. Whatever they promise clients, it will actually happen like that.

Pannon Lézer Műhely Kft. employs nearly 50 people. The company owners are proud to know each of them in person, and as a result, there is a very friendly atmosphere in the plant. Their employees are encouraged to turn to managers with all kinds of problems. Company events are often organised, for instance, families are invited every year to participate in Advent wreath-making.

In 2014, supported by the new Széchenyi Programme¹, new company premises were built in the town.

The 1,550 square metre hall gives visitors a very pleasant sight. Upon arriving, you get the feeling that you are entering the garden of a family home. There is a little pond and a lot of plants, while the building itself and its design are quite unique inside and out.

The company is planning to further develop its site and to take on more people. However, they are not planning to expand above one hundred employees as it would mean losing their flexibility which is so highly appreciated by their clients, and would also bring an end to the friendly atmosphere. The company aims to develop its equipment and other assets, and to automate all possible processes.

The company owners consider it important to help to those in need with part of the firm's revenue. The company regularly supports a few local sportsmen in the town, and are happy to support a good cause. They also supported the construction of the new sports hall with nearly HUF 20m HUF in TAO payment².

¹Economic development programme of the Hungarian government
²See the article entitled "New Tata sports hall opens" on page 16

THE 1,100-YEAR STRUGGLE CARVED IN WOOD

The wood panel carving entitled "Hymn", created by Róbert V. Smidt, sculptor and woodcarver from Szőgyén and honorary citizen of the town of Tata, was first displayed for public viewing in Hungary, in the assembly hall of Tata Town Hall.

Born in 1966 in Párkány, Róbert Smidt has been living and working in Szőgyén since. After completing his primary education, he studied at the Vocational Secondary School of Construction in Komárom between 1981 and 1985. At the beginning of his artistic career, he produced graphics and paintings, but has been working with wood since 1995. He has made memorials, Hungarian gates, church interiors, altars, reliefs, belfries, outdoor theatres, open-air sculptures, tombs, and pieces of furniture in his studio. His works are displayed in a number of public spaces in Tata, such as the Sister Towns Park, and Nemzeti Összetartozás tere, a small square facing Somogyi Béla utca, as well as Mindszenty tér. The artist's motto: *"There is neither present nor future without a past."*

His piece on display in Tata is a unique wood carving, that took six years to finish. Although its motifs and themes had appeared separately in a number of the artist's prior works, this was the first time that he had brought them all together, as a sort of open history book, for anyone to read. The 10 m², 5 x 2 m oak panel carving, weighing 800 kg, depicts major events of Hungarian history, from the Hungarian conquest of the Carpathian basin onwards. The centre of the carving presents the Battle of Pozsony as a tree of life, surrounded by the rulers of the time, being torn apart by the storms of history. The panel carving depicts the light of hope, the Holy Crown, the sword and flag, as well as the guardian angels of our nation, archangels Gabriel and Michael in the top two corners.

At the unveiling ceremony, Róbert

Smidt said the following about the carving: Six years is a very long time, during which the spirit of the work occupied his days and nights, even while he was working on other pieces. The creative process was both mentally and physically tiring, but also uplifting. The artist added: the carving speaks for itself, summarising all the work and personal ideas which had come before.

The Hymn is monumental not only in size, but the creative process itself was also a huge challenge. The stages of reflective thought and preliminary sketches took half a year, followed by the exhausting task of carving the wood, working with the hardest European oak, English oak. Róbert Smidt commented on the overall process as follows: - Initially, the intellectual work was the most taxing; developing the concept and then the carving of over 200 additional figures onto the initial background had to be executed with utmost care and consideration. As far as the physical work is concerned, in addition to moving the material, it was also a tremendous challenge to select and glue the material together. I boldly set about the carving, but the real physical stress started after the carving of the central motifs. After two years, I had to stop working for a whole year as my neck and shoulders could no longer bear the strain. Some time later, I began working in phases, creating other pieces in the meantime to take my mind off the panel carving. But I always returned to the carving whenever I had some spare time.

The artist carved the struggles of over one thousand years of history into the Hungarian wood, making this masterpiece a desperate outcry: do not leave me Hungary, I need you! This is how the artist summarised the message of the painting: - Hungarian people still retain their instinct for survival, for civilisation,



and a determination to live (despite constant efforts to drive this out of them). This is particularly true of Hungarians living abroad, because they still need to fight for our Hungarian identity. On the one hand, the panel carving depicts the 1,100-year-long period of adversity that the nation suffered. Having said that, this is not a pessimistic piece of work, but rather an expression of optimistic strength, showing that we are still here, despite the blows of misfortune. We may get hit hard, beaten, and crushed, but eventually we will always rise again, like a phoenix. We are sure that the Hungarian nation is destined for much more than people would think. We should take heart from the piece; the struggles of our ancestors send us a positive message that can strengthen and reinforce us.

The panel carving was on show in Tata for one month, after which it was displayed all over Hungary so that the Hymn could be admired nationwide.

The centre of the picture depicts the battle of Pozsony, with archangels Gabriel and Michael. The additional main figures and themes include: the resettlement in 1947, Recsk death camp, the Treaty of Trianon, the 1848-49 revolution and fight for independence, the Battle of Mohács, German oppression, the Rákóczi fight for independence, the Tatar invasion and the seven chieftains, Hunor and Magor, Prince Géza, Saint Stephen, King Mathias, Attila, Saint Ladislaus, and Blessed Eusebius, founder of the Order of Saint Paul.







VÖRÖS AND ARANY...

A summer spectacular at the open air theatre

The town of Tata celebrated the 200th anniversary of the birth of famous Hungarian poet János Arany, in a very special way. The Local Government of Tata and Tatai Városkapu Közhasznú Zrt. staged the musical "Vörös Rébék" at the end of July. The musical's genre and atmosphere were both wholly unique and special. The show was first envisaged by opera director Kati Pesty-Nagy, whose plays and shows have been performed at Tata town events and celebrations on numerous occasions, including at last year's New Year concert.

The musical pays tribute to Arany's influential, enduring poetry, and is part of a mission to bring real culture closer to young people through the language of musical theatre. The local government chose to support the work's creators as they recognised the importance of combining current artistic endeavours with some of life's

perpetual questions. Our town wants to share the experience of the show with more than just local residents, so we hope that the nationwide tour in 2018 will provide the perfect chance to catch it.

"Vörös Rébék", was written based on a fragment of a folk ballad, and perhaps stands out the most if one considers Arany's later ballads. This musical mirrors a traditional ballad, as its structure feeds on Arany's great poem and asks the questions that we seek answers to, perhaps every day. Kati Pesty-Nagy summarised how the concept of this musical was first born: - In fact, the ballad's atmosphere captivated her as early as her college years, when she decided she would later create something based on the ballad. She was drawn in by the story's little untold secrets, details that almost go unnoticed, and can be unearthed only if you read

between the lines. The play answers a number of questions with simple and easily understandable situations. These themes engage us all. For instance, there are pivotal questions in life such as whether evil can exist without reason, whether a single bad





decision can determine our entire lives, whether a person born good can make mistakes, how easily we can drift into sinful little battles, whether there is a way back once we have set foot on the wrong path, whether God can save us, and whether all sinful people find faith in the end.

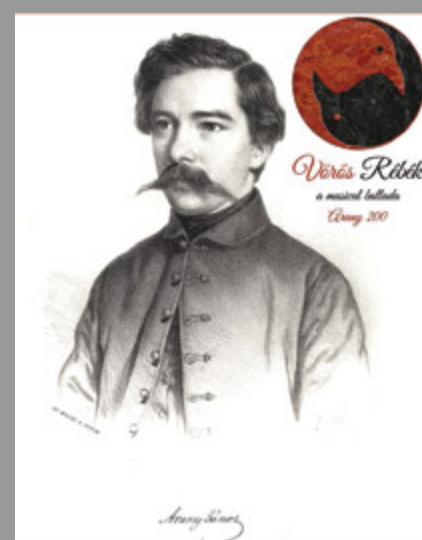
The biggest challenge of the creative process was undoubtedly the fact that although the genre of the play is a musical, the audience wants to see a complete story with reasons, motives, explanations and clearly interpretable human relationships. Kati Pesty-Nagy described her thought process as follows: "I naturally conducted research to uncover the original story behind the play, but unfortunately, it was not possible to find it, so we used a sort of ancient world of fantasies. We simply provide the audience with an alternative, the chance to discover what motivates each character, how these characters contradict or clash with each other, and what triggers drama and tragedy. We are far from convinced that this is the only way the actual story ended, rather we open the gates to our imaginations to suggest that perhaps it could have been this way... We want to draw the audience's attention to the fact that responsibility does not always lie with a single person, and that a bad decision can negatively impact other people's lives as well.

The János Arany Commemorative Year is not only a time to pay tribute and celebrate one of the lasting fig-

ures of Hungarian literature, but also a time to pause for a moment and reflect. Contemplation can reveal how the past and present contradict one another, and how our world and values can be compared with those of the past. If we remain open-minded, this convergence of past and present may bring us gifts, which can further strengthen us along our chosen path. It is very much the same with the musical itself, as a fundamental question of the play is what message we can derive from it, and how the play can be tailored and modernised in terms of its artistic impression. The message is surely about responsibility, that it is worth believing that we can turn back from the wrong path, even at the very last moment. We must be able to distinguish between our decisions and hesitations, and recognise if we are not on our own path. Realisation is delayed in this play, and consequently some decisions are irreversible... If we manage to properly interpret the play on stage, its message can seep into our everyday lives, and hopefully help us resolve some old conflicts." The director was also more than happy to discuss the play's most important feature, the music: "It is the music that makes the play complete. The play's musical world is fantastic, it was the best decision of my life to ask György Derzsi to work as musical director. He graduated as an actor, but has a real understanding of music as well. The play is interspersed with numerous musical hits, and boasts amiable

musical humour combined with elements of great drama."

Over the past couple of years, the town of Tata has proven many times that it is not only gaining increasing popularity as the "Town of Waters" but is also the proud host of many other events in culture, sports and art. The town's history, architecture, spiritual heritage, traditions and unrivalled natural features provide superb inspiration for a wide variety of artists. Kati Pesty-Nagy describes her relationship with Tata as follows: "Tata is one of the most beautiful towns I know, and for me it is undoubtedly a real symbol of cosiness, peace and harmony. It revitalises me as it is full of positive energy; it is a truly fantastic place. It feels like the town always wants to give you something. You walk along the lakeside and it simply enriches you. It is important to note that culture radiates from every corner of the town, automatically motivating you to contribute something valuable to it. Undoubtedly, through the eyes of a theatre-lover, the Open Air Stage offers unique opportunities. The only thing that remained was to find a Mayor who was not only receptive to culture and but also resonates with it. Overall, I believe that staging this play was a wonderful community experience for all involved, as the show is full of exceptional talents. I also feel that our work has become a common goal and motivation, both for Tata residents as well as other Hungarians throughout the country."





TOWN MUSEUM SEEKS NEW DIRECTIONS

The Domokos Kuny Museum is a town museum of county-level significance. It is one of the oldest museums in Komárom-Esztergom County and has been co-ordinating similar institutions within the county for decades. The first museum collection was compiled by the Piarist monks in Tata. The museum continues to display a wide range of exhibits, including those from the fields of ethnography, history, archaeology, the arts and geology. The highlight of the museum is its international ethnography collection, which is considered an extensive collection for a provincial museum. There are many interesting artefacts on display, such as Australian aboriginal tools, and Japanese samurai armour. Currently, the Domokos Kuny Museum collection and operations extend to the western part of the county, however, the museum is responsible for archaeological excavations throughout the county. The museum also serves as a professional training centre, providing other sim-

ilar county institutions with operational training. The museum has been operated by Tata since 2013. Since 2017, there have been two exhibition sites; one in the Museum of German Minority, whilst the other is the most popular attraction of the town, the Castle Museum.

Public relations

Domokos Kuny Museum takes public relations very seriously. To this end, the museum has strong and mutually beneficial ties with the local senior citizen groups. This relationship with local senior citizens helps to increase the museum's database and collections, while in exchange, the museum strives to offer cultural programmes and lectures which engage with their fields of interest. As well as senior citizens, the museum also provides job opportunities to people with disabilities or those who are temporarily between jobs. One of the museum's most important goals is to educate future generations. Today's world is

fast-paced, and increasingly digital, however, not only can the museum can still help educational institutions in passing on cultural knowledge, but also in fostering social relationships. This year, nearly 50 students worked for the museum in the summer period, and a number of other students chose the museum for their commu-



nity service placement. This scheme aims to make voluntary activities more popular, to ensure that both the young and old can experience and reap the benefits of working together for the sake of the community.

At the same time, the museum is continuously seeking new directions. We would like to introduce our cultural and intellectual heritage to wider groups of people, enabling them to put this knowledge to use in their personal and community development. An escape room set up in co-operation with the Tata Tourism Association, called "The legend of the castle dungeon", served this very purpose.

Cultural and museum education programmes

The museum has also been the venue for civil forums on a number of occasions; it has hosted events about local horse riding history and club meetings for local poetry groups. These events were perfect for reinforcing the links between the local community and the museum.

One of the highlights of 2017 was the promotion of the geology and scientific collection, such as information on the abundance of the Tata region's natural resources due to the hot water springs. Thus a number of participational events were organised in Tata and in Budapest alike.

The museum also actively participates in the promotion of the town's Child-Friendly initiative. Co-operation agreements with many of the



educational institutions facilitate the museum's teaching and educational activities. Tata-related activities, as well as ecology training courses, were held again to strengthen the bond between the museum and the town. We do our utmost to enable students to think up new ideas and gain knowledge through experience. We organised two camps in the summer to help students better immerse themselves in science and arts. The camp named "Kings and soldiers" presented local history topics while the "Palet-tata" camp was a perfect opportunity to improve artistic and crafts skills. Both camps were highly successful.

Scientific research and studies

The museum management deems it an important task to introduce its visitors to critical periods in history through the lives of individuals. A

unique aspect of this exhibition is the testimonies of those who suffered and witnessed the deportation of the Hungarian German minority. Collecting and documenting such regional history started as early as 2014 in Tata and the surrounding villages. As a result of our 30-year twin town relationship with Gerlingen, we also had a chance this year to collect items from there too. Many memories could be recorded from witnesses still alive. This research unearthed information, documents and data that was previously unknown, reinforcing the twin town relationship, as well as providing great opportunities to get to know one another and understand the stories a little better.

Much of Hungary's traditional craft industry was lost during the fifties due to forced industrialisation. In order to collect and preserve what is left of the knowledge and skills of the past, on the occasion of the 130th anniversary of the local Chamber of Industry, the museum organised a joint collection with the Tata Local History Association, the remaining active Chamber members, and craft experts. The research focused on the collection of local memories, and allowed for retrospective registration of museum artefacts, as well as the extension of the existing collection with new pieces. Even though this research lasted a year, it was not possible to form a complete picture of just how the organisation, which replaced guilds, operated. However, it did manage to gather information on local



craftsmen and their activities, which could be presented in exhibition form this year.

The mill industry, which had characterised the Tata area for centuries, was also shut down in the 1950's. Regrettably, there are no mill buildings in the town to commemorate the one-time significance of this industry. At the town's request, the museum developed a scheme to set up an exhibition dedicated to the memory of the Tata mills in the building which used to house Jenő Mill. Research and collecting on this subject is still under way.

In order to commemorate the establishment of the Piarist order and its foundation in Tata, the museum undertook this year to explore the 20th century history of the Piarist monastery through the archives.

Archaeological excavations, mainly so-called observations at smaller construction works, were conducted at a number of locations throughout the county. A highlight of these works was the discovery of a stone sarcophagus dating back to the late Roman period, which was found during ploughing in the vicinity of Környe. Community co-operation made it possible for the first time in decades for museum experts to reach the site before the "treasure hunters" and record the findings.

Vitány Castle, located in the forests of Vértess, has been the subject of research for years now. The primary aim is to preserve the castle and gather more information on its background. In addition to everyday objects, archaeological investigation has so far unearthed Gothic and Renaissance stone carvings, making it easier to learn about the building and its functions.

There has also been ongoing research for decades in the area around a church ruin located on the edge of the village of Baj. This year we had the chance to continue the excavation, and uncovered a settlement destroyed during the Ottoman occupation, as well as a small village manor.

A new feature of the research of our institution is the local stone analysis being conducted at the museum. The



analyses examine wall sections and connecting material found during the excavations. This new technique successfully combines scientific procedures with conventional knowledge, to better define medieval and modern building styles.

The collections

In addition to research, offerings and donations from the local population extended the museum's collections in 2017. Upon the museum's request for artefacts, a considerable number of photos, letters and other items from the First World War period were given to the museum. A number of mainly local documents were also collected. An exceptional item among these latest acquisitions is a nearly pristine coat worn by a Chief Forester of the Esterházy family, and is currently the only one of its kind.

Exhibitions

Exhibitions are the most effective way for the museum to display research and collections to the general public. A number of exhibitions have been organised this year too. A temporary exhibition displayed objects and artefacts found during the 2015 archaeological investigation of the town's Kossuth tér. The collection of remains of women's clothing from the 17th century put on display is really quite unique in domestic terms. Visitors could also gain a deeper insight into the history of the church which used to stand on the main square. In

connection with this, during the Baroque Festival, visitors were provided with a comprehensive account in exhibition form of the creation of the Maria Immaculata statue, which can still be seen on the square. An exhibition entitled "My craft is my life... History of the Tata-Tóváros Chamber of Industry" was held in Tata Castle to much interest, partly linked to the anniversaries. Another interesting exhibition took place this year at the Museum of German Minority, to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the reformation. This exhibition examined Central European reformist achievements from a German point of view. For many visitors, the opening ceremony of the exhibition "Under foreign skies – Suffering and hardship in Russia" was an overwhelming experience. This exhibition displayed personal objects and stories of the women who were taken to the Soviet Union as captives.

In keeping with tradition, the programme "Guests at the museum" was held for the seventh time, this time to introduce the village of Vértessokszma with its own temporary exhibition and series of events. The village's exhibition during "Guests at the museum" consisted of a selection of old photos collected there. These photos showed pivotal moments which were eventually compiled to become the town's official photo album. The exhibition also included all of the material collected by voluntary service students in the village since 2014.

Our museum has provided many contemporary artists with the chance to display their work. At the beginning of the year, sculptor János Nagy, Ádám Lévai and Károly Kerti all held exhibitions in the museum which enabled arts students to improve their knowledge and technical skills. Tibor Madarász's anniversary exhibition, which mainly focused on his Tata-related work, was well received by the public. Aside from well-known artists, local artists and beginners' work was also on display. A traditional event known as the "Grotta" exhibition was held for the fifth time to enable young artists to put their work on display.

Publications and conferences

In addition to exhibitions, we use a range of publications to communicate our achievements to the public. A volume entitled "Book of Memories" uses photos in order to help the reader immerse themselves in the artworks, plaques and historic monuments of Tata. A publication entitled *Pivotal years – Piarists in Tata (1940-1944)* was published to present the educational activities of the order under ever more difficult circumstances. Another book entitled *Regent Ferenc Glánthai Balogh (1708-1765) – the Billegpuszta residential centre pays tribute to an important member of the aristocracy, whose life had a major influence on Tata.*

We published an artistic album called *Imago – Imaginis* as well as a separate volume, in tribute to Károly Kerti's work, to emphasise our devo-



tion to the arts.

A new volume was released this year to commemorate the suppression of the 1956 Hungarian revolution and the imprisonment of some of those involved. A book of poems about the persecution and prison years of Dr. Gábor Mészáros, who played a significant role in the revolutionary events, was published, under the title *Prison Diary*.

Being ranked as a county institu-

tion means that we also deal with science-related organisation tasks. Early this year, the results of the church and graveyard excavation conducted in 2015 were discussed with a multidisciplinary approach, at a recent commemorative conference on János Fatuska. We discussed the current issues surrounding nationality research, while at the end of the year, the "Science workshops in Komárom-Esztergom County" conference was held for the sixth time, allowing us to gain an insight into the research activities in the area, as well as the latest research results of our own and cooperating institutions.

This year's activities succeeded in further strengthening our relationship with local residents, and helped us to discover new ways to reach out to the community. Our museum is no longer just a maze of cold and dimly lit rooms, with some small objects on display, rather it has emerged as an institution which strives to preserve memories of the past by sharing them with the public, instead of hiding them away.



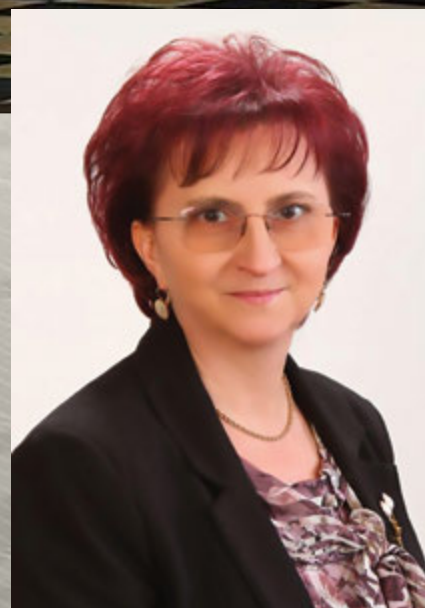
THE EGRESSY CHAMBER CHOIR CELEBRATES 25TH ANNIVERSARY



Tata, holder of the Europe Prize, is one of the most beautiful towns in Hungary. Its natural features, beautiful architecture and cultural-artistic life are considered exceptional among small Hungarian towns. Its musical history is dominated by names such as the Esterházy family, Bernát Menner and Imre Vincze. The great figures of the past should always inspire us to strive for the best on behalf of our town and be worthy of the heritage passed down by our ancestors.

I believe that we have proven ourselves on both local and national platforms with the work that we have done over the last 25 years. Through our efforts, the Egressy Chamber Choir now stands out as one of the musical highlights of the town. Our choir enriches the cultural life of Tata as an embodiment of the town's artistic values; we develop and refine the audience's taste in music through our concerts.

The history of our foundation is directly linked to the work of the town's largest cultural civil group. The Egressy Chamber Choir seceded from the Egressy Choir, a large mixed choir, in 1991. We began our work with 16 founding members. Since then, we have transformed ourselves and have welcomed many new faces. The choir presently comprises 26 people. We have represented our town, Tata, our county, Komárom-Esztergom county, and Hungary at many events. Our actions are driven by the desire to produce quality work whilst at the same time serving the community, having fun and entertaining the public. What we have achieved so far was made possible by the sacrifices that the choir members have made and the perseverance that they have demonstrated, investing all their time and energy into our work. We are so proud of our achievements both as individuals and as a community, as



the administration and residents of Tata can be as well.

So far, the group has stayed together through the love of singing, the joy of working together, the on-stage success, the tours and other joint programmes. This is why we take part in competitions, festivals and concert tours. Friendship, a love of music, and mutual respect and appreciation all bind us together.

To name just a few of our accom-

plishments and concerts over the past 25 years:

- We achieved great success at our very first competition, at the International Chamber Choir Festival held in Pécs in 1996, where the international judges gave the range of our musical programme special mention.
- We first requested our rating in the Hungarian certification system in 1999, when the judging panel awarded the group the "Festival Choir" certificate.
- We made an important decision when we decided to request international certification at a world competition involving 360 choirs from 60 countries. In June 2004, the chamber choir took part in the CHOIR OLYMPICS held in Bremen, Germany, returning home with a silver medal. This accomplishment gave us a massive boost with regard to the professional work that we were to undertake over the subsequent period. We learnt a lot from the judges' feedback, which contributed significantly to our work.
- In 2007, at the international II. Musica Sacra di Roma choir competition, held in Rome, the judging panel awarded us a bronze medal.
- In May 2009 and 2012, we visited Poland to participate in the international religious music choir competition called "Ad Gloriam Dei", at which we won a bronze medal both times.
- In 2011, on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the chamber choir, we took up the challenge once again, and our group was rated as a "Concert Choir" in the "Singing Hungary" national certification system once more, thereby obtaining certification in July 2011. We took a significant step forward as a result, as this is the highest category in Hungary. After this event, we started receiving many invitations to local and foreign concerts.
- That same year, we went on a concert tour to Arenzano, Italy, one of Tata's twin towns, where we performed at their religious music festival with great success. As part of the tour, we sang in Montebelluna, another twin town of Tata, together with the choir of the local basilica

in a joint concert, which was a great honour for us, a Hungarian amateur chamber choir. During the tour, we sang in Genoa, Padua and Verona, where the audiences really appreciated the choral works of Zoltán Kodály and Lajos Bárdos.

- 2011 was an important year for us. We faced great challenges and undertook a significant amount of work. In that year, we participated in the European Union Choir Festival held in Kielce, Poland, and performed famous pieces by Zoltán Kodály as well as other Hungarian composers, in a live online broadcast.

- We have participated in a number of national productions, and have sung in major concerts every year, including in the 500-hundred-person choir at the event entitled "The Country is Singing" at the Palace of Arts in Budapest.

- Over the past 25 years, we have endeavoured to accept requests and invitations. As a result we have been to Poland, Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, Transylvania, and held concerts in Pinchow, Kielce, Homburg am Main, Gerlingen, Krems, Odorheiu Secuiesc, Vienna (in the St. Stephen's Cathedral), Budapest (in Matthias Church and St. Stephen's Basilica). At the Festetics Palace in Keszthely...

- Through invitations, we received a number of opportunities to travel to one of the twin towns of Tata, Gerlingen in Germany, where we per-

formed at jubilee events, ecumenical worship, and festivals. We developed a friendship with the audience in the town as well as with the town leaders, as they really appreciated choral music.

- In 2014, we received an unusual invitation from perhaps one of the most famous rock bands in Hungary. We could sing as the backing vocal group to Omega Oratorium, at the pop concert held in the newly renovated open-air theatre of Tata's English Park. Being part of a joint production with a world-famous band was a very special experience for us.

- Károly Halász, a young Hungarian composer, asked the Egressy Chamber Choir to perform the mixed choir version of his work entitled "De Profundis", which we sang together with the Filmhatás Orchestra in Oroszlány on the 60th anniversary of the town's foundation.

- The chamber choir considers interpreting and presenting the works of Hungarian and European composers, promoting the works of young Hungarian composers and performing special musical compositions to be among its primary goals. As a Hungarian choir, we have a number of Hungarian folk songs and folk song adaptations in our repertoire, which are usually well received by our audiences. We also gladly sing modern choral pieces with special sounds, as well as popular songs and adaptations. A young composer, At-



tila Balázs, greatly assists our work, and has composed many works for our choir.

- One of our main goals is to discover and perform choral pieces by both known and unknown composers both in Hungary, as well as at international competitions, promoting the works of Hungarian composers beyond our borders. Performing unusual musical pieces from around the world is a special challenge for us. It is our constant goal to build relationships with other choirs, to reach out to and invite foreign and local partner choirs, to promote the works of young composers, as well as to improve our technical skills and quality as performers.

- 2016 was also a significant year for us, as it marked our 25th year as a professional choir. In June 2016, the choir completed certification once again, and achieved the highest rating available in Hungary, the "CONCERT CHOIR" classification once more, which is something we are truly proud of. It was a great pleasure for us to defend our title and achieve this high rating once again.

The professional work and operation of the choir is supported by the "Tata Egressy Choir" Foundation and the Local Government of Tata with specific grants awarded through grant applications.

In December 2016, in the Advent Musical Worship, held as part of the 25th jubilee series, József Michl, Mayor of Tata, presented the choir with a sculpture of Béni Egressy, created by sculptor János Nagy.

As well as being the founder, I



have also been the Egressy Chamber Choir's choir director and artistic director since 1991. I obtained my master's degree in choir conducting at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Pécs, under the professional guidance of Valér Jobbágy, head of department. In recognition of my professional work and support given to the work of the choirs, I was awarded the KÓTA Prize in 2016.

I am deeply grateful to all former and current members of my group for their commitment, our accomplishments together and the friendly atmosphere. I am grateful to the town administration for all their support, the community of Tata for their love

and attention, as well as the selfless financial support provided by the companies and entrepreneurs that back our choir, helping us to achieve our dreams and plans. In the future, I would like to continue my work with unfailing determination and faith, and to keep making contact with the choirs of Europe.

I strongly believe in what Zoltán Kodály said, *"No person is complete without music". "Singing improves life, and those who sing improve the lives of others as well. Singing alone does not do much good; it is much more beautiful when two people sing together. Then more and more people, hundreds and thousands, until a great Harmony is reached, in which we can all be united. That is when we can really say: Let the whole world rejoice!"*

This is our purpose and mission. Safeguarding our Hungarian identities, national values and heritage, as well as bequeathing and promoting our folk music and folk songs.

ZSUZSANNA SCHÖNFELD ROBOZ



SURROUNDED BY BOOKS



The Móricz Zsigmond Town Library manages to function under particularly trying circumstances, when compared to other institutions in the town. Despite that, it is continuously developing. It strives to maintain an ever-growing collection, as well as organising countless educational programmes and regularly applying for grants, in a bid to increase the number of visitors and meet its visitors' potential needs. Its work is somewhat hindered by the extremely poor condition of its current location, the cultural centre, but this does not discourage staff members. The library deserves to be given its rightful setting. We hope that a successful grant application will support its relocation to the Garison Club.

In its economic programme for the 2015-2019 period, the town council identified the relocation of the library, which currently operates in the cultural centre, as a priority. The current building does not meet the requirements of the library. The extremely poor condition of the building negatively impacts on the services provided, with leaks, collapsing walls, and the presence of mould and saltpetre, all impeding the performance of daily tasks. The library also deals with constant warehousing issues and overcrowded offices. Plans have already been drafted with regard to its relocation. In May 2016, a new grant programme was launched as part of the Area and Settlement Development Programme for the implementation of Community Led Local Developments (CLLDs). The towns wishing to apply were required to define the projects they planned to implement using the grant, by means of the so-called community-led local development strategy. Our local government developed its community-led local development strategy last June, whereby seven proposals and measures were identified as essential to the town's community development. The most significant of these is the relocation of the library to the Gar-



ri-son Club, which was chosen as the key project of the grant programme. In addition to the renovation of the property at Ady Endre utca 12-14, and the library's relocation, the Zoltán Magyary Knowledge Centre will also be established as part of the investment. This would also serve as a public space, as well as providing library services. The town submitted its application at the end of last June, and soon received a notification that the file was in accordance with the formal requirements, and would be examined in detail. Unfortunately, the decision was not favourable and the application was rejected. It was then revised and re-submitted. This time, the key project was divided into two phases. We are hoping to hear some positive news regarding this matter in the near future.

At one time, Tata had a library dating back to the middle of the 18th century. The first notable collection was owned by the regent of the Esterházy family, Ferenc Balogh. The Piarist secondary school also had its own library, which was founded by general superior Gergely Tapolcsányi in 1765. Later, a number of libraries functioned within the town, but the most significant among them was that of the Esterházy family, although its documents were sadly totally dispersed by 1945. The town of Tata has officially had its own library since 1949, as this was when regional libraries were first established in Hungary. Tata's library was one of the first to be established, located at Kossuth tér 17, and housed approximately 3,000 books. In 1959, it received "district library" status, then in 1974, following the dissolution of the districts, it became a "regular" town library. In 1961, it took the name of Móricz Zsigmond (Hungarian author, journalist, editor and one of the most well-known Hungarian novelists of realist prose of the 20th century). On 4 April 1969, it relocated to its current building, which

at that time was operating under the name of Komárom County Cultural Centre. The children's library was located in a separate building in Kossuth tér for a long time, and was only relocated in 1993 to the cultural centre, alongside the main library. The library has two branches in the town, one in Agostyán and the other in Kertváros.

Since 2008, the town library has been managed by Ildikó Sinkó, who previously worked in the institution as a Children's Librarian. Currently, there are seven, highly knowledgeable librarians available to assist readers. This is greatly needed, as even though this library is fairly small in size, it is open more than 40 hours per week with multiple sections, organises countless activities, and regularly prepares grant programmes.

As of 31 December 2016, the library's current collection contains 115,310 items in total, including books, magazines, audio, image and digital documents, indeed, 3,706 new pieces were added last year alone. All libraries employ a collection policy to determine how they wish to expand their collections. As a town library, the institution in Tata performs general collection activities, i.e. it aims to provide its readers with as wide a range as possible. As there are not many grant programmes that specifically support the expansion of library collections, a set amount of the budget is allocated to increasing the number of books and magazines each year.

From time to time, staff members review the publication dates of books that the library has in each field. If new reference books are published in a certain field, they try to purchase them, and replace old versions. The staff continuously monitors the supply and special offers of online bookstores so that they can buy as many items as possible using the available budget. In the course of the selection process, they take into

account recently published books and the needs of local readers, regularly noting the most in-demand books. They primarily try to increase the collection by acquiring best-sellers, which generate the greatest interest. In addition to books, they also focus on equipping the library with electronic devices, and therefore purchase audiobooks and e-books as well. Donations are often made to the library; most of the time people offer books that they have inherited from relatives. The books that suit the collection are gladly accepted, while others are transferred to local and cross-border pre-schools and schools. Some are even placed on "open" shelves, from which they can be taken for free.

The Zsigmond Móricz Town Library also has a rich collection on local history, which currently consists of 11,077 documents. Its establishment first began in the 1970s, thanks to the efforts of Miklós Pastinszky. In addition to the library, there is another substantial collection in the town, owned by the Domokos Kuny Museum. The idea that the two institutions' collection on local history should be combined has been raised a number of times, as some documents are only partially available in both places. As a result of such a collaboration, the town would finally have a more complete collection. Within the framework of the MANDA (Hungarian National Digital Archives and Film Institute) programme, both institutions began digitalising their magazines on local history.

Last year, the library had 2,115 registered readers, who borrowed 45,607 documents altogether and used 2,872 on-site. Compared to the population of 24,000 people, the number of registered readers may seem low, however, it is important to note that no registration is required for on-site use. Furthermore, the library staff work continuously on increasing the number of visitors

and registered readers. They chiefly try to attract non-library visitors with a vast array of programmes, in the hope that if someone attends an event or activity, they will see the additional services offered by the library, and be more likely to return and register. The annual registration fee is 1500 HUF, while children under the age of 16 can register free of charge. A monthly additional fee also needs to be paid for audiovisual services. Other services, such as photocopying, printing and spiral binding, are subject to separate fees. Pensioners and teachers can register at a discounted price, along with Tata Card holders. Various promotional offers for registration are also available from time to time, e.g. registration was free of charge a number of times during "Library Week". Usually, books can be borrowed for up to a month, magazines for a week and DVDs for a day. The institution also provides its visitors with a bibliobox service, which allows them to return books outside opening hours. Readers can place the returned library books in the bibliobox stands next to the library entrance. Those who still require use of the document they have borrowed may extend the loan period over the phone or via e-mail. If the borrowed document is not returned on time, the reader has to pay a small fine. However, every year, the so-called "Forgiveness Day" takes place. On this day, those who return books that expired a long time ago do not have to pay fines. If the reader has lost the document or returns it in an inadequate condition, they are asked to pay for a replacement or acquire another copy, if necessary, from a second-hand bookshop.

Most of the library's visitors are pensioners and children under the age of 16. According to the librarians, university and college students generally prefer academic libraries. However they gladly visit the their town library when writing their

theses or any other paper, especially if the topic is of local interest or they cannot access returnable copies elsewhere. People between the ages of 28 and 40 are the least likely to visit the library. Based on the librarians' experience, young people tend to stop visiting the library after they have finished their studies, only to later return when they have children, as they also like to take a look around and choose something to read themselves when they bring their children. The same is true for grandparents, as when their grandchildren are born, they start to visit the library more frequently once more. The experience of going to the library together is now facilitated by the fact that the children and adult sections are now in the same building.

Each year, the library compiles its TOP 100 list of the most frequently borrowed books. In the children's library, the most popular authors of 2016 were Erika Bartos and Judit Berg (both Hungarian children's authors), their works were in great demand. Of the adult books, the works of Janka Fábrián, Ken Follett and Barbara Bradford were the most popular. From the librarians' point of view, the readers' taste and preference is greatly influenced by what they read and hear about in the media. This is demonstrated by the fact that the demand for best-selling books is usually high. Books whose authors were invited to an upcoming author's event are also more frequently borrowed, but personal recommendations often influence preferences as well. Book reviews sent by readers are regularly published on the library website, but staff are also glad to share their own reading experiences.

The institution plays an active role in community development. It operates a craft club, sewing club and even an English-language club. It organises exhibitions, author

events, theatrical performances, programmes that aim to improve reading culture, as well as drawing, poem and story-writing competitions, and slam poetry performances. In 2016, 171 different events took place there, with a total of 6,096 attendees. These events are usually organised using grants received as a result of successful grant applications. The library also maintains a close relationship with other institutions and civil organisations in the town, and regularly organises programmes in collaboration with them.

The manager and her colleagues have high expectations of the relocation. They hope that the renovated Garrison Club will be a suitable place for the library, and the wide variety of work they do. They hope to extend the range of their services at the new site, as well as to develop their IT system, since the condition of the electrics in the current building does not allow that. They also wish to add new electronic devices to the collection, in order to provide everyone with an opportunity for learning and training. The management plan to set up a public space in the Zoltán Magyary Knowledge Centre, at which all age groups can find interesting activities, and reading and learning materials to match their interests, either on paper or using an electronic device. The current circumstances of the library often make their job difficult, but thankfully, the many positive experiences help them to make the most of the situation. For instance, seeing the excited look on a child's face at an event or during a library lesson, hearing readers appreciate how quickly a recently published item was made available by the library, being congratulated for organising an event, or even just simply being thanked – all these moments give them the strength to rise above the current difficulties.



RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN TWIN TOWNS

Cooperation between European cities has long existed throughout history. These relationships were based on economic, political or cultural cooperation. The modern concept of twin towns and sister cities emerged right after WWII - an effort to heal relationships wounded by war, and to build bridges between citizens of various nations. It quickly became obvious that peace within a unified Europe could not be achieved without help from local municipalities and active participation from their citizens.

Twin town and sister city relationships are essentially formed by the civil sector; i.e., on citizen initiatives. Though formal cooperation is established by the local councils, the relationship will only be sustainable and successful if it is supported by private persons, institutions, organisations, and eventually, the business sector.

Equality is the foundation of twin town relationships, and and

it influences all actions, intentions and future plans, right from the beginning of the official relationship. The local government represents its citizens as the first among equals and as such, it strives to harmonise and - if possible - support a wide variety of activities throughout the relationship.

The Council of European Municipalities and Regions monitors the number of twin town relationships between European settlements and local governments. The total number of registered relationships in all countries is approximately forty thousand. However, as every relationship is built between at least two partners, the current number of European twin town relationships is probably about twenty thousand. Remarkably, according to the 2010 data from twinning.org, operated by the council, Hungary is the second most active European country in forming relationships, an impressive fact, considering the number

of inhabitants. (The top spot in this comparison goes to Estonia.) Tata, with twenty-four thousand inhabitants and 9 twin town relationships, is well above the Hungarian average of 1.7 relationships per ten thousand inhabitants.

TATA'S TWIN TOWN RELATIONSHIPS

The history of our twin town relationships goes back to before the democratic transition in 1985, when the town council at the time decided to establish cooperation with the Dutch town of Alkmaar. To the best of our knowledge, it was the first twin relationship between Hungarian and Dutch towns. Nearly two years later, the town council formed twin town relationships with the German town of Gerlingen in 1987. In retrospect, our town's first few steps toward building relationships with European neighbours can be clearly seen internationally as a political

step; a pre-indication of the imminent political changes to come, despite the fact that all activities and developments in the relationships were closely monitored by the socialist regime.

After 1990, twin town relationships significantly opened the Eastern European countries to the West introducing them to the peoples and cultures of their western neighbours. Eventually, this served to promote expansion of the European Union. Thereafter, our existing twin town relationships have grown stronger, and our town's first freely elected local government entered into a cooperation agreement with two new towns: Dammarie-lès-Lys in France, in 1993 and Arenzano in Italy, in 1994. At the turn of the century in 2000, we also managed to create a "twin town triangle". We established official relationships with Montebelluna, the Italian twin town of Dammarie-lès-Lys. In 2004, our twin town relationship with Pińczów became official.

The motivation behind establishing twin town relationships with Alkmaar, Gerlingen, Dammarie-lès-Lys, Arenzano, Montebelluna and Pińczów is to recognise the necessity of mutual understanding, respect and cooperation between nations of different languages, cultures, history and heritage. Forming a relationship with Slovakia's Szőgyén (Svodin), Romania's Szováta (Sovata) and Serbia's Magyarkanizsa (Kanjiža) (in 1997, 2002 and 2012, respectively) was inspired by our shared history, language, culture, heritage, and last but not least, our duty to support Hungarians outside of Hungary. (It is a well-known fact that following the 1920 Treaty of Versailles after WWI, Hungary lost more than two-thirds of its territory and more than half of its population. Szőgyén, Szováta and Magyarkanizsa were also among the many settlements surrendered to foreign control following the peace treaty signed in the Grand Trianon Palace.

In 2005, a meeting was organised between the Visegrad Four (Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic and Poland), the mayors of Tata, Szőgyén, Pińczów and Bystrice nad Olší in the Czech Republic to sign an agreement to support efforts aimed at establishing relationships between their settlements and micro-regions through their initiatives and participation in cooperative activities. With this, our town became part of the V4 cooperation. In the same year, Tata became part of a new twin town triangle after Szőgyén and Pińczów signed an agreement.

HISTORY OF A RENOWNED AWARD – REFLECTED IN NUMBERS

In 2013, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, awarded the shared Europe Prize to Tata and Altötting in Germany. This renowned award (which is essentially the highest step of a four-step award system) is awarded to towns every year, and is noted for actively promoting the European spirit. As stated in the official press release on the award winners: "Komárom-Esztergom county's Tata, with its 9 twin towns, has established an extensive and diverse exchange network. The more than 60 events organised in 2012 enabled many exchanges in cultural, sports and educational fields, making Tata the local model for promoting European values."

Indeed, twin town activities of our town's various communities are reflected in number terms as well. As seen in data from recent years, various groups and delegations from our twin towns visit Tata 30-40 times each year, and in doing so, 20-30 opportunities are offered for Tata people to reciprocate those visits. In the last 10 years, over 600 visits in total have occurred between Tata citizens and those from our twin and partner towns. It must be noted that, due to the two "twin town triangles" and our V4 cooperation, it

is often necessary to meet the representatives of a given twin town in a third country – in one of our shared twin towns. In recent years, a total of approximately 800-1000 people have been involved in Tata's "twin town movement," in travel to and from the twin towns every year. Szőgyén and Gerlingen are the most popular settlements in terms of welcoming or sending visitors.

2017 – THE YEAR OF JUBILEE ANNIVERSARIES

In 2017, four of our twin town relationships reached an important, jubilee anniversary.

Let's begin with the most recent one: Magyarkanizsa! Located in the Northern part of Serbia, Magyar-kanizsa (Kanjiža) is mostly inhabited by Hungarians and attracts visitors with its very lively and high-quality cultural and sports life. Its natural features also contribute to this: the thermal water which is used by the spa and hotel built there and the river Tisza which flows by the town's outskirts. The river also has an important role in staging the running and swimming marathon which has been organised annually since the 1980s. This race in Magyarkanizsa and the Minimathon street run in Tata brought together the runners of the two towns – this is in fact where the twin town relationship of the two towns originates from, which was concluded at the Tata Town Hall after several years' preparation on 2 July 2012. In the already five-year old twin town friendship, culture, education and youth have an increasing role alongside sports, and in this way, more people are getting involved in the co-operation which can hopefully develop further with the same dynamism as thus far.

Tata's twin town relationship with Szováta (Sovata), located in Romania, was established ten years before the one with Magyarkanizsa, on 29 September 2002. A

member of the Local Government of Tata and his acquaintance from Transylvania were the ones who thought of this spa town, situated in a beautiful natural environment and famous for its salt water lake, for Tata. Considering the figures, the relationship with Szováta is Tata's third most significant twin town co-operation after the co-operation with Szőgyén and Gerlingen. The residents of Tata and Szováta have the chance to meet at joint events 8-10 times a year. The determining factor of the co-operation between the two towns is youth – which obviously gives us significant confidence as regards the future. It will rest upon the current secondary school students, young people who do sports and do well in arts to develop and improve the now 15-year-old twin town friendship which was born in the first years of the new century until they become adults and then into their adulthood.

Tata's first twin town in the Carpathian Basin was the village of Szőgyén (Svodín) in Slovakia. The twin town agreement was signed on 9 May 1997, however, one shouldn't forget that the relationship between the two towns dates back to much earlier, to 1947 when the tragic period of Czechoslovak-Hungarian population exchange took place. According to the agreement between Czechoslovakia and Hungary, the number of people of Slovak nationality who decided to move from Hungary to Czechoslovakia had to be matched by the same number of Hungarians living in Felvidék being made to move in the other direction. Finally, 77,000 Hungarians were made to leave their homeland compared to the 60,000 Slovaks who voluntarily moved to Slovakia. The arable land they had to leave behind was more than ten times the size of the area left by those moving from Hungary to Slovakia. As a consequence, the Hungarians who resettled in the current territory of Hungary were scattered and

treated as foreigners in their new place of residence for a long time. It was also often the case that they were given the houses of Germans in Hungary who had been expelled from Hungary to Germany during the same period. 135 Hungarian families were forcefully relocated from Szőgyén to Hungary. A major part of these families resettled in the area of Tata, with later many of them moving into Tata itself. In order to organise their first meeting in Szőgyén, the local government leaders of Szőgyén and Tata started up contacts between each other. A few years later, the official relationship was also established – which also took place in Szőgyén.

By now, the friendship formed with Szőgyén 20 years ago has become Tata's richest, most successful twin town relationship. The residents of Tata and Szőgyén can meet one another at 25-30 joint events annually. An average of 250-300 people from Szőgyén and Tata attend the various events and occasions as guests each year in both Tata and Szőgyén. As regards the figures for the last decade, we can conclude that more than 40% of the guests arriving from twin towns to Tata were from Szőgyén, and the destination of four out of ten people from Tata who visited a

twin town was Szőgyén. Tata and Szőgyén responded to the tragedy of the "Czechoslovak-Hungarian population exchange" – by grabbing the opportunity of today – with the creation of a strong and flourishing relationship.

The two town's local government commemorated the 20-year twin town anniversary between Tata and Szőgyén on 12 April, the memorial day for the displacements which also had their 70th anniversary. Of the full-day series of programmes, we would like to highlight the wreath-laying ceremony, the premier of the documentary film of Szőgyén on the displacements, the closing gala concert and the slide show through which we recalled the most memorable moments of the two-decade long relationship with the presentation of more than a hundred photos.

In 2010, the Hungarian Parliament enacted the Day of National Unity on 4 June, a national day of remembrance to commemorate the anniversary of the Treaty of Versailles that brought an end to World War I. On that day, the Local Government of Tata always holds a commemoration together with the representatives of the Hungarian cross-border twin towns. In 2017, the Day of National Unity took





place on Whit Sunday therefore, at the initiation of József Michl, the Mayor of Tata, the commemoration was held in Szováta because the representatives of Tata, Szőgyén, Szováta and Magyarkanizsa could jointly make a pilgrimage to the Mária-kegyhely in Csíksomlyó (Șumuleu Ciuc in Romanian) near Szováta where on Pentecost each year an open-air holy mass is held in the presence of hundreds of thousands of Hungarian participants. The pilgrimage of the Catholic Székelys of Transylvania to Csíksomlyó started in 1567 and has become the most significant Christian event for Hungarians around the world and a symbol of national unity. Besides the delegations from Szőgyén, Magyarkanizsa and Tata,



a married couple from Gerlingen, – Erich Gscheidle, the retired head of the main office of the local government of Gerlingen and his wife, Maria – also attended the Pentecost holy mass in Csíksomlyó and the festival which was held the following day in Szováta. They could easily be the first from Gerlingen to visit Tata's Transylvanian twin town. Hopefully, others will also follow in their footsteps...

Only a few weeks after their meeting in Transylvania, the representatives of Tata, Szőgyén, Szováta and Magyarkanizsa met again in Tata at the end of June – on the weekend of the Water, Music and Flower Festival. On this occasion, the new joint publication of the four towns, entitled "Összetartozunk" ("We belong together"), was presented.

To everyone's delight, four guests from Dammarie-lès-Lys also attended the event: Dominique Kundig-Bordes, Deputy Mayor, Albin Guillory, Chairman of the Twin

Town Committee of Lys Jumelages, and his colleagues, Sandrine Hallé and Christophe Delagrée. In fact, the French guests came to Tata to relax, but, of course, they had the chance to discuss current aspects of the twin town relationship between Tata and Dammarie with the Mayor of Tata. So, for example, the event "Fête du terroir" in Dammarie-lès-Lys was also discussed which will also be a significant event for Tata because the 25-year anniversary of the twin town relationship between Tata and Dammarie will fall in 2018.

In addition to the meeting of the four sets of local government leaders, two other just as significant "summit meetings" between Tata, Szőgyén, Szováta and Magyarkanizsa were also held: the joint camping events of the young people of the four towns interested in visual arts. This was the first time that the young people camped together in Szováta in July, then, one week later, the usual joint camping





event was held in Tata in August. The Tata Talent Development Arts Camp also reached an important milestone: the one-week long event was organised for the 15th time.

A chance for the “summit meeting” of athletes came with the Tata Minimarathon in August. For the 14 km race in 2017, a total of 47 guests arrived from twin towns, including Alkmaar, Gerlingen, Arenzano, Szőgyén, Szováta, Pińczów, Magyarkanizsa and the runners of Bystřice nad Olší, our V4 partner town in the Czech Republic. The

best-ranked runner of the twin town competitors was Tim Tesselar from Alkmaar who came in absolute 5th place out of 542 runners.

And if we are talking about sports – we shouldn't forget two other

events which were held at the end of summer and in early autumn. A total of 68 young people and 18 adult companions from Gerlingen, Szőgyén, Szováta and Pińczów attended the twin town youth sports meeting which was organised for the first time at the end of August. The young people put their skills to the test in indoor football, basketball, table tennis and chess. And in early September, the focus was on the swimmers: the youth swimming section of the KSG sports club of Gerlingen chose Tata as the location for its training camp for the second time. As part of this, they also participated in a joint, playful training together with the young swimmers of Tata.

Early autumn is still the most beautiful in Italy – it's no wonder then that both Italian twin towns of Tata time their main event for September to which they also invite their twin towns. The so called old market cart pushing race is reg-



ularly held in Montebelluna at the end of August and early September. "Palio del Vecchio Mercato" – as it is known in Italian – served as a basis for the cart pushing festival which has been organised annually since 1999 in the village of Kocs located near Tata. In the 2017 event in Montebelluna, the local governments of Tata and Kocs attended the event with a joint delegation.

The "Mare e monti" ("Seas and mountains") sports event of the town of Arenzano is organised in September and was included in the official events of the International Marching League (now IML Walking Association) in 2001. Although this most prestigious sports event of our Ligurian twin town already saw visitors from Tata in previous years, in the same year, in 2001, cooks from Tata were also invited to Arenzano. "Goulash ungherese" made from ingredients purchased by the Italian organisers on the basis of a Hungarian recipe has been a success for more than one and a half decades among the sportsmen arriving from all over the world to participate in the walking event as well as among local residents, as the expert cooks from Tata, whether they are restaurant cooks, nursery cooks or very talented amateurs, have been travelling to Mare e monti every year since 2001. And this happened in 2017 too: even the stormy weather that hit the walkers couldn't prevent the success of the Tata goulash soup.

But let's get back to the twin town anniversaries! The twin town relationship between Tata and Gerlingen was established 30 years ago. In its creation, a decisive role was played by the fact that the town of Gerlingen is the patron of Germans who were expelled from Hungary and displaced to Baden-Württemberg following World War II. The leaders of Gerlingen got to Tata on the trails of the German traditions which can still be found in their one-time home country. The twin town agreement was signed in Tata on 18 September 1987 by Albrecht

Sellner, Mayor, Dietrich Schönfelder, Deputy Mayor, Sándor Papp, Council President and Dr Sándor Nagy, Town Council Secretary.

Of the nine official twin town relationships of Tata, one of the most intensive nowadays is the one established with Gerlingen: about one-quarter of the twin town guests arriving to Tata are from Gerlingen, while every fourth or fifth person from Tata travelling to twin town programmes visit Gerlingen.

The 30 years of the twin town relationship was celebrated both in Gerlingen and Tata as usual. The celebration in Germany was held in early May on the weekend of the traditional Federal Swabian Ball of Gerlingen. The Tatai Szarkalábak, a folk dance ensemble, and the choir and band of Dunaszentmiklós were also invited to the events.

The celebratory meeting in Tata was organised on the weekend of the Old Lake Great Fishing Festival. Members of the 35-strong delegation from Gerlingen visiting Tata for the event not only got the chance to get to know the fishing traditions of Tata, but also visited the Fényes Nature Trail, the Museum of German Minority and the one-time building of the Tata sparkling wine factory. In the del-

egation, besides the current town leaders, former representatives of the local government were also included to everyone's delight as well as one of the original signatories of the twin town agreement: Albrecht Sellner, former Mayor, who was accompanied by his wife for the meeting.

The report on 2017 would not be complete without recalling that this year – for the occasion of the jubilee twin town anniversaries – a number of our cross-border friends received an award from the Town of Tata. The Town Council of Tata granted the "Tata Town King Sigismund Award" award to Horst Arzt, Deputy Mayor of Gerlingen, in recognition of his various activities in Hungarian-German co-operation, especially for deepening the twin town relationship between Tata and Gerlingen. Honorary citizenship was given to Anita Leonov Nyilas, Mayor Councillor of Magyarkanizsa, Andrea Szarka, Headmaster in Szőgyén and Gábor Vígh, the Mayor of Szőgyén. The honoured people received their awards on 20 August, the day of celebration of King Saint Stephen, the founder of the Hungarian State.





CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OF THE 2017 TOWN PRIZE-WINNERS!

On 20 August, we gathered at the heart of the town, in Kossuth tér, for a town festival organised by the Local Government of Tata in honour of St. Stephen, founder and first king of the Hungarian state. The celebration began with a holy mass in Saint Cross Parish Church followed by an ecumenical blessing of bread in Kossuth tér. In keeping with tradition, town prizes were also given as part of last year's celebrations. In 2017, the Local Government of Tata decided to award the following prizes:

- **Horst Arzt** (Deputy Mayor of Gerlingen in Germany, our twin town, who received the Knight's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Hungarian Republic in 2006, presented by Dr. Sándor Peisch representing the President of Hungary, as part of a 1956 Revolution Commemoration) **has received the King Sigismund Prize of Tata** in recognition of the great work performed in strengthening Hungarian-German cooperation, and in particular the twinning relationship between Tata and Gerlingen. As a member of Landsmannschaft der Deutschen aus Ungarn, Horst Arzt has made significant contributions

to reinforcing the Association's relationship with Hungary, as well as establishing the twinning relationship between Tata and Gerlingen. In 1988, he set up one of the first joint ventures, with the involvement of his own company and a company in Tata. In 1995, he donated a minibus to our town. He was a founding member of the "Friends of Tata Club" in Gerlingen, as well as being its secretary for many years. Each year, he brings buses full of visitors to Hungary and Tata in particular, from Gerlingen and Stuttgart. He is also one of the main organisers of the Tata group visits to Gerlingen. With regard to his charity work, it is important to mention his donation and assistance given to the Evangelical Parish of Tata, his professional support granted to kindergartens in Tata and the neighbouring area, his support to the disadvantaged residents of Tata, the cooperation of the Tata Group of the Hungarian Maltese Charity Service and the autistic self-help group that he helped to establish, as well as the support he has provided to the Reformed Secondary Grammar School of Tata. Horst Arzt received his prize

in the 30th anniversary year of the twinning relationship between Tata and Gerlingen.

A GOLDEN PRO TATA PRIZE WAS PRESENTED TO:

- **Attila Berczelly** (CEO of Tatai Városkapu Non-Profit Zrt.), a true innovator at his company, Tatai Városkapu Non-Profit Zrt., as well as the creator of Tata's marketing image, in recognition of his multi-faceted, outstanding and selfless work in expanding tourism developments and strengthening twinning relationships. He has been the head of Tatai Városkapu Non-Profit Zrt. since 2009. He works relentlessly to develop Tata's marketing image and was also behind the introduction of Tata cards. He successfully manages the Fényes lido, the Fényes nature trail, the Zoltán Magyary Cultural Centre, the New Kayak House Ecotourism Centre and the English Park. As the civil chairperson of the Tata and its Environs Tourism Association, he organised the cooperation between the town's tourism companies.

- **Gyula Fekete** (civil engineer), in recognition of his involvement in

establishing, promoting and continuously developing Tata Industrial Park, as well as creating sporting opportunities within Tata. His name has become synonymous with the establishment of Tata Industrial Park; he has been the managing director of Barina Kft., the park's operator, for 16 years. The company founded the industrial park on 11 April 2001, thus initiating the renewal of the town's industry. Since then, 36 companies have moved into the area, creating work for 1,100 people. His work as chairperson of the Tata-Tóváros Water Sports Association over the past 15 years has also been outstanding. A rowing centre, which has become an indispensable part of the sporting life of Tata, was set up under his management on the banks of the Old Lake.

A SILVER PRO TATA PRIZE WAS PRESENTED TO:

- **Márta Jenei** (public official of the Tata Joint Local Government), in recognition of her outstanding community involvement, in addition to the excellent humanitarian work she performs. Márta Jenei is primarily known in Tata as Head of the Mayor's Secretariat, but is also a registrar and has assisted at hundreds of weddings in our town. In addition to her official duties, she also gladly gets involved in local government events: she takes on organisational and preparatory responsibilities, and, occasionally, even the role of presenter.

- **Katalin Pap** (Head of the Basic Social Provision Institution's Homeless and Daytime Shelter), in recognition of her devoted and exemplary work in caring for homeless people, which she performs with professional dedication. Katalin Pap has been working at the Basic Social Provision Institution since 1998. She began work as a social worker; however, it was homeless care that gave her a true sense of fulfilment. She has been in charge of the Basic Social Provision Institution's Homeless and Daytime Shelter since 2002. She helps homeless people with outstanding sensitivity and endless patience. She produces grant applications with

inexhaustible commitment, thus facilitating the smooth and efficient operation of the institution over the critical winter period.

A BRONZE PRO TATA PRIZE WAS AWARDED TO:

- **Ildikó Szabóné Bottyán** (first violinist of the Kincső band), in recognition of her selfless work in promoting, safeguarding and popularising folk music.

FIVE PEOPLE RECEIVED HONORARY CITIZENSHIP OF TATA IN 2017:

- **László Elsner** (technical head of the Aikido Foundation), who contributed to the advancement of Tata's reputation by the promotion of aikido, a traditional martial art, as well as its teaching at national and international level.

- **Anital Nyilas Leonov** (the Mayor's councillor in Tata's Serbian twin town, Magyarkanizsa, and vice chairman of the Hungarian National Council in Vojvodina), in recognition of her complex work and role in establishing the twinning relationship between Tata and Magyarkanizsa.

- **Ilona Nyisztor** (one of the most well-known singers of Moldavian Csango Hungarians; pedagogue), in recognition of her exemplary work in strengthening the reputation of

Tata, as well as preserving and passing on Csango Hungarian folk songs.

- **Andrea Szarka** (Principal of Lajos Csongrády Elementary School in Szőgyén, head of the Iglice Folk Dance Group), in recognition of her outstanding and generous contribution to the enrichment of the twinning relationship between Tata and Szőgyén.

- **Gábor Vígh** (Mayor of Szőgyén), in recognition of his diverse and charitable organisational work carried out in reinforcing the twinning relationship between Tata and Szőgyén. Thanks to his support, the participants in the cultural and traditionalist organisations of Szőgyén can regularly attend town festivals in Tata, and artists from Tata can visit the summer art camps in Szőgyén. Gábor Vígh helped strengthen the twinning relationship between Tata and Szőgyén as a council member between 1998 and 2014, as Deputy Mayor between 2002 and 2006, and now, since 2014, he continues to do so as Mayor. His initiatives as Mayor have contributed to helping the residents of Tata gain a broader and deeper insight into the culture and history of Felvidék.

We would like to congratulate the prize winners and wish them great success in their future work!

The Local Government of Tata awards the following local prizes and titles:

- King Sigismund Prize of Tata;
- Golden, Silver and Bronze Pro Tata Prizes;
- the title of Honorary Citizen of Tata.

The **King Sigismund Prize of Tata** can be awarded to individuals who have performed an activity that significantly improved the financial, intellectual or moral values of the town, or enhanced its reputation or prestige through work of national or international renown.

The **Golden, Silver or Bronze Pro Tata Prizes** can be granted to persons or communities that work in Tata and advance the reputation of our town through high-level professional activities performed in their fields of expertise, for the good of the town as a whole.

On behalf of town residents, the Town Council awards the title of "**Honorary Citizen of Tata**", as well as the rights attached to it, to persons who: significantly improved the financial, intellectual or moral values of the town with their work or donations, played a significant role in its development, enhanced its reputation and prestige or expanded its scope of relations through work of national or international renown.

TOURISM DEVELOPMENTS IN 2017

Over the past few years, a number of tourism developments have been carried out in our town, primarily with the help of grants provided by the European Union. One such development is the Fényes nature trail, which was constructed in 2015. The trail, which was set up on stilts above 1,350 m of wetland, has 18 stopping points where the biodiversity of the Fényes Spring Area in Tata is presented to the public interactively. The New Kayak House Ecotourism Centre, which offers a number of programmes and options not only for tourists but also Tata residents, was opened in the same year. Here, visitors can rent kayaks, canoes, dragon boats or bicycles, and choose from a range of biking tours, hiking trips or night tours. The Ecotourism Centre also organises and stages events, including training and leisure activities for co-workers, or for civil organisations. The English Park, the first English-style park in Hungary, was renewed in 2015 as well, also with funding from a grant. The deservedly popular park, with its beautiful groves, paths and monuments, was created by landscape architect Ferenc Bóhm, by order of the Esterházy family, in 1783. The English Park serves as a venue for one of the oldest, yet most modern open-air theatres in the region. Both the interior and exterior of the Summer Residence in the English Park were also renovated. The building is currently hosting a Herend porcelain¹ exhibition, as well as an interactive exhibit on the English gardens of the Carpathian Basin.

The ecotourism developments carried out over the past few years, such as the New Kayak House Ecotourism Centre with its bicycle, water sports and hiking tours, the English Park, the Fényes nature trail, and from May 2016, even the Fényes lido, will all be operated by the town-owned Tatai Városkapu Közhasznú Zrt.

In 2016, the company's most important task was to give purpose to the newly renovated facilities, which involved organising high quality and diverse programmes, as well as developing the services already available.

The year 2017 focused on continuing with the developments that had been implemented in the past few years. The largest new tourism development was at the Fényes lido. The town refurbished the Grófi Lake (the count's lake) at its own expense. The lake was first given this name as Countess Esterházy used to bathe there. During the coal mining era, which began in the 1950s, water was pumped out in large quantities. This led to a significant drop in the level of karst water, and, by the 1970s, the complete disappearance of springs in Tata, including those that feed the Grófi Lake. Following the end of the mining period, the level of karst water slowly began to rise again. The Fényes Springs, which run the deepest, were the first to start flowing in 2001. The temperatures of the springs that rise in the Grófi Lake are approximately 20-33 degrees, with a flow rate of 15,000 m³ per day, which is approximately 60% of the total flow of the Fényes Springs. The Grófi Lake is currently the spring water lake with the largest flow rate in Central Europe. In order to protect the karst, the bottom of the lake was lined with a layer of clay after the springs had dried up. In 2001, when the springs started flowing again, it was partially removed. Meanwhile, dredging the remaining material has become crucial for keeping the lake in operation, together with the removal of the concrete banks; the natural sandy design is far more attractive to swimmers and increases the lake's capacity for self-cleaning. Tatai Fényes Fürdő Zrt. had already carried out basic renovation works in 2013, to make the lake suitable

56 ¹ The world-famous Herend porcelain has ties to Tata, as the founder, Mór Farkasházy-Fischer, was born in Tata, and established the company here, where it began to flourish.



for swimming once more. In 2014, the local government prepared a plan for dredging, transforming and renewing the lake, which received a water permit for installation from the Győr-Moson-Sopron County Directorate For Disaster Management as the water authority. The renewal of the lake began last year, in the course of which the town paid special attention to replicating conditions to as close to the original as possible. The concrete finishes of the lake were removed, as well as the layer of clay that had been placed on the lake bed, thus opening up the ground for the rising springs. A jetty, from which swimmers can jump into the water, was built between the lake and the sauna located alongside it. The sections of shore, which are not designated swimming areas, were separated from the swimming area by laying plants.

Another great addition this year was the Cellarius Tata Treasure House, which was opened in the English Garden's Summer Kitchen building, where local and nearby artists' works and producers' goods are on display. The word "cellarius" is an adjective used to describe things stored in a pantry. The Tata Treasure House aims to show the value of local products. These items help us to identify who we are and what we can create. They also help us feel even more like citizens of Tata. Currently, the works of 40 artists can be viewed in the showroom, all of which can be purchased at a number of locations throughout the town, including the Summer Residence. The opening hours of the Cellarius Tata Treasure House are the same as those of the Summer Residence, namely Tuesday to Sunday, from 9.00 am to 2.30 pm.

2017: THE YEAR OF NEW SERVICES AND PROGRAMMES

Tata and its Environs Tourism Association



The 20-year old King Sigismund Order of Wine Knights

The Tata and its Environs Tourism Association was founded in 2009, as a local tourism destination management (TDM) organisation. Between 2009 and 2015, its area of operation extended over an additional four towns and villages (Tata, Baj, Kocs, Vértesszőlős), while the number of members varied between 40 and 60 people. However, 2016 brought significant changes in the life of the organisation. A further fourteen towns and villages joined the association and, with the entry of members interested in tourism, membership numbers increased to over 80. Thus we can state that today, it maintains a notable regional influence outside Tata and its catchment area as well.

The greatest challenge of 2017 was to ensure that a direct (preferably personal) relationship was established with members interested in tourism, and for their services to become an integral part of the scope of the region as a whole.

Consequently, new branches were established in Bábolna and Kisdér, where the manager of the Association holds an open house meeting every month. An information point has also been set up in both towns, in order to provide visitors with full information on the available services,

events and programme options. Half-day and full-day bus trips to introduce participants to both the natural and man-made cultural heritage of the wider region, are now included in the range of available leisure activities.

Developments in Tata have also been progressing well. Eight thematic routes (The Route of Stones; The Route of Mills; Following in the Footsteps of Architect Jakab Fellner; Following in the Footsteps of Carver Antal Schweiger; A Walk with Count Niki; Jewish Memories; The Route of King Matthias; The Route of Churches) have been added to the range of traditional sightseeing tours.

The electric scooter rental service launched in the town aims to meet the needs of older tourists as well as those with disabilities, as these visitors cannot or can only partially complete the traditional 3- to 3.5-hour sightseeing tours. Furthermore, the areas around sights are restricted traffic zones for cultural heritage management and environmental protection reasons, and thus cannot be accessed by car or bus. The electric vehicles can be rented for half a day or an entire day; groups can even request a tour guide for their scooter sightseeing tour. There are current-

ly two fixed rental vehicles, however the quantity can be increased on demand, in case of orders submitted through service providers or directly to the TDM organisation.

Hungary is also an international frontrunner in setting up so-called "escape rooms/games". Escape rooms are cleverly furnished rooms where groups of 2-5 friends have to find their way out by solving all kinds of tricky riddles and puzzles. Padlocks, locks, unique combinations of objects, and interconnected riddles all either hinder or provide assistance in achieving the goal. The Association constructed such a game entitled "The Legend of the Castle Dungeon" in the former castle dungeon in Tata, with the help of Domokos Kuny Museum.

Last, but not least, Tata also hosted the 22nd National Conference of Chief Architects in August 2017, which was jointly organised by the Local Government of Tata, the National Chamber of Chief Architects and the TDM organisations (Tata and its Environs Tourism Association, Duna-Gerecse Touristic Non-profit Kft.).



TATA: A HOME OF SPORT

Tata is a truly “sporty” town with so many natural outdoor spaces, that you cannot help but get yourself moving. The Old Lake is surrounded by a 7 km track for running, cycling and Nordic walking. Such activities can also be enjoyed on the shorter 2.2 km path at Lake Cseke. It is not surprising then that you can see active local residents on the streets and promenades of the town throughout the year. In addition to individual sports, a number of seasonal organised events are staged as well. The Lake Run and the Tata Minimarathon both have a long history. The Lake Run is held at the Old Lake twice a year, in May and September. Competitors can choose to run one or two laps of the lake, but children and beginners have the choice of a shorter 2 or 3.5 km run instead. Perhaps thanks to the varying distances, between 400 and 500 people sign up for the races each time. However, the town’s largest race is the Tata Minimarathon, traditionally organised on the first Saturday of August. Competitors have been taking part in the race along the streets of Tata for 34 years now, passing through the most attractive natural sites along the way. Runners race around the two lakes, before running back to the finish line along Tata’s charming streets, covering a total distance of 14 km.

Although the race was held in very hot weather in August 2017, this did not deter competitors travelling from across the region, country and even Europe, from participating in the competition; nearly eight hundred people in all participated in the individual and relay races. Last year’s race was a real community celebration of running. Many people worked very hard to ensure the success of the event, with town residents also contributing by setting up refreshment points along the way. Additionally, the Great Sport Selection Event is a wonderful programme for children, as it introduces various different sports, as the name suggests. In May 2017, the young people who participated in the event at the Olympic training camp were given the opportunity to try themselves out at 31 different sports. Of course, in addition to amateur sports events, the town also hosts important national and international events as well. Last year, Tata hosted the National Triathlon Championship for the first time, which brought with it the national recognition of sporting professionals. Boccia also made its debut in Tata last year, at which athletes with physical disabilities could showcase their talent. As we have mentioned the Old Lake a number of times in connection with running,



we must also talk about beach volleyball as well, as two sand courts were set up by the lakeside in the summer for one of the rounds of the National Championships. When all these sporting events are taken into account along with the nearly 4,000 registered athletes at 29 sport clubs in the town, our opening remark is perhaps no exaggeration: Tata really is a home of sport.



NEW SPORTS DEVELOPMENTS AT KŐKÚTI SCHOOL

This spring, the Kőkúti Eagles Student Sports Association once again completed significant sports developments in relation to the facilities of the Kőkúti Primary School. The construction of a 36-metre corridor connecting the school building and the new Town Sports Hall has been finished. The corridor was greatly needed, as the Sports Hall is primarily used by the pupils of Kőkúti School during morning PE classes and afternoon training sessions. Approximately 300-400 children go back and forth between the two facilities every day. In the summer, this does not pose a problem but in the rain and snow of winter months, the buildings become dirty very easily. Moreover, during the heating season, the constant opening and closing, as well as wedging of doors, results in enormous additional costs to both institutions. The association calculated that approximately 1m HUF can be saved over winter, thanks to the construction of the corridor.

This year's developments also include the renewal of the sports tent on the school-yard, which now functions as an ice rink in winter. The ice rink received a special heavy-duty, non-slip plastic flooring, which is also resistant to discolouration. As a result, the tent has become multifunctional, as when it is not being used as an ice rink, it serves as a handball court. The gym has also been fully renovated; the floor has been replaced, the wall-edges have been cleaned, and the interior has been repainted. The renovation was funded with 2m HUF, which was provided by the Tatabánya School

District Centre. The developments cost 92m HUF in total. They were primarily completed using TAO funds. The largest donations in support of the projects were received from Foxconn (Komárom), GE Water (Oroszlány), as well as from Perfekt Kft. and Güntner-Tata Kft. (Tata). In addition to the funding provided by these organisations, 32 smaller companies from Tata and the county – Gelbmann, Agrowitt Kft., Gottwald, Pikant, DK Transport, Door to Door Express, Tabak Team Kft., and DERIK Hungária Kft., among others – offered several million forints in TAO funds. The town's own contribution required for the completion of the projects – more than 23m HUF – was provided by the Local Government of Tata.

With financial support from parents, the school also purchased a 90-metre plastic cover for the running track. The old track covering had to be removed three years ago due to the relocation of the ice tent and construction of the Sports Hall. The new covering was greatly needed as the track is regularly used in PE classes and sometimes for Kőkúti Eagles athletics training sessions. This year, the association was able to replace its minibus as well, which primarily serves to transport its handball teams to games and tournaments. The new Ford Transit was bought using the money from the sale of the old one, from TAO funds, and from support provided by the local government. Bearing in mind the tragic bus crash near Verona, the vehicle they have chosen is equipped with a lane departure alert system,

a blind spot information system, a rear camera, and an anti-sleep driver alert system.

The total cost of these developments exceeded 128m HUF, which was raised as the result of a major collaboration involving the joint efforts of the local government, TAC, the Kőkúti School, parents, and a number of local companies. One of Kőkúti School's top priorities for the future is to organise and tidy up its surroundings. They would like to restore the site to its former state, before the construction works, so that the building can be surrounded by green areas with well-kept lawns and trees. Their long-term aim is to construct a 50-60 metre-long ski practice track, which would be built somewhere in Tata. This ambitious plan has been prompted by the excellent quality of ski instruction taught at the school. At present, classes take place exclusively in ski camps, but if the proposed plan goes ahead, ski instruction could soon be integrated into PE classes. The school provides its students with all of the necessary equipment, thus their parents do not have to buy or rent any items at their own expense. In the future, the school also plans to update its stock of ski equipment.

The pupils of Kőkúti Primary School deserve appropriate sports and training facilities, as last year they finished fifth at "The most successful public educational institution at the Student Olympics" competition organised by the Hungarian School Sports Federation, which was due to the excellent results achieved at national sporting events. In 2015,

the school finished sixth, and in the previous year, fourteenth. Principal Zoltán Kőhalmi is very proud of his pupils because they had to compete with large educational institutions which have as many pupils as all the primary schools in Tata combined, not to mention that there are 16 athletics training centres in the country, whose students also participate in the inter-school competitions.

Due to the fast-growing population of the town, Kőkúti Primary School was founded in 1983, in addition to the Vaszary János and the Fazekas utca Primary Schools, as it became apparent that a third school was needed. When the school was established, PE teacher László Maráz was invited to develop a programme for physical education. The school has always placed a special emphasis on sports, with many talented children attending from the outset. With time, as the local government decided to form specialised schools, it became obvious that Kőkúti should be focusing on PE. In 2007, the government announced a grant programme for a "sports school" title, which Kőkúti won. The evaluation procedure took into consideration the number of staff at the institution, its development plans, the qualifications of its PE teachers, the results achieved by pupils at competitions, and the sports in which the school intended to specialise for training future generations of athletes. The Kőkúti School chose the following three sports as its specialisations: athletics (as a basic sport), handball (due to its long traditions in the town), and kayaking and canoeing (due to their popularity among pupils). In 2009, following the construction of the new school swimming pool, swimming was added as a fourth sport and co-operation was established with the Hungarian Swimming Federation. The school remains a sports school to this day and now also functions as a methodological centre. The school tries to familiarise first year students specialising in sports with as many different kinds of sports as possible, subject to their availability within the town, ranging from golf through

to ice-skating and even fencing. The teachers help pupils choose the sport best suited to them by taking into consideration the fields in which they excel, as well as what the pupil enjoys. In addition to concentrating on sports, the academic studies of the pupils are also prioritised, with a special focus on preparing them for secondary school education. Pupils usually achieve outstanding results in school assessments, with 85-90% of those leaving the school continuing their education at secondary or grammar schools.

The students' sports club was founded at the same time as the school with the aim of making sports popular among younger pupils, in order to discover talents, involve as many pupils as possible in the sports that best suit them, and encourage children from disadvantaged backgrounds to become part of a community. In 1995, the students' sports club was turned into an association called the Kőkúti Eagles Students' Sports Association. It consists of eleven sections: handball, basketball, athletics, gymnastics, chess, football, swimming, ice-skating, ice hockey, competitive games, and hiking. All of them can be enjoyed simply as hobbies, or at competitive level. Currently, more than 350 students do sports and compete on a weekly basis. They do well, not only in competitions organised within the town and county,

but also at national and international sporting events. The children of the association are instructed, prepared, and accompanied to competitions by the school's PE teachers. It is thus easier to organise sports classes, motivate the children, spot and encourage the most talented ones, and communicate with parents. Each sport is coached by a non-staff member, usually a parent. For the last three years, the association has been led by Gábor Molnár, who took up the presidential responsibilities as a civilian providing a voluntary social service, as he is principally the owner of a data management and protection consultancy firm. Thanks to his extensive professional network, he has managed to persuade a number of companies to support the association with TAO funding. Participation in competitions, entry fees, travel, the costs of referees, and the provision of shirts, jerseys and other sports equipment pose a serious financial challenge to the association, thus in addition to membership fees, they need to rely on various financial sources, such as TAO funds, local government funding, professional organisation funding, occasional donations, and must regularly submit grant applications as well. Kőkúti's is underlined by the fact that other towns have also contacted them, to seek guidance in managing an association.





DIVERSE YET STILL ALIKE

This year, Tata hosted the National Folk Traditionalist Kindergarten Teachers' Meeting. The 19th Spring Workshop was entitled "Pure as spring water", referring to the spiritual purity of young children. The principal theme of the two-day event was laying the foundations of children's behaviour, by using the tools provided by our cultural heritage; i.e., looking at how children can be acquainted with folk culture, and how we can transfer and preserve both knowledge and values within these traditions. Nearly 300 kindergarten teachers participated in the event. More than 50 people travelled considerable distances, with a number of guests arriving from our twin towns of Magyarakanizsa, Szőgyén and Szováta. In addition to the professional programme, participants also had a chance to visit the 70-year-old kindergarten on Fűrdő utca, where they had the opportunity to try folk crafts such as matting, gingerbread decoration and horse-shoe-making. They then went on a sightseeing tour of Tata and walked the Fényes nature trail. This was not

the first time that the kindergarten had organised a national meeting; they previously hosted this event back in 2010. 18 years ago, they became committed to safeguarding folk traditions when they joined the Association of Folk Traditionalist Kindergarten Teachers. Their educational programme is 100% compliant with the national curriculum, which suits them perfectly.

A total of five state kindergartens function within the town (Bartók Béla, Fűrdő utca Folk Traditionalist, Geszti, Kertvárosi and Kincseskert), seven, if we include their affiliated schools (Bergengőcia in Agostyán and Szivárvány). In addition to the five institutions, Tata also has three kindergartens which are run by foundations (Juniorka, Angyalforrás Waldorf and Színes) and one that is run by the Church (Hajnalcsillag Reformed). The local government maintains a closer relationship with the Juniorka and Hajnalcsillag kindergartens, as they have entered into a public education agreement, thus their directors participate in every event and meeting concerning kin-

dergartens. There are 750 children in total that attend these nine kindergartens, with 550 of them attending those run by the state.

Each kindergarten consists of between four and six groups, except Bergengőcia in Agostyán and Szivárvány, which teach a single group. In certain kindergartens, groups are simply divided based on age, while in others, e.g. at Geszti kindergarten, they are mixed, with three-year-olds and five-year-olds belonging to the same group. Kindergarten director, Judit Vas, believes that children develop better in mixed groups, as they act as a source of motivation for one another. Geszti kindergarten is considered within the town to be particularly family-friendly, mainly due to their commitment to maintaining close relationships with their students' parents and siblings. Moreover, they now include grandparents in kindergarten life and greatly appreciate their help. The kindergarten invites them to tell stories or hold craft sessions for the children once a fortnight. The programme quickly became very popular amongst

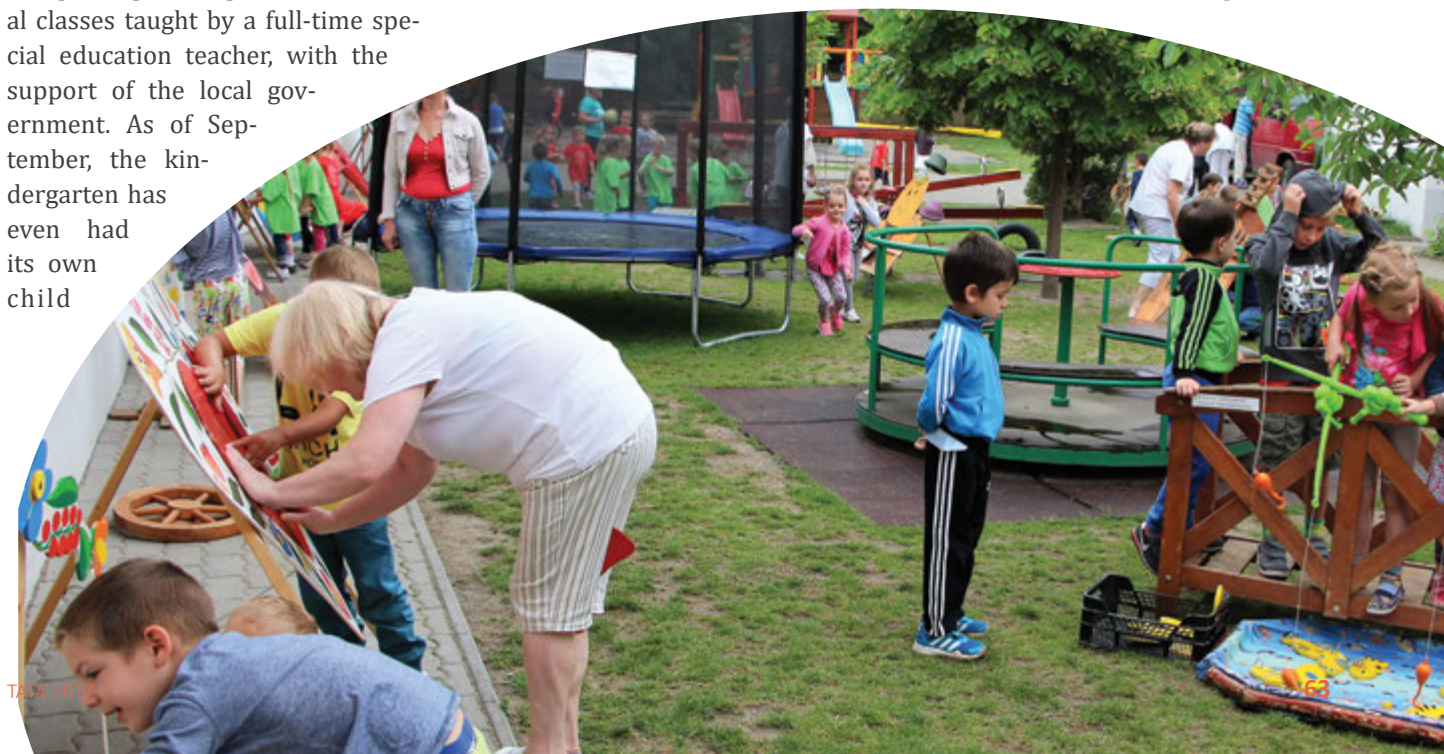
grandparents, as they are excited to help and feel it is very important. The kindergarten organises a number of family afternoons throughout the year, as well as excursions, which ensure that parents can really get to know each other instead of just running into each other in the school changing room. Even though Judit has been a kindergarten director for ten years now, she still knows every child by name, and if one of her colleagues is on holiday or off sick, she will substitute them.

A number of kindergartens in the town lean in a certain direction. For example, Kincseskert focuses on teaching children to lead a healthy lifestyle. Developing an environmentally-responsible mentality is particularly important for them, and they even set themselves the ambitious goal of also shaping parents' attitudes. For instance, all groups tend to vegetable gardens in which they grow peas, radishes, tomatoes and peppers. As they hoe and take care of it, the produce is theirs to eat. The staff pay special attention to developing the children's motor skills, and therefore pay extra attention to strengthening the arches of the feet and improving posture. The Kincseskert kindergarten also welcomes children with disabilities and special educational needs, currently teaching six such students. They are integrated into the groups, and in addition to the daily activities, also participate in special educational classes taught by a full-time special education teacher, with the support of the local government. As of September, the kindergarten has even had its own child

psychologist, who also sees children from the other institutions. Their affiliated school, the Szivárvány kindergarten emphasises the teaching of art subjects, providing talent workshops with a special focus on painting and puppetry. The kindergarten on Fűrdő utca chose the preservation of folk traditions as their focus; they celebrate each folk holiday, maintain folk traditions, often dress in folk costumes and practice folk dance. In the course of their craft sessions, they often use natural materials for activities such as in braiding, felting and weaving. Here, all graduating kindergarten children make their own pouches. The kindergarten in Agostyán, which works with just one group, often takes children out for excursions in the area. The group regularly visits the nearby eco-village as well as frequently making crafts. The educational programme of Bartók kindergarten is based on the Freinet method, which aims to develop self-expression, self-awareness, tolerance and independence. As part of this programme, children establish an active connection with the world, which takes place within a set framework of projects. In addition – to be true to their name –, the kindergarten also offers music classes. The Kertváros kindergarten functions as a “green” institution and places its emphasis on environmentally-responsible education.

Unstructured playtime and exercise is a priority in each institution. Many of them even have daily physical education. Currently, only three kindergartens have gyms, but this does not mean that the children are any less active in the rest of them. The only difference is that the teachers need to be a little more creative and rearrange the room in order to make space for physical exercises. Children that go to any of the kindergartens spend a lot of time outdoors. Usually, the only time they do not go outside is if there is heavy rain. Children in the final years of each kindergarten regularly have swimming lessons at the Kőküti Swimming Pool. In the Kincseskert kindergarten, playful wrestling is taught by András Koller, coach of TAC (Tata Athletics Club) wrestling division free of charge. The local government also supports the motor skill development of the children; last year, they purchased 12 bosu balls to help develop the children's balance and motor skills. These hemisphere-shaped training tools are shared between the kindergartens, being used at one for a few weeks before being transferred to another. The kindergarten managers can already see the positive effects. In addition to the development of children's balance, their drawing skills show great improvements as well.

So what are the kindergarten children like in Tata? Kindergarten managers feel





their door is open to all. The parents often take this opportunity to discuss any issues either within

that the pool of children has changed a lot over the last few years. The world is changing so quickly, and now children are exposed to far too much stimulation. Many parents give them electronic devices at too early an age, the negative effects of which we all know too well; watching too much television and using the computer too often not only damages the children's nervous systems, but also makes them impatient and hyperactive. The kindergarten teachers do not feel as though their job has become more difficult when compared with previous years, but that adults have become less patient and tolerant, when understanding and love are what this age group really needs. They believe that children nowadays require more outside trips, so they frequently organise educational trips to the library and museum, which have a lasting positive effect.

All kindergartens maintain a good relationship with parents, and aim to quickly resolve any problem that may arise among them. Kindergarten managers not only meet parents at the parent-teacher conferences, but have regular office hours during which anyone can contact them;

the kindergarten or at home. When they discover that the directors are open-minded and talk to them in one-to-one meetings, the parents open up and accept their help in the event of problems. If necessary, the kindergarten directors may refer them to the family support worker or recommend a psychologist. In many kindergartens, teachers even visit the families in order to get to know them and improve relations between the family and kindergarten.

Last June, 195 of the 250 children in compulsory full-time education in Tata graduated from town kindergartens. The remaining 55 will stay for another year, as they do not meet the requirements for school just yet. Whether or not a child is mature enough to start school is determined by education counsellors. In certain cases, the kindergarten management may also hold back certain children at their own discretion. They recommend that children

stay at kindergarten for another year when justified by health or physical underdevelopment, insufficient weight or height, delayed speech development, or a lack of the physical or mental maturity required to sit through an entire lesson. The 22% of children that remain in kindergarten for an additional year can be considered a good statistic in the region as it seems that this extra year is very useful for the children; the primary school head teachers often tell kindergarten directors that the children of Tata are well-prepared and ready to succeed in school.

The kindergarten directors appreciate the fact that the local government is concerned about the welfare of the youngest ones, by making sure that all children in Tata grow up in similar circumstances and start their lives with equal opportunities. The local government always supports the kindergarten that requires most assistance. In the near future, two kindergartens are to be renovated: the Szivárvány kindergarten will be modernised and its energy consumption lowered, while Kertvárosi kindergarten will be reconstructed. The building of the latter is outdated, all the doors and windows need to be completely replaced,



the kitchen appliances are also obsolete, and the size of the group rooms are not suitable. The town has recently submitted an application for a grant for the development and extension of the kindergarten, and so hopefully, children in Kertváros will soon find themselves in better circumstances as well. The local government has already raised the idea of establishing another kindergarten in the Újhegy area at some time in the near future, due to the growing number of families with small children that now live there, as in this way, parents could take their children to a kindergarten close to home.

The mayor holds meetings for kindergarten directors once every three months. Each time, a different kindergarten hosts the meeting, so the directors can also get to know each other's institutions. This personal meeting provides a great opportunity for the directors to discuss shared issues and problems. They often invite guests as well; for instance, at the last meeting a presentation was given by a mental health expert, whom the directors can contact in the future, if necessary. The local government feels it is important for the directors to

receive moral support as well as professional assistance,

as managing an institution of 100-150 children is not an easy task. Two years ago, the opening hours of kindergartens were modified in order to meet the needs of working parents; now they are uniformly open from 6:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. During the summer, they close for four weeks, instead of the previous six-eight weeks. In the course of these four weeks, a limited service is provided; two kindergartens are selected each year, which accept students whose parents request day care during this period. Most parents do not take up this opportunity, as they would rather take leave from work, to spend time with their children, or undertake the summer break with the help of grandparents and summer camp. In Geszti kindergarten, which has 120 students, only five parents requested kindergarten services during these weeks.

The directors also strive to develop their kindergartens on their own initiative, whether by organising new events or making infrastructural developments, such as having the school repainted or the hardwood flooring replaced. They generally request support from the local government or use foundation funds in order to implement these developments. This year, Geszti kindergarten introduced "Children's Week", during which kindergarten children can learn about the main attractions in Tata. The staff find it important for children to first acquaint themselves with their surrounding neighbourhood, to learn how to get around and navigate in the area. The Kincseskert kindergarten has a small tent set up in the hall, containing a blanket and a pillow, to provide those who wish to retreat from the noisy group of 25 children with a place to go. Here the children can relax, look at a book from the library and study it for a while, before returning to the group. Needless to say, this tent has become very popular! The next

project is to create a barefoot path in the garden, to develop the children's motor skills and sensory nervous system. By organising the national meeting, as supported by the local government, the kindergarten on Fürdő utca raised the bar once more for other folk traditionalist kindergartens, proving that they are worthy of the Master Kindergarten title awarded to them by the Association of Folk Traditionalist Kindergarten Teachers.





TATA – AN ACADEMIC TOWN

Tata has always been proud of how well-educated its residents are, and how some of the local intellectuals have become well-known throughout the country due to their work and achievements. We are convinced that their success is a direct result of the high standard of local education. We aim to continue building on this tradition of high-quality education in the future. Currently, Tata ranks third in terms of the largest school centres in the county, behind Tatabánya and Esztergom. In addition to 4,400 local students, more than 1,700 students commute to study there from other towns and villages.

There are two combined primary schools in the town, operating in four different locations: Kőkúti Primary School in Upper Tata and its Fazekas Utca sister school, and János Vaszary Primary School and its Jázmin Utca sister school. Tata also has two foundation schools: Színes Iskola – Kindergarten, Primary and Secondary School, and the Talentum Eng-

lish-Hungarian Primary and Secondary School and Arts School. The town is very proud of all the special courses currently being offered in Tata (arts courses, basic level sport training, maths-IT and foreign language courses) which have been continuously developed by the institutions concerned. For all courses, it is considered important that this shouldn't be at the expense of other courses in the national curriculum.

There are two secondary schools in Tata, the József Eötvös Secondary School and the Tata Reformed Church Secondary School, which is run by the Tata Reformed Church. The former is the oldest public education institution in the county, which was established by the Piarists in 1765. The school was taken over by the state in 1919 and in 1948, when it was then renamed after reform politician and writer József Eötvös. The school has always respected its rich history and traditions, with its current activities reflecting this approach. Its students successfully participate in school and sports competitions, achieve outstanding university entrance exam results, and based on its students' language skills, it is listed amongst the top secondary schools in the county. The school strives to provide high quality education in the fields of natural sciences, mathematics, technical subjects and IT, and aims to set up a county knowledge centre.

There are a number of prestigious

grammar schools, vocational schools, and training institutions in the town. The Sándor Jávorka Agricultural and Food Industry Vocational School is also worthy of note, as it can be traced back to the Piarist activities of the 18th century, thanks to Zoltán Magyary. This school offers high quality practical training. The training is greatly facilitated by 120 hectares of practice farmland, 1.5 hectares of fruit trees and a bakery school. The students enjoy success every year in a variety of specialised competitions. Another famous educational institution in the town is the Ottó Bláthy Secondary Vocational School. The school, founded in 1949, now has more than seven hundred students (fifty of them travelling from other towns and villages), and offers regular day courses for grammar school and vocational students. This is the only technical training school in Tata, and is thus a major source of future employees for regional and local industry alike. The school cooperates with more than one hundred businesses and farms in order to provide an ample supply of freshly graduated specialists. School students also regularly participate in vocational competitions, with considerable success. Around 10% of vocational graduates go on to study in higher education. The school's graduates are reliable and respected contributors to the local economy.

In 2017, the Hungarian government launched a school development programme and provided 10bn HUF in development resources for educational institutions in the Tata region. The developments began with the modernisation of the dormitories for the Jávorka and Bláthy schools. Under the umbrella of this programme, the school buildings of János Vaszary Primary School and its Jázmin Utcai sister school will be fully renovated. This development will enable the facility to function as a regional educational centre. The renovation will include the complete overhaul of the schools' public utility systems, including water pipes, wires, and insulation. A gym will also be built for Jávorka School.





FROM SCHOOL TO THE STAGE

The first acrobats class at the Talentum school started their final year at the start of September, with the main focus on vocational training. Students can get their acrobat certificate this spring and start working right away. Both domestic and foreign circuses are awaiting them with open arms, as Hungarian acrobats are very talented and receive excellent training.

Last year, the acrobat and graphic design students of the Talentum English-Hungarian Bilingual Primary and Secondary School successfully passed their baccalaureate (school-leaving) exams. This year they will only receive vocational training, after which they will become certified acrobats and graphic designers. The school launched its dual arts training 4 years ago, initially as a trade school but now as a vocational school. The arts have been prominent throughout the 25-year history of the school. For more than 10 years, the school had drawing and media sections but musical training has also played an important role.

Seven years ago, the Principal of the Imre Baross Vocational School of Acrobatics (formerly National In-

stitute of Acrobatics), Ildikó Szakáts Murainé approached the Talentum school, to launch acrobat training outside Budapest on the recommendation of a friend from Tata. Up until that point, Budapest had been the only place to provide such training since December 1950. They were looking for a school that was open to the arts and flexible to changes. In the academic year following the initial talks, acrobat training was launched as an afternoon activity, to which all students from inside and outside the school were welcome. A few years later, after seeing the popularity of the activity, the school management decided to give the training a more formal structure. At the same time, they were also looking into possibilities of how to re-

launch the previously phased out drawing section. The form of dual arts training was chosen, in which the acrobatic and graphic design professions are taught at the same time. In the mornings, students have classes in the compulsory subjects together, while in the afternoons they have acrobat and graphic design classes separately. There are 18 students in a year. The small class sizes allow teachers to pay the necessary attention to everyone, which gives students a sense of security. In the whole country, such dual arts training is only available here, and is so successful that the Budapest acrobat training institute is considering adopting the training structure of the Talentum school.

In the first two years of acrobat training (years 9-10), students receive basic training in various forms of the circus arts. They study acrobatics, juggling, balancing, mime, basic dancing techniques, trapeze, aerial silk and aerial straps, in 15 classes a week. In the third year (year 11), specialised training begins. Students can choose one or two specialisations from acrobatics, balancing, aerial acrobatics and juggling. They

also receive theoretical training in health and safety, circus history, economics, business and law, event and project planning, performing arts, and foreign languages. At the end of the fourth year (year 12), students take the school-leaving exam, but do not yet receive a vocational certificate. In the following year (year 13), they are prepared for the vocational exam in their chosen specialisation. They finalise their exam routine, participate in various shows to gain the necessary experience and practice, and write a thesis on a subject of circus history, art theory or methodology. In the final year, they take part in vocational training consisting of 35 classes a week. The school attracts students from all over the country,

with students from as far afield as Fót and Pécs. Students from further away are housed in dormitories.

With their certification, they can get a job in most domestic and foreign circuses, as the demand for well-trained Hungarian acrobats is very high. This year alone, 20 new circuses were founded in Hungary, some of which have already approached the students offering them jobs. Aside from appearing on stage, there are other opportunities in the fields of sport, tourism, entertainment and education. They are often signed up by theatres for certain productions or events. For example, in the show of the Recirquel Társulat in the closing ceremony of the recent FINA World Swimming Championships in Budapest, more than 200 dancers and acrobats

performed the legend of the miraculous deer.

Students can gain practice while still in school as they often perform at company events, town fairs and galas. They are permanent performers at the Water, Music and Flower Festival and lead the circus playhouse. This year they were signed by the Jászai Mari Theatre in Tatabánya. They performed in Ervin Lázár's play, *A kisfiú és az oroszlánok* (The boy and the lions), during the circus scenes. In the summer, they performed and staged a workshop as part of Gyerek Sziget (Children's Island) on Hajógyár Island in Budapest. They even received payment for certain performances, which the school collects separately in a fund to allow seniors to buy the necessary equipment to start work right away. The equipment used during the education and shows is provided en-



tirely by the school. It is necessary to continuously buy new equipment as the students develop their skills.

The 15 classes a week is not just physically straining, but also mentally, as it demands constant concentration. However, the students are very focused on their goals, as everyone knows how much practice is needed. No students have dropped out of the school yet, which is proof of their positive attitude. They develop incredible discipline

over the years that has a positive effect on their personalities too. Not to mention the fact that they learn humility, empathy and how to care for each other, all of which are necessary to put on a successful show.

They have held workshops together with the acrobat training school in Budapest, in which they can learn a lot from one another and see how they stand in terms of progress. The school has developed an excellent relationship with the acrobatic group of one of the secondary schools in Gerlingen, Germany, our twin town. Although the Gerlingen group practices this art as an extracurricular activity, as a hobby, they still find it important to meet with their peers in Tata every year as they can learn a lot from each other. Last year, the German group visited Tata, while this year the students from Talentum spent a long weekend in Germany. Next year, they are going to perform together at the Water, Music and Flower Festival.

The other part of the dual arts training, the graphic design section, has been running for more than 10 years. It was founded by Krisztina Szigetvári, who is still the vocational head of the programme. The students in this section are just as dedicated as their acrobat peers. They have put on a number of exhibitions. In the Town Gallery, they staged an exhibition together with their teachers called *Mesterek és Tanítványok* (Masters and Students). They have been invited to display an exhibition at one of the most important cultural institutions in the county, the Vértess Agóra. The Talentum school holds a major annual art competition that receives 400-500 submissions from 30 schools. On the jury is the former rector of the University of Fine Arts, as well as leading book publishers, editors, artists and teachers. One of their students has also won a national competition and had their work displayed in the Vasarely exhibition.

Currently, only the graphic design section is oversubscribed, but the acrobatics section is also proving to be increasingly popular. Both sections have an entrance exam which tests

the children's skills and abilities. They don't want to mislead anyone, parents, students or themselves. They only accept students who they think can successfully take a school-leaving exam and are talented, with an affinity for their chosen art form.

Aside from the vocational secondary school, Talentum also has an English-Hungarian bilingual primary school. Children have at least one English class a day and also study three other subjects in English as well, thus giving them at least 10 classes a week in which they use a foreign language. Teaching is assisted by a native English language assistant. The school's aim is for children to be able to use the foreign language and reach B2 level by the end of their primary school years. Last year, 10 seniors took the intermediary language exam, with all of them passing. Recently, a nationwide second language survey was made of bilingual schools, in which their year 6 students achieved 92%. A school can be considered bilingual if it achieves above 60%. Further successes have been achieved during the most recent academic year. Teachers from the school have been invited to the United States to give lectures to the teachers of local English-Hungarian schools in the subjects of Mathematics and Hungarian literature. This year, they have been invited to Australia. The school pays special attention to the further training of its teachers. For example, at the end of October, the whole faculty went to Denmark, thanks to parental sponsorship, to get acquainted with the Scandinavian system of education and adopt its good examples.

As with the vocational secondary school, the primary school also functions with small class sizes. There are 16 students and only one class per year. Mostly children from local and nearby families apply, attracted not just by the training provided, but also by the family-like atmosphere and values of the school. They acknowledge the importance of the attention and care, which can be provided in

such a small community of children.

During its 25-year history, the school has faced many difficulties, and has had to be moved and restructured a number of times. But it has now found its place, not just among the schools, but also in the town, the county and the country as a whole. It has found the types of training which set it apart from other educational institutions. Zsolt Fogel has been Principal for over 9 years and still pays special attention, despite the changes, to preserving the ideas and atmosphere envisioned by his predecessors. The small class sizes make it possible to get to know the students better and also achieve more active, intensive relations with parents. The management of the school still believes that teachers and parents must work closely together in order for children to achieve their full potential. They believe in the importance of practical learning as well as theory. They also place a strong emphasis on community within the classes, with the notion that children can perform better if they grow to know and like each other. The teachers are also committed, taking an active part in school life. Each school year is preceded by a two-day camp, at which teachers and students get attuned to the coming year whilst building a strong feeling of community. This year was no different. The camp was held at the lakeside where they talked, played, participated in workshops and heard lectures by guest speakers.





THE TATA STUDENT DORMITORY TURNS 30 YEARS OLD

The Kindergarten, Primary School, Vocational School, Skills Development School and Komárom-Esztergom County Dormitory, also known as the Új Utca School, celebrated the 30th anniversary of its foundation this September. A three-day series of events was organised to mark the occasion. The programme included a gala performance, a conference and a children's festival.

The students of the school put together a two-hour show for the opening ceremony and gala performance, which was held at the Zoltán Magyar Cultural Centre. The programme also included a professional conference, an exhibition, and a pensioner and alumni reunion, not to mention a sporting competition, a quiz and an all-day children's festival. One of the highlights of the programme was the signing of a cooperation agreement between the Local Government of Tata and the Hungarian National Association of Student, Competitive and Leisure Sports for the Disabled (FODISZ). FODISZ will support the

efforts of our town in providing equal opportunities to all, by organising joint sporting and cultural events to enrich the free time of those with disabilities and facilitate their integration into society. The Tata Student Dormitory will also actively participate in the organisation of these events.

Its sister institutions, the kindergartens and schools of Tata, as well as its supporters, were all invited to the celebration. In addition to encouraging the children to have a good time, the purpose of these events was to open minds, to give an insight into their lives, as well as to recognise their professional achievements. The events of those three days have motivated the staff members and students of the student dormitory ever since.

The Tata Student Dormitory was founded by Komárom County Council in 1987. At the time, the school was able to accommodate 120 children and young people with learning disabilities, and established a kindergarten, an 8-grade primary school and

a student dormitory. Disadvantaged children that did not have access to special education in their home towns were welcomed from all over the country, as well as young people in foster care who, without schools such as this one, were living in children's homes. Over the years, the school has taken on an increasing number of additional responsibilities. Since 1989, it has been accepting autistic children as well, and has now become a base institution for them. Special vocational education was introduced in 1993, as part of which students are prepared for OKJ vocational examinations in three different vocations. In 1997, the school was extended further, to provide a 10-grade educational programme, - two additional years of vocational training were thus added to the original 8-grade programme. In 2005, the school merged with the Tata No. 6 Primary School, and since then, they have also been teaching special education to children with mental disabilities. In 2009, the school was

merged once again, this time with two schools in Kömlőd and Komárom which performed similar work, and have been operating as sister institutions ever since. Since the introduction of skills development education in 2014, children with severe and multiple disabilities have also been accepted at the school in Tata. In September 2016, the student dormitory was separated from the school and placed under the operation of the Directorate-General for Social Affairs and Child Protection, but remained in the dormitory section of the building on Új utca. Its residents with special educational needs have been studying at the school ever since, while the non-disabled children attend the other schools in the town.

The student dorm was maintained by the county council for a long time, however, it now belongs to the Tatabánya School District. Head teacher Éva Szőke, who has been in charge of the student dorm for 30 years, is grateful to the respective operating authorities, as they have always provided the equipment, staff and funding necessary for running the institution, at the same time as a number of other schools in the country have been forced to close.

The Kindergarten, Primary School, Vocational School, Skills Development School and Dormitory of Komárom-Esztergom County is currently the largest special education school in the county, providing approximately 365 children with special education, training and accommodation. It is difficult to accurately determine the number of students, as the expert committee regularly examines and transfers children, thus the numbers are frequently changing. New residents are always arriving at the student dormitory as well, many of whom continue their studies in-house.

The boarding school in Kömlőd includes a kindergarten, a primary school, a vocational school and a skills development school as well; they mostly educate children with mental disabilities, but also some with physical disabilities. In Komárom, autistic children, as well as students

with mental and physical disabilities, attend the primary, vocational and skills-development school. In the county, there are other special education schools in Esztergom, Tatabánya and Oroszlány, however, none of them provide accommodation, and none are equipped to care for such a wide range of disabilities. There is no special education kindergarten in Tata anymore, only in Kömlőd, where, in addition to children with mental disabilities, autistic children are also welcome. In response to parents' needs, the plan is to establish a kindergarten for autistic children in Tata in the near future. The school is contacted by parents of autistic children on a weekly, sometimes daily basis, enquiring as to how/where they can enrol their children, in order to start their skills development as soon as possible. The new kindergarten would certainly meet a need in the region in terms of special needs education.

Differentiated learning is greatly emphasised at these primary schools; a personalised plan is drawn up for each child, with their individual skills taken into consideration. This is highly important, as there are significant differences in the level of knowledge and abilities from student to student. They must also consider any behavioural and social problems as well. When creating timetables, special attention is paid to having as few teachers in each class as possible, as well as to have most of the teachers remain with classes for consecutive school years. It is crucial to have the same teachers guide them from the first year right up to the eighth, if possible, as these children have a greater need for stability. In addition to special education teachers, special education teaching assistants are also present in each class, as well as people who perform skills-development, taking children out of certain lessons and teaching them one-to-one, so that they can catch up with the curriculum. There is a separate teaching group for autistic children in the primary school, but some are integrated into mainstream classes and provided with skills development corre-

sponding to their condition, whether it be hydrotherapy rehabilitation, or sensorimotor training.

Emotional education and personal connections are a priority in the school's educational programme. The key goal is not for children to have extensive lexical knowledge, but rather to become healthy adults. With a focus on emotional education, students are more motivated and accept expectations more easily. "I want to be an educator that is remembered in 30 years' time. Miss Hajni took my hand and we learned the letter 'a' that way. If I can leave my mark on the students, then I have done my job well", says Hajnalka Számné Maurer, deputy head of the school.

The vocational school provides a three-year training. Young people that wish to further their education can learn the following vocations: gardener, leatherworker, carpenter, manufacturer of interior textiles, computer data recorder, park caretaker, kitchen assistant or cleaner. In the case of the first five, they can even obtain a partial OKJ vocational qualification. The reason why it is only "partial" is that they only learn a fragment of the vocation, and can only work under the supervision of skilled workers. By law, they are entitled to learn two partial vocations free of charge, and can even obtain a third partial qualification in one of the above vocations for free. However, the emphasis is not on these students having a vocation, but rather on acquiring skills that make them fit for finding employment, not necessarily in the field in which they have a qualification. They are prepared for many situations that they may experience in real life, for example, what it is like to work a busy schedule, how they can adapt to working with colleagues, what night work is like, etc. In the course of this training, catching up is of great importance. Some students face serious disadvantages due to absences from lessons and gaps in their skills. In these cases, the vocational teacher holds special additional classes, so that the students can pass examinations.

As a new modification to the sys-



tem, autistic children are now also accepted into the vocational school. They can study to be gardeners, office, or cleaning assistants. Again, for autistic people, the point is not for them to gain a vocation but rather to participate in manual, physical and intellectual development sessions that prepare them for independent life and performing simple work. For them, being able to complete a task independently is already a great achievement.

It's easy for students these days to get overwhelmed, with the many lessons and individual skill development taking up a lot of their free time. Nevertheless, teachers still strive to organise useful extra-curricular activities in the school in addition to mandatory lessons, such as folk dance, art, music and sport clubs. Previously, when the school day finished earlier and the old daycare centre was still running, they could organise a lot more sessions. The deputy head teacher made a point of making children's afternoons as diverse and interesting as possible; they learned about folk traditions and took part in crafts, sports and computer science activities. The children simply did not want to go home. In this time, they established their student government called "Imbolygó" (Flicker) which is still fully operational; its members organise the costume party, children's day and more. Following the example of the Student's Island in Venice, they set up ministries led by child ministers,

with the teachers as secretaries.

The dormitory currently houses 34-36 students; the remainder of the students commute from other towns and villages. The goal is to make life in the dorm as close to family life as possible, therefore children live together in mixed gender and age groups. Initially, some people had reservations about this, but time has proven that "these families function very well". The students live in small groups, in rooms with a common kitchen, living room and bathroom. They cook and clean themselves using their monthly allowance, which they manage. All "families" have permanent educators who provide day and night oversight alternately; in this way, the attachment between children and educators is formed more easily. Children often come to call their educators mum or dad, as they spend more time with them than their actual parents. Students only go home from the dormitory at weekends or every second week, but they have the option of staying as well. The head teacher is not too fond of this, as she views it as important for children to spend as much time with their parents as possible. She does not like admitting 6 or 7-year-olds to the dormitory at all; she believes that they are too young for it. The dormitory is rather aimed at older students with troubled family backgrounds, or those who have no place to go home to. The dormitory – previously called the children's dorm –, has always been the most important part of the

school, as these children require the greatest care. They usually come from difficult backgrounds, and in addition to their special educational needs, they have a number of other problems as well. The staff members try to make a home for them where they can put down roots and even return again later. This is the reason why the words of Áron Tamási have been chosen as the school motto: "We are in the world to be at home somewhere."

Students can stay at the school until the age of 27, as they are subject to compulsory full-time education until then. The school's management considers this to be a great opportunity. Over this period, they can provide skill development to students in many different areas, which they can then use later in life. On finishing school, some students return to their families, and many of them start their adult lives on their own, buy a flat, find employment and start a family. Some go astray, as families that were unwilling to raise them still do not accept them later, or, at most take them in temporarily, due to financial reasons. Fortunately, this is a rare situation as most of the graduating students succeed in life and keep in touch with the school. The head teacher likes to employ her old students as receptionists, gardeners or cleaners. "If we don't trust them and give them an opportunity, who will?" she asks. They take pride in their work and appreciate the fact that they have jobs to do. The current students also see them as positive role models and are motivated to learn, so that they too may one day have a job and a salary.

The school frequently applies for grants. For 15 years now, students have had the opportunity to do their internship in other countries of the European Union, such as Ireland, Portugal, Germany or Denmark, as part of the Erasmus+ (former Leonardo) programme. Seven students, accompanied by three teachers, have the opportunity to work at a foreign workplace, factory, park or dormitory similar to theirs for a period of three weeks. The school's programme has

won the Tempus Public Foundation Award of Excellence on a number of occasions. In another grant programme, carpentry students had the opportunity to learn from master folk-craftsmen in Transylvania for a few weeks. An internship abroad broadens their knowledge and experience, whilst at the same time boosting their self-confidence. Vocational teachers have also participated in EU programmes and exchanged professional experiences with their foreign counterparts. In the TÁMOP grant scheme, teachers have given a number of professional presentations for institutions where children with mental disabilities are taught in an integrated manner. They were recently awarded a grant of 20m HUF for their innovative project. Using these funds, they plan to renovate their kitchen next year, as well as organise health care and educational events. They even plan to involve parents in their efforts. They have also applied for financial support to fund their plans for the future. They would like to gain experience at foreign institutions for their planned kindergarten for autistic children. Furthermore, they wish to officially become a unified special education school, so that they will be able to advise other schools within the regulated framework. Their teachers already visit nearby schools and kindergartens, where children with special educational needs study in an integrated manner, as their development can only be supported by specialised teachers. Ideally, of course, all schools should have their own special needs teachers, however, there is a nationwide lack of skilled professionals in this field. If they manage to become a unified special education school, then the gaps in the region's special needs education system will be completely filled. With

the Klebelsberg grant scholarship, the Tatabánya School District also supports teachers who study special education.

The school in Tata now has more than a hundred employees: 57 of them are teachers, while 27 assist in special needs education. Their sister institutions have a similar number of staff members; all of them large enough to be independent. The distance between the schools sometimes makes work more difficult, yet they still believe that the merger was useful, as they have become stronger, can better represent their interests, learn from one another and, and provide a wider range of vocations. It is easier for them to transfer students from one place to another if, for instance, they could learn a vocation that would suit them better in another school. Most of the teachers have been teaching here for decades, with very few teachers leaving this school. According to the head teacher, there is no other workplace quite like it where an employee is greeted by people running towards them, giving them hugs and kisses every morning. For them, this is an everyday experience. The work performed here is not about teaching and education in the traditional sense. Due to the situation of these children, the expectations of teachers are a lot higher; they cannot just teach a lesson and then go home, they need to offer more. Often, they have to care for students as if they were a parent, healing thousands of "wounds" in the process. They cannot solve all their problems or change their lives, but they can bring a smile to their faces, and give them love, attention and care. The children reciprocate this by also giving back a lot of love in return, and even changing and shaping the teachers.

In the past, many parents had res-

ervations about enrolling their children with special educational needs at this school, and chose the mainstream primary school instead. However, it soon became apparent that this was not a wise decision, as the child's condition deteriorated, with some even suffering psychological problems. After transferring them to the Új Utca School, their state of mind significantly improves, the psychological symptoms disappear and growth begins. School management believes that these days parents do not view their children attending the school as something to be ashamed of, as they can see the results. They value the work done here, and are grateful and cooperative.

Over the years, the town has accepted and "got used to" the school. The school owes a lot to the local government, which supports them through different grant applications, and regularly invites them to town events. For instance, they award the most successful athletes of the student dormitory among the best sportspersons in Tata. In this way, the town shows how they are also proud of their achievements, and consider them an honour for Tata. The Mayor of Tata, who worked at the school for many years, always has a positive attitude towards the school management, makes time for them, talks to them and even shares his own ideas.

According to the head teacher, Hungarian society is much more accepting of people with special educational needs nowadays, but there is still a long way to go. We also need to step out of our comfort zone and organise more events together with non-disabled people, as this is the only path to real acceptance.





THE TATA ART AND TALENT DEVELOPMENT CAMP

In 2003, the Local Government of Tata organised the first camp for gifted children from Svodin (Szőgyén) and Sovata (Szováta), with an affinity for the arts. No one thought then that this was to become one of the most meaningful, worthwhile and highly regarded elements of the town's twin-town programme.

The starting point for the programme was the 2002 art camp organised by local art teacher, Teréz Sulyok. At that time, the local government paid for the participation of four children from Svodin, one from Sovata and even one from Arenzano. The get-together was so successful that the following summer, the local government organised a camp for 4 children from Svodin, 4 from Sovata and 4 from Tata.

The Tata Talent Development Camp celebrates its 15th anniversary this year, with its own well-refined traditions. The camp is held annually at the beginning of August. Programmes start on a Monday and end early Saturday afternoon, with a closing ceremony and exhibition at which participants display their works produced during the week and receive a plaque.

The children from twin-towns are accommodated in dormitories. For local children, it operates as a day camp. In past years, the camp was usually held at Bláthy Ottó Secondary School, but there have been camps in Jávorka Sándor Secondary School, and on one occasion, in the Új út School. Due to the renovation of the usual dormitories, the 15th camp was held at Öreg-tó Club Hotel.

Most of the programmes take place at the current campsite, but some are regularly held in Menner Bernát Primary School and its pottery workshop. Programmes have been held in the Fazekas utca primary school, the Zoltán Magyary Cultural Centre, the castle, and the old building of Menner Bernát Primary School on Kosuth tér.

From the very beginning, our aim has been to teach small groups, so we can pay special attention to individual skills. Since 2008, the camp has been organised in two sections; arts and crafts. This allows 6 children to participate from each town. In 2009, years before the twin-town relationship was officially announced, the original participants were joined by children from Kanjiža (Magyarokanizsa). On two occasions, both in 2008 and 2015, there were also Csango participants at the camp.

Over the past 15 years, there have been 41 children from Svodin, 30 from Sovata, 27 from Kanjiža, and 69 from Tata attending the camp. The age of the participants varies greatly, as there have been children aged 10, ranging up to university students in their 20s.

The calm and caring atmosphere and innovative programmes of the camp encourages participants to return year after year.

The following students have participated the most: András Zsolt Deák (Sovata, 8 times), János Vámos (Svodin, 7 times), Péter Huba (Sovata, 7 times), and Attila Levente Németh (Sovata, 7 times, the last time as a camp councillor).

There also are three girls from Tata who have each participated 4 times: Mirjam Musicz, Eszter Dózsa, and Jázmin Kollár.

The many former participants pursuing higher education in fine arts and crafts indicates the high quality standard of education provided by the camp. These include:

- János Vámos (Svodin) – Slovak University of Engineering (STU), Bratislava
- Attila Levente Németh (Sovata) – University of Fine Arts and Design (UAD), Cluj
- Máté Tímea (Sovata) – University of Fine Arts and Design (UAD), Cluj
- Balázs Sárkány (Kanjiža-Horgoš) – University of Pécs (PTE), Faculty of Fine Arts
- Anita Bagi (Kanjiža) – University of Szeged, Faculty of Teacher Training
- Lilla Görözdi (Tata) – University of Pécs (PTE), Faculty of Fine Arts
- Rita Görözdi (Tata) – University of Pécs (PTE), Faculty of Fine Arts
- Zsófia Laborc (Tata) – Hungarian University of Fine Arts (MKE)
- Angéla Szabó (Tata) – University of Szeged, Faculty of Teacher Training

The Tata Art and Talent Development Camp aims to develop the talents of participants and reinforce their creative motivation, but most importantly strengthen their sense of nationhood and community. With this in mind, there have been literary and drama teaching programmes alongside arts and crafts, from the outset. There are also programmes in which participants can introduce their home town, mainly to strengthen



en their sense of national identity.

Each year, the camp is linked to a specific theme. So far, the camp has covered the following themes: Picture – Poetry – Music (2003), Castles and Their Defenders (2004), Baroque (2005), Flying (2006), Art Traditions (2007), Renaissance (2008), Fine Arts and Crafts (2009), Kings in Tata (2010), Romanticism (2011), Movement (2012), Imaginary Creatures (2013), Baroque Tata (2014), Plants – Trees – Flowers (2015), The Wheel of Time (2016). The poetry of János Arany was chosen as the theme for the camp in 2017.

The fine arts, crafts and cultural history programmes have been taught by the following teachers and artists, of both local and national renown. (This list is not exhaustive): Teréz Sulyok art teacher, Jánosné Gútay literature teacher, János Gútay art teacher, Cs. Ernő Kiss woodcarver, József Csiszár ceramics teacher, Anna Nyikus folk crafts-woman, Frank Brigitta Horváthné teacher, Gábor Lengyel art teacher, Emese Szegvári basketweaver, Szerafina Szabó Kristófné librarian, Lajos Gyarmati architect, Zsuzsanna Juhász fashion designer, Dóra Borsos Tankóné porcelain enameller, Ferencné Janka craftswoman, Éva Szabó museum teacher and her associate Erika Juhász Juhászné, Csilla Kamenár porcelain enameller, Péter Kóthay art teacher, Lilla Gíber drawing teacher, Edina Stamler nursery teacher, Tímea Juhász ceramicist, Zsuzsanna Óvári art teacher, Krisztina Szapu basketweaving, Anita Németh restoration artist.

The following teachers came from twin-towns: Róbert Smidt wood-carver and Árpád Baracska graphic designer, from Svodin; József Sárkány art teacher, Zsuzsanna Muhi craftswoman, István Erdélyi wood-carver and Lívია Kávai Kormányos teacher from Kanjiža; László Szabó art teacher from Pustiana (Pusztina) and Levente Attila Németh fine arts teacher from Sovata.

Younger participants from the twin-towns are naturally accompanied by adults. Three such persons have been of great help in organising and staging the camp: Kornélia Berényi (Svodin), Ferenc Molnos (Sovata) and Attila Leonov Nyilas (Kanjiža). All are now honorary citizens of our town. Their contribution is most valuable.

For 15 years now, the camp has welcomed participants from twin-towns all over the Carpathian-basin. The participants from Svodin, Sovata and Kanjiža, and their local governments do not just passively take part, but are also active contributors to the excellent work that goes on at the camp.

In the spring of 2014, the Local Government of Kanjiža organised an exhibition for the work of the camp's teachers in the Dobó Tihamér Art Gallery. In the same year, the Local Government of Tata organised an exhibition called "Végletek" (Extremities) for the Day of National Unity. The exhibition displayed the works of four former participants, namely János Vámos (Svodin), Attila Németh (Sovata), Anita Bagi (Kanjiža), Balázs Sárkány (Kanjiža). Both the exhibi-

tion and the artists visited Kanjiža and Svodin in 2015.

In the autumn of 2016, the Local Government of Sovata organised an exhibition of the works of former participants called TASZŐSZOMA. (To clarify the title: It is formed using the initials of TATA, SZŐgyén, SZOVÁta and MAGyarkanizsa, and was coined by Ferenc Molnos.) The exhibition presented the works of the following artists: Angéla Szabó from Tata, János Vámos from Svodin, Zsolt András Deák, Zsuzsanna Kovács, Levente Attila Németh, Fruzsina Siklódi and Tímea Máté from Sovata, Balázs Sárkány from Kanjiža.

In June 2017, inspired by the camp in Tata, the Local Government of Sovata organised a week-long fine arts camp under the well-known TASZŐSZOMA name. The camp welcomed participants from Tata, Svodin, Sovata and Kanjiža, amongst whom many old and new faces could be seen. The programmes were led by art teachers Mária Fülöp (Sovata) and Teréz Sulyok (Tata). The camp in Sovata is expected to continue next year.

Through arts and crafts, this Tata-born initiative aims to bring together young artists who are separated by borders, yet share the same passions. In this regard, it has resonated well with all our twin-town partners in the Carpathian-basin. Thanks and appreciation go to the Local Governments of Svodin, Sovata and Kanjiža for their support and hard work, in providing our children with an unforgettable experience in creativity and community.





NEW LIFE WITHIN OLD WALLS

The Piarist monastery is to serve science and knowledge once more

"On the 8th of September, the Piarist monastery opened its gates once more; the Tata Community Centre for Higher Education Training[KFKK] began teaching within the monastery." The opening ceremony of the academic year, organised at the monastery, was an important chapter in our town's history, as the training centre connects the town with the Hungarian higher education system.

Back in 2013, local council members decided to seek co-operation with higher education institutions, as the local government considers it one of its key goals to help the youth of the region as well as individuals who want to gain advanced qualifications. Accordingly, the Magyar Plan outlines concrete plans for the implementation of an agreement between the local government and a number of universities and colleges.

An agreement was formed with the University of Pannonia at Veszprém in 2014, as the university aims to open a local branch in Tata for first year BSc Computer Science Engineering students. In the same year, a declaration of intent was signed with the Tatabánya-based Edutus College, to establish an education centre pro-

viding onsite training to the college Tourism Department. On the 6th of October, an agreement was reached with Eötvös Loránd University to continue cooperating in regard to the Tata ELTE Geologist Garden, and to jointly establish a national teacher training centre (the National Öveges Centre) in Tata. In April 2015, an agreement was entered into with Eszterházy Károly College in Eger, for cooperation between the college and the local government in advanced teacher training. The agreement also set forth measures for collaboration, with the aim of introducing and researching skill development methods, as developed by the Tata Reformed Church Kenderke Elementary Arts School. As the next stage, council members approved the declaration of intent between Tata and the University of Sopron, to establish a Community Centre for Higher Education Training[KFKK] in the town. The new higher education act made it possible for local governments to establish community training centres. Tata was among the first local governments to take up this opportunity. Field training - based on community needs - can be launched by an accredited higher education

institution to ensure the provision of experts required to run the local economy and to keep highly qualified professionals in the region.

Following the signing of the declaration of intent on 14th July 2016 in Sopron, an infant and childcare BA course will be launched at the Tata Community Centre for Higher Education Training[KFKK], and has already been authorised by council members. Childcare professionals will be able to obtain higher education degrees and join the action plan developed for pedagogy professionals. Based on the agreement, training will be professionally coordinated by the University of Sopron while classroom and field course locations will be provided by the local government of Tata. The joint plan was fully implemented this September, as 20 students started the first course in the Piarist Monastery. Extending the local education system has a massive impact on the region's economic development. Investors arriving in the town bring capital and create job opportunities, but as well as suitable infrastructure, they are also looking for the intellectual potential to operate businesses and create value. Education and training are fundamen-

tal in promoting this goal, therefore, it is important for towns in the Tata region to host higher education institutions.

As a training location, Tata is unique due to its rich history. The Piarist College was established by Grand Chancellor Count Ferenc Esterházy in 1765. In the same year, the Piarists received a large plot of land including a number of farm buildings, which had previously been owned by Camaldolese hermits. These buildings were rebuilt to serve as temporary school and monastery facilities, based on the plans of architect Jakab Fellner. Construction of the monastery and the college building continued in 1766, based on Jakab Fellner's plans: first the building, which had been temporarily converted into a monastery, was altered, after which the northern section of the eastern wing was built in 1767-68. This building houses Fellner's staircase and the chapel. Between 1768 and 1772, the missing section of today's eastern wing was completed as a refectory, with a cellar underneath, and a room of equal size above. The rococo stuccoes adorning the refectory's ceiling, and the original stuccoes of the main staircase ceiling, are presumed to have been completed before Fellner's death in 1780. Extension work continued until 1804, under the supervision of architect Antal Gött. The new sections

match Fellner's sections seamlessly, in a harmonised style. The next phase of construction work took place in 1840-41, when architect György Hanauer planned to extend the chapel with a sanctuary, instead of completing the Fellner church. Thus the U-shape layout of the monastery was first formed, with this layout remaining untouched until 1930. The main façade also dates back to this period. In 1929, Dezső Hüttl drafted plans for the western wing, on the basis of which the wing was finally completed in 1930. The architecture of the new building section's façade is modelled on Fellner-style façades. The state took ownership of the monastery in 1950, when it first began operating as a vocational training school for miners. It was then used as a dormitory for the nearby Eötvös Grammar School until December 2011.

Our local government then decided to commence restoration work in the Piarist monastery. Tata Város-gazda Kft. renovated the ground floor eastern corridor, in order to convert the building into a facility boasting a conference room, library and computer room, classrooms, teacher rooms and offices. This year marks the 460th anniversary of the birth of Piarist founder Saint Joseph of Kalazanc, and the 250th anniversary of his canonisation. Thus it is fitting that this year, a small section

of the Piarist monastery can once again serve education by creating a space for professional activities and teaching. The facility is now capable of hosting a wide range of university courses and workshops, and will provide a temporary location for the Magyary Zoltán Community College Society. The first phase of the building's new life undoubtedly offers new and impressive sights, both internally and externally. The huge internal space, the lively combination of walls and windows, and the unique atmosphere of the rooms not only touch upon our physical senses but the building's spirituality can be clearly felt at every level and in every room. There is no question about it; the past still resonates here, and its message is clearly conveyed to all. What is the message of these walls for us? The first Piarist schools initially provided basic native language education in the following: reading, writing, mathematics and religious studies. Calligraphy, music and advanced algebra also formed part of the syllabus. The Piarist slogan "Pietas et litterae" translates as "mercy and science". This phrase splendidly summarises their main motives and driving philosophy to raise faithful Christian believers who excel in the sciences. Piarist philosophy emphasises an inherent respect of all creation values, through which individuals working for the community can find their place in the world. Science - the passing on of knowledge - is considered to be vital by the Piarists, not only for brain development, but also because it represents the road to God and the search for eternal truth which, in their view, actually enhances their faith. This scientific approach is a real gift for the 21st century individual as it highlights and confirms the harmony between science and faith. Instead of putting up barriers, it connects and builds bridges and by doing so, leads us to the fullness of knowledge which we can only reach by searching for the truth. This is the message that the Piarist monastery communicates to us from the past.

*Blessing the building
Zsolt Labancz, Hungarian provincial
head of the Piarist order and
Bálint Havassy, parish priest*



WORLD WETLANDS DAY IN THE TOWN OF WATERS

To mark the occasion of World Wetlands Day, Tata hosted a national holiday event and professional conference in the New Kayak House Ecotourism Centre by the Old Lake in February 2017.

The event was jointly organised by the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ramsar Convention, the Által-ér Association and the Local Government of Tata. The central theme of last year's World Wetlands Day was "Too much water – too little water: the role of wetlands in reducing risks."

The Treaty on Wetlands of International Importance, i.e. the Ramsar Convention was adopted in the city of Ramsar, Iran, on 2 February 1971, and came into force in 1975. Since then, 169 countries from all over the world have joined. In accordance with the convention, wetlands can be defined as natural or artificial, temporary or permanent, marshy, aquatic, or peaty, where water is stagnant or flowing. They can be fresh or salty, including areas of seawater where the depth of water does not exceed 6 m at low tide, as well as saltwater lakes that periodically dry up. The main aim of the Ramsar Convention is to facilitate the preservation of wetlands, as well as to establish the necessary legal and institutional framework. The List of Wetlands of International Importance (the Ramsar List) was created under the convention and includes at least one wetland area in each participating country. The Ramsar List now comprises more than 1,900 locations totalling 243,000 hectares, including 29 locations within Hungary, which joined in 1979.

The moderator of the event in Tata was Dr. András Rácz, Deputy Secretary of State for Environmental Affairs (Ministry of Agriculture), who highlighted in his opening speech how the Ramsar Convention is one of the world's most dynamically developing conventions, and has progressed from the protection of waterfowl to the preservation of complex aquatic ecosystems. We can see nowadays that wetlands are mainly being destroyed

by human activity; they are greatly damaged and their preservation requires continuous presence and intervention. The Deputy Secretary of State added that even though in general, the European Union provides limited resources to its member states these days in the field of environmental conservation, within the framework of the Environmental and Energy Efficiency Operational Programme, work will continue to be performed on the same scale during the new programming period as in previous ones, with regard to both funds and the planned intervention areas. Thus, during this term, wetland conditions will be improved once again in the 100,000 hectares across the country.

As the host of the event, the Mayor of Tata, József Michl, said the following in his welcome speech with regard to humanity's responsibility towards nature: –the countless treasures and beauties in our surrounding environment have been given to us as gifts to enjoy, but also nurture and strengthen; we should perform our work and activities in a way that means we can still leave a legacy behind for future generations. The Mayor also emphasised that the wetland habitats in Tata are one of the 29 Hungarian Ramsar Sites that are designated conservation areas, which are not protected nationally but at a local level. Tata makes every effort to look after its waters, but the town would greatly appreciate it if the protection of these habitats were to become a cause of national importance.

Prof. György Dévai, President of the Hungarian National Ramsar Committee congratulated Tata on the progress it had achieved so far with its nature conservation, saying: – hosting the World Wetlands Day celebration in Tata is a great pleasure, especially as the Committee has stated on a number of occasions how our town has a good chance of being awarded the prestigious "Wetland City of the Ramsar Convention" accreditation, due to its innovative initiatives. Both the Committee and the national en-

vironmental protection institutions strive to assist the cause in any way possible, he added.

The town of Tata submitted its application entitled "Wetland City of the Ramsar Convention" in 2017. So far, the local government has taken a number of steps to ensure the preservation of its natural assets. This is how Tata became the Capital of Biodiversity in 2010, as well as achieving the Hungarian Landscape Award in 2013, mainly thanks to the work of the Által-ér Association. However, it is also the town's responsible attitude that helped the town win the title of "Sustainable Town". The documents of the town's long-term strategic plan were drawn up in line with a dedicated green approach to urban development, as are the various grant applications and important rehabilitation measures. As the town comprises significant areas of Wetlands of International Importance (Old Lake, the 8 Réti Lakes, Fényes Springs and the surrounding area) that are protected by the Ramsar Convention, the town's role in implementing the convention is highly important even at an international level. For Tata, the responsibility of preserving the lakes, springs and protected conservation areas has always been a priority. Consequently, we hope that our application for the title introduced last year by the international Ramsar Convention Secretariat based in Switzerland of "Wetland City of the Ramsar Convention" will be successful. The international application entitled "Wetland City Accreditation of the Ramsar Convention" was also discussed by the Hungarian National Ramsar Committee, and a preliminary agreement was reached wherein Hungary would support Tata in the international contest. The decision on awarding the title is made at an international level, based on pre-defined criteria. The decision regarding the application is expected to be made in the first half of 2018.



TATA – WINNER OF THE “TOWN OF THE FUTURE” AWARD

Tata is among this year's winners of the “Town of the Future” award, for the third time. In 2017, we have earned recognition in the “Sustainable Town” category. The award was received by Mayor József Michl in Budapest.

Since its launch in 2010, the “City Hungary” initiative has become the most prominent platform for sustainable and liveable Hungarian towns. Its aim is to introduce both Hungarian and international models, practices, and tools that have already proven successful, as it is in our common interest to improve everyone's quality of life. The “Town of the Future” award – a national distinction for sustainable towns – was established in 2013 as part of this initiative. In the autumn of 2017, the award-winners received their titles in a ceremony at the Assembly Hall of Pest County Local Government (Budapest).

During the ceremony, Dr. Miklós Réthelyi, President of the Hungarian National Commission of UNESCO and patron of the award said, “It is important to feel at home in a town that both accepts and connects us. The different parts of the town should be harmoniously connected to one another, so that people can consider them as a whole. Some places are worth preserving against continuous change and interventions.”

The founders of the award would like to encourage towns to be proud of their values and achievements, to believe that they have all the skills and abilities needed to make their homes more liveable and sustainable, and that they can become attractive and worthy of respect from those living elsewhere.

The Town of the Future award aims to motivate those Hungarian local governments and (in some categories) those organisations who strive to better themselves, to achieve a more modern, sustainable, liveable

and higher quality life.

In 2017, the Local Government of Tata once again won the honour of the “Town of the Future” title, on this occasion in the “Sustainable Town” category. Last year, Tata's application focused on the current tasks and strategy of people-centred public administration.

Moreover, Tata already participated in the initiative in 2015, when it also won the “Town of the Future” award in two categories. We were recognised in the “Green Town” and “Preservation of Arts, Culture, and Heritage” categories. A year later, our application was successful once more, thus the Local Government of Tata was announced as the winner of the “For a Sustainable Town” category, and we have managed to repeat this success in 2017, for the third time. The previous application of the local government placed a special emphasis on economic prosperity and social balance; on nurturing talents and equal opportunities. Furthermore, the application also focused on sustainability and environmental balance, as well as on our most important projects related to these issues, together with the use

of energy sources. The local government views the sustainable development of Tata as a priority, in seeking to preserve and develop its natural and cultural heritage. To achieve this goal, the town is creating a series of development activities, in accordance with its overall development strategy, the so-called Magyary Plan, which seeks to integrate our various resources. As it is also essential to focus on economic development as well as ensuring social and environmental balance, the leadership of the town is launching separate programmes for NGOs to help people from disadvantaged backgrounds. They are supporting talent and giving the possibility for many members of the community to have their say. A number of projects related to the preservation and development of our natural and cultural heritage are being continuously implemented. Tata is consciously working to improve the quality of life of its residents in a sustainable manner and, as a result, to get the general public feeling that it is not only the “Town of Waters” but also a “Sustainable Town”.



STANDING THEIR GROUND ON ALL FRONTS



Gábor Horváth, Brigadier General of the Hungarian Defence Forces' 25th György Klapka Infantry Brigade, has been preparing for a military career ever since he was a child. He worked his way up, and has served in many locations both in Hungary and abroad. He has been leading the military unit in Tata, which has a tremendous responsibility in performing obligations arising from our NATO membership and under international treaties, for four years now. In addition to this, we also discussed his career and family, border protection, the terror threat, recruiting and the Zrínyi 2026 Programme.



Last year, you took command of the land forces of the Hungarian Defence Forces Joint Forces Command. What does this position entail?

As senior unit commander of the land forces, I was a substitute for the head of the land forces, who was studying abroad at the time. In this position, I participated in managing mission tasks and the activity of other land force units. This assignment was only ten months' long, and afterwards, I took back command of the infantry brigade in Tata.

How long have you been commanding the Hungarian Defence Forces' 25th György Klapka Infantry Bri-

gade? How did you get appointed to this position?

I have been in Tata since March 2014. It has been a long road thus far. I have led units and teams both within my service and branch, served on staffs and been a trainer. I have also gained experience in quite a number of foreign cooperations. I have risen through the ranks: I have been platoon leader, company commander, battalion commander, academic teacher, operations officer serving in the general staff, operations officer serving in different international staffs and general staffs, as well as brigade chief of staff. I have gained the necessary confidence and leadership experience through

these positions. I always managed to perform my duties in a way that I could deliver results with the people entrusted to me. I am saying this modestly and hope it does not sound like bragging, but I think that in these various positions, I have gained the experience and wisdom necessary to lead a military organisation of such magnitude.

In your opinion, what are you like as a commander? What are the criteria for being a good military leader?

I would like to quote our Chief of General Staff, General Dr. Tibor Benkő, who said, "A commander should be strict, demanding, consist-

ent and humane and set an example.” I would add that it is also important to keep up with the development of the military profession, but this may follow from the above list. Of course, all leaders have different styles, but if one manages to keep these characteristics balanced, one cannot go too far wrong and can gain the trust of subordinates. Another one of my great teachers, General Dr. Ferenc Végh, former Chief of General Staff said, “A commander becomes a commander three times: the first time is when they are appointed, i.e. his superiors trust him; the second time is when they themselves feel like a commander; and finally, and most importantly, the third time is when their subordinates consider them to be their commander as well.” I am most proud when I feel that my people trust me, support my decisions and carry them out fully. Not only because they have received an order, but because they are convinced that it is the right thing to do.

Where are you now in your career?

Considering the requirements and size of the present Hungarian Defence Forces, I can say that I have achieved my minimum expectations. This does not mean that I am completely pleased with myself, but if this were the end of my career, I would not be dissatisfied either. Being in this position and leading this unit is a great honour and indicates trust. Many soldiers dream of becoming brigade commanders one day.

Did you also aspire to lead a larger team?

I had high ambitions even as a child. I was determined to have a great career. So much so, that I applied to one of the then existing military boarding schools when I was fourteen years old. I passed my school leaving exams at Erzsébet Szilágyi Secondary Grammar School in Eger, with excellent results. Back then, students of military boarding schools did not have to take an admission exam to the military college, with an adequate academic performance, they were automatically admitted to the selected programme. I wanted to be a mechanised infantry soldier and studied in Szentendre.

Why not a fighter pilot or a member of a long-range reconnaissance patrol?

Mechanised infantry is a general profession, in which one must be able to command the activities of all other services and branches as well. Besides, by that time I already knew where I could find a job within the then so-called Hungarian People's Army that suited my skills. I graduated from college with excellent results and while my classmates ranked as second lieutenants, I was inaugurated in Kossuth tér as Lieutenant.

What attracted you to this profession as a child?

All boys have periods in their lives when they want to be soldiers. Just like many others, I was attracted by the visible things, the technical equipment, the uniform, the uniformity, the power that emanates from military organisations and military individuals. Then later, when I started to gain more insight into life in the army, I started to appreciate the hard work, authority and responsibility that it entails. I realised that I could have an impact on my own environment, and shape things in a way that I could achieve results. I always wanted to become a soldier, ever since I was a little child, even though I do not come from a military family. I was born in Gyöngyös, my ancestors were miners on my father's side, and worked in bus transport on my mother's side. Both sides encouraged me to follow them, but all I was interested in was the military.

You have already served in many locations both in Hungary and abroad. Where exactly?

I started my career in Abasár, then went to Gyöngyös, Cegléd, Budapest and Tata. Later, I served abroad, mostly in Brussels. Then I was reassigned to Budapest, and afterwards, to Szentendre as the commander of the NCO Academy. Finally, I was assigned back to Tata.

Constantly moving around must have required lots of sacrifices from your family as well. How did they

feel about this?

For soldiers, especially commanders, having a stable family background is crucial. When we discuss careers, we usually talk about the individuals, but achieving such results is simply impossible without a supportive family: a wife who is willing to sacrifice her own career, if necessary, in order to support and accompany her husband, and children who are also willing to make sacrifices, since their father's profession is sometimes a burden on them as well. Switching schools four times in two different countries in the course of four years is not easy. My children have seen how many difficulties and how much self-sacrifice having a career in the military involves, and they still chose the same path, even though I never directly encouraged them to do so. My son studied international studies at Corvinus University. Now he is a volunteer operational reservist officer here in the barracks, and is preparing for a position in a peace support mission abroad. My daughter also started studying at Corvinus University, but realising that it was not for her, gave it up, and chose the military instead. After a long period as a volunteer operational reservist, she was admitted to the Faculty of Military Sciences and Officer Training at the National University of Public Service this year. She is currently preparing to follow in my footsteps as an officer cadet.

Where did you serve abroad and what were your responsibilities?

I served in Brussels three times, under different auspices each time. At first, I was the deputy of the Hungarian Defence Forces' National Military Representation responsible for EU affairs. The second time, I already worked as a NATO officer responsible for harmonising the activities of the organisation and the European Union. The third time, I served in the European Union Military Staff and was made director responsible for Concepts and Capability Development. I also pursued various international military studies. I graduated from the Army Staff Officers' School in France, and a few years later, the Joint Defence

College of the French armed forces as well. I also completed other higher level military schools, for instance, in Rome. I spent some time with a Canadian Forces brigade for practice.

Do you see any difference between foreign armies and the Hungarian Defence Forces?

The nature of each army is rooted in its traditions, which are quite different in the individual countries. What I do not see a difference in is the commitment and devotion to the profession. I have always worked well together with allied officers, because we share the same values. The attitude towards work, the submission to duty is the same. The military ethos is the same everywhere.

How long have there been barracks in Tata?

For a long time now, since they are located next to one of the main arteries of Hungary and are the gate to the Budapest region which keeps contact with foreigners in the westerly direction. Its location predestined it to serve as a site for some form of military headquarters. We could trace our traditions back to King Sigismund, but let's not go so far back. As far as our unit is concerned, our predecessor was established 67 years ago in Székesfehérvár, then relocated to Sárbogárd and later to Baj. It moved into the current barracks after the 1956 revolution, in 1957, which was when it took the name "tank regiment". A few years before the regime change, it became a tank brigade, then an independent mechanised brigade.

Afterwards, it was made a mechanised infantry brigade, a light infantry brigade, and is now an infantry brigade. It is possible that in the future, it will become a mechanised infantry brigade once again due to changes in the technology and organisational structure. We placed a wreath on the monument of our predecessor recently, on 31 October, since 1 November is the date of its establishment.

How large is the infantry brigade in Tata?

We provide a livelihood for a little more than a thousand people. This number includes not only the soldiers but public servants in the Hungarian Defence Forces as well.

What are the main responsibilities of the unit?

All military units of the Hungarian Defence Forces have the basic duty to protect Hungary's sovereignty and territorial integrity. In peace time, our job is to prepare for this task and train our soldiers. Since our unit belongs to the military force of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, we also take part in international cooperations and perform duties of the alliance both in Hungary and in the territory of other allied countries. Our assistance in peacekeeping is also extremely important, which we perform not only within the framework of the alliance but externally as well, for instance, in the EU, UN and other coalition organisations. We also provide direct help to the population in the event of natural or industrial disasters and other emergency situations. Since the terror

threat is an unfortunate reality of life these days, we have to prepare for it as well, and take part in prevention together with other state authorities.

How severe is the terror threat in Hungary?

It is hard to say exactly. We are still recovering from a terrorist attack carried out in the United Kingdom, and last Sunday, cyclists were hit by a car in New York. If we look around, we can see that extremists are capable of attacking and threatening defenceless people anywhere. Part of our job is to ensure that people do not have to live in fear.

Hungary is considered to be one of the safest countries. Do you think this is true?

From the Brigadier General's chair in Tata, I do not have the insight needed to make such comparisons. Safety certainly seems to be greater here, but it comes at an enormous price. Just look at how many people are serving on the border together with their police colleagues to prevent the entry of extremists. How many people patrol in how many different locations in Budapest and across the country, and how carefully we prepare for our tasks here together with other state organisations. It is fair to say that we live in safety in Hungary, but this safety has a price.

What is the greatest challenge in safeguarding the borders?

We essentially carry out border protection tasks, not border defence. It is important to distinguish between the two. The police is the main border protection force, they are the ones who can arrest and check identities, our soldiers only support them in carrying out this task. This means that, in addition to police officers, soldiers also work in the patrols. The challenges include the weather, the terrain and being away from home, as is always the case with military activities. However, for us, soldiers, overcoming these issues is not that hard. This year, with the help of our superiors, we managed to create service conditions that make



serving on the border a lot easier.

How many people serve on the border from the unit?

In the course of this year, we continuously provided some 100-200 people. However, at the end of October, a significant proportion of our unit was withdrawn from performing border protection tasks, since we are preparing for a foreign mission. This training is important, because we will have to play our part abroad as well.

Where will you go?

According to the rotation plan for the land forces, our unit will take its place as the Tactical Reserve Battalion of the KFOR contingent next February. This means that we will stay on site, prepare and, if necessary, intervene anywhere within the territory of Kosovo. Currently, our soldiers also serve in the contingent providing training in Iraq, assisting in the training of Kurdish forces within the framework of the coalition. We will also provide a sizeable contingent of soldiers in Iraq in the next rotation. In addition, we are continuously present in Somalia, Mali, Afghanistan and other locations, but these are usually individual missions, where our soldiers carry out tasks in international staffs, commands or contingents. Next year, a significant proportion of our military personnel, almost 400 people, will carry out external service tasks.

How much does the fact that so many people serve abroad hinder service here, in Hungary? Do you feel understaffed?

If we didn't, that would mean that we have a lot of extra people with nothing to do. Fortunately, the volunteer operational reserve system has been set up. In such situations, we can call up reservists, who assist in local service or perform tasks that are crucial for units, such as doing inventory.

What does preparation for a mission abroad entail?

The function of the Kosovo contingent is very special, as they perform not only military but law enforcement functions as well. Since the latter is not



part of our general training, and none of our sub-units have such a specific competence, we mainly prepare for these tasks. However, we also need to make sure that everyone can carry out their duties perfectly, whether they are drivers, tank drivers, machine gun operators or clerks. We also have to prepare our soldiers for the possibility that they may have to perform riot control and crowd control activities, just like the police. This preparation consists of team building, coordination and extra training, not to mention language practice.

Does the training take place locally?

In the Hungarian Defence Forces, the assembling, preparation and coordination of a given contingent, as well as the organisation and execution of the mission is performed by a different military organisation each time. In the case of the next KFOR rotation, it is our responsibility. We carry out both the individual and collective preparation here. In addition, the command staff regularly travels to the mission area in order to learn about the relevant experiences. The commanders and experts of the sub-units that serve there regularly visit and tell us about the special evolution that can be experienced in the mission area, the progress and changes that have taken place, as well as the practices and procedures that can lead to successful performance of duties. The preparations are quite complex.

What is the duration of such a mission?

At the Hungarian Defence Forces, an armed mission abroad is usually six

months' long, but there are some exceptions. As I have already mentioned, the land forces work based on a rotation plan, so we know years in advance when it is the given unit's turn. Our soldiers can be sure that they will have mission duty in that specific period. Sudden news of being assigned to service abroad is rarely unexpected. Sometimes, however, it happens that the number of the Kosovo contingent increases, and it happened this year, because the mission system changed. In the future, more people will be needed in the contingent that provides training in Iraq as well. In these situations, we count on our colleagues' previous experience. We strive to react to changes in a flexible manner, ensure continuity and extend preparation.

What criteria do you base the selection of mission members on?

There are certain input requirements for serving abroad. These are more stringent than the requirements for serving at home, in physical, psychological and professional terms. We fill the contingent based on applications, however, these days, unlike before, it often happens that soldiers have to serve abroad on command. Still, we make a point of making sure that the workload is even.

The Hungarian Defence Forces is intensively recruiting. What kind of tasks will the new recruits carry out? Where are they needed?

Yes, that is right. Currently, we are holding a very intense 10-week basic training for hundreds of soldiers at our base. They are not all from Tata, the basic training of other units also

takes place here jointly. This is more economical and, in this way, we can also ensure that the basic training is uniform and professionally appropriate. We hope that, due to the success and effectiveness of the nationwide recruitment, we or other units will be able to carry out even more such training. We expect the prestige of the military profession to increase and more people to wish to join us. Within the army, predictability, recognition, comradeship and respect await all. Switching to volunteer military force has resulted in a smaller army, therefore we mainly need enlisted soldiers. We also need officers and NCOs who have already proven themselves as enlisted soldiers and know the profession; we prepare them for the more challenging tasks through internal courses. We also welcome applicants from the civil sphere: cooks, lorry-drivers, healthcare and financial workers, as well as those with professions that could be necessary for maintaining a mechanised unit. There are many vacant positions in the army, so everyone should apply and try themselves. We welcome everyone!

The infantry brigade took on a great responsibility regarding the duties arising from our NATO membership. Are the rumours about Tata becoming a NATO centre in the future true?

I am not aware of any changes or the establishment of any new organisation with regard to the Alliance.



The rumours may have arisen due to the constant presence of allied soldiers among us. The personnel of the United States Armed Forces assigned to Europe who perform external service here following a rotation system carry out training exercises with us. Our military unit performs various tasks on behalf of the alliance, from missions to various security tasks. For instance, the unit has a section that is continuously standing by at a given level of preparedness to carry out the tasks of the alliance, but I am not allowed to talk about this. Our soldiers participate in a number of international exercises within the framework of NATO, and training exercises with neighbouring allies have also become more frequent over the past four years. One of our sub-units carried out a three-month joint training exercise in NATO ally Estonia as part of the NATO Reassurance Measures offer of the Visegrád Four countries. We also perform Crisis Management tasks within the framework of the European Union, and provide standby forces from time to time. For instance, in the first half of 2016, one of the sub-units of our brigade was appointed to the standby Battlegroup of the European Union.

To what extent does the infantry brigade belong to Tata?

We are part of the town, but do not belong to Tata exclusively. We are not a provincial unit, but rather a military unit for the entire country, and must always look beyond the limits of Tata. A significant percentage of our soldiers are not from Tata either. Our officers and NCOs mostly are, and actively participate in the life of the town. We cooperate with the town in many areas, such as in heritage conservation and culture; our band regularly performs at various events. We do anything we can to help the town; if necessary, we pull the excavator that sank at the construction of the sports hall out of the mud, if there is a public utility issue, we are there. If a disaster struck the population, we would be there to help. We maintain a good relationship with the Member of Parliament of the Tata Basin, as well as with the leaders of the county. They regularly visit us and are

interested in us. The mayor even visited our soldiers who serve on the border, and did not come empty-handed.

What are the unit's plans for the future?

The Hungarian Defence Forces are at the beginning of an important period, since they have started their Defence and Force Development Programme called Zrínyi 2026. The modernisation elements of this programme will have an effect on all units of the army. We will only see the detailed plans and tasks next year, so it is too early to say about what will or will not improve in these barracks. Nevertheless, there are some quite ambitious development plans both in infrastructural and technical terms. We hope to serve in the defence of our homeland in significantly nicer and more spacious barracks, with much more modern equipment and better prepared soldiers.

Can you make long-term plans in Tata as a commander? Can you be called away at any time?

This is my fourth year as commander, but I can be called away at any time. I am glad to be commander here, and I will be happy to remain if I can, but since I am a soldier, I will leave if I must. Regardless of where I have served over the past 18 years, Tata has been home to my family since 1999. Duty may call me to another post, but I am certain that we will not be able to keep away from Tata.

After the interview, I accompanied the Brigadier General to the firing range in Szomód, where the first company of the battalion responsible for basic training was carrying out a live-fire exercise for peace operations. They practiced shooting tasks that they could need in the course of a peacekeeping operation, i.e. how to wound and disable a person without taking their life, using pistols and carbines. It was exciting to see the discipline and diligence with which they carried out the exercises. I hope that we will never have to experience these things in real life, however, we can all feel safe knowing that our soldiers are ready to protect us at any time.

HUNGARY'S CHIEF ARCHITECTS MEET UP IN TATA

Between 23 and 25 August, Tata hosted the 22nd National Conference of Chief Architects at the Palm House Events Centre. The main theme of the conference was the relationship between families and the town, promoting the following slogan: "Homes made of stones, water, and love". The event was organised by the Hungarian Association of Chief Architects and the Local Government of Tata. Event co-organisers were the Association of Hungarian Architects, the Hungarian Society for Urban Planning, the Chamber of Hungarian Architects and Duna-Gerecse Turisztikai Nonprofit Kft.

In August of last year, Mayor József Michl and Chief Architect Zsolt Kiss received the flag of the National Conference of Chief Architects in Kecskemét, to signify that the conference would be held in Tata this year. At their own initiative, national and local government Chief Architects have organised the conference in a different town every year since 1996. This year, they sought to answer the question of how to establish attractive surroundings for the town's inhabitants, families and communities. A number of people were invited to the conference, namely Chief Architects, along with their families and other professional experts, designers, building authority representatives, cultural heritage protectors, archaeologists, department authorities and ministry experts, local government associations, MPs, sociologists, economists, as well as heads and staff members of professional and social organisations. More than 150 people attended the event. As well as enjoying the professional and sponsor presentations, they also participated in various tours of the town. Town

Mayor József Michl reflected on the event: "We feel really honoured that Tata was chosen as the venue for this conference. The people who are building the country met here, and you can really learn a lot of useful things from such talented individuals. The presentations put forward a great number of ideas and suggestions which can be incorporated into the Magyary Plan to further improve the town's urban planning schemes." In relation to the main theme of the event, the Mayor highlighted the following: – The main theme was suggested to the organisers by the Local Government as it had never previously been touched on. The concept of a "family-friendly town" and a "town-friendly family" are closely connected, and it is worth focusing on what we can do to make our town better and more liveable for families.

Zsolt Kiss, the town's Chief Architect, believes that the conference is important for Tata as experts and specialists who may never have visited otherwise, now have a chance to spread the word about Tata's tourist attractions and friendly atmosphere. The town presented several good examples at the meeting such as the sophisticated system of green and public spaces. These examples clearly show in practice how family-friendly areas can be established in a way that allows them to serve as useful and pleasurable venues and locations in everyday life.

As an introductory event to the 22nd National Conference of Chief Architects held in Tata, professional training by the Prime Minister's Deputy Undersecretary of Architecture Office was organised by the Government Offices of Győr-Moson-Sopron and Komárom-Esztergom Counties,

and the county chambers of architects. The next item on the agenda was an overview of the town's image and layout protection, as well as the legal and technical issues associated with the preparation of a town image and layout decree, based on the town image and layout manual. Following the welcome speech, Mayor József Michl and Chief Architect Zsolt Kiss held presentations about Tata, followed by a number of technical and professional programmes.

The traditional award-giving ceremony took place on the second day of the conference. The awards were given by Mayor József Michl, President of the Hungarian Professional Association of Chief Architects Ferenc Salamin, Chief Architect Zsolt Kiss, and President of the Hungarian Society for Urban Planning, Imre Körmeny. In 2017, the Chief Architect of the Year award was given to Architect János Jánosi, Chief Architect of Szada and Szokolya, and Architect László Mezei, Chief Architect of Pápa and Várpalota. The Lifetime Award for Chief Architects was given to Architect Frigyes Philipp, Chief Architect of Esztergom and Kismaros, while the Hild Award was given to retired State Chief Architect Mihály Bernáth.

On the third day of the event, Deputy Undersecretary of Architecture Zsolt Füleky held a closing presentation. At the end of his speech, the Deputy Mayor of Kaposvár, Tamás Dér, received the conference flag to signify that the town will host the event next year.

We hope that our guests thoroughly enjoyed the event in Tata. Based on the feedback received so far, we are convinced that our town has presented a number of concepts and useful examples which can be implemented in the future. We trust that conference attendees will return to Tata in their free time, as our town is an ideal place for leisure and relaxation.



THEIR CALLING IS TO SERVE

The Tata group of the Hungarian Maltese Charity Service was one of the first to be established in Hungary. Their mission is to help those in need, in and around Tata. They provide social services and support to those that need it, primarily by using donations in kind. At times, all they can provide is their caring love and presence, which often counts for more than money.

SERVING PEOPLE IN NEED FOR 28 YEARS

The Hungarian Maltese Charity Service is the Hungarian aid organisation of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, which dates back nine centuries. Its foundation is associated with the name of Baroness Csilla von Boeselager, who lives in Germany but was born in Hungary and sought out ways of helping Hungarian people in need in the late 1980s. Initially, she collected medical equipment from German hospitals, and sought assistance in Hungary, to help ensure the donations were getting to the right place. This is how she met Father Imre Kozma, the vicar at the Holy Family's Parish in Zugliget, who assured her of his assistance and support. In 1988, she founded the organisation Ungarischer Malteser Caritas-Dienst in Germany. On 4 February 1989, the Association of the Hungarian Maltese Charity Service, one of Hungary's very first NGOs, was established under the guidance of Father Imre. That same year, they launched the greatest humanitarian aid movement in Europe at that time. Tens of thousands of people arrived in Hungary from East Germany with the intent of never returning to their homeland. The Charity Service set up its first refugee camp for them on 14 August in Zugliget church garden and cared for 48,600 people over the course of three months. They have provided help not only in Hungary, but also abroad. Following the outbreak of the Romanian uprising, they

delivered aid shipments to those in need. In the early 1990s, they created an autonomous refugee camp amidst the wars in the then disintegrating Yugoslavia, which supported 60,000 Bosnians, Croats and Hungarians who found refuge in the camp. They helped the Jews passing through Hungary who were emigrating from the Soviet Union, and provided support to the victims of the great floods in Poland and the subcarpathian region. During the Balkan war, they rescued hundreds of the wounded, resettled children in schools, the old in nursing homes, and took care of thousands of refugees for years. Meanwhile, they opened the first homeless shelter in Hungary, had spectacles made for the underprivileged, introduced the signal-system home care programme, started the country's first repair shop specialising in wheelchairs, and launched the Ambulance Service of the Hungarian Maltese Charity Service which is operated exclusively by volunteers. By the mid 1990s, they had set up a national network; aside from their centre in Budapest, they now have seven regional organisations, as well as a number of local groups. They coordinate the work of thousands of volun-

teers. Their mission is to help those in need - the homeless, the elderly, the sick, and the disabled, regardless of their beliefs, nationality or religion. They provide financial aid and donations in kind, counselling, and social care and health services. Their educational training programmes attempt to find solutions to the problems of specific groups or regions. In addition, they participate in disaster relief activities and international humanitarian aid programmes. Recently, they delivered new household appliances to flood victims in Serbia. During the summer and autumn of 2015, they helped 400,000 migrants passing through Hungary. They provided them with medical care, food, and clothing, at a number of locations. (Source: www.maltai.hu)

FROM FOOD DELIVERY TO MANAGING INSTITUTIONS

The Tata group of the Charity Service was founded in 1990 at the Capuchin church, the first in the country. The group was principally organised by the parish priest of the time, János Virág, the provost of the Capuchin order, and its membership mainly consisted of members of his





congregation. Father Imre Kozma has been a supporter of the group from the outset; he encouraged and authorised members to help those in need in and around Tata within the framework of the Charity Service. In 2015, the town awarded Father Imre honorary citizenship for all the donations to the institutions of Tata, for his selfless work in the spiritual renewal of the Hungarian nation, and for helping people in trouble and need.

The Tata group started its work right after its foundation, delivering food to those in need. Initially, lunch was supplied by the Training Camp, then subsequently from the Capuchin monastery restaurant, at cost price. The volunteers delivered lunch every day to approximately 15-20 people. Today, they care for more than 80 people. Thanks to Csilla von Boeselager, the Tata group managed to establish international partnerships in the early 1990s. Their partners have organised a number of fundraisers and charity collections, delivered aid shipments to Tata, and maintain a lively connection with the town even now. Over the years, the group has gradually taken on more responsibilities. Among other organisations, it has become actively involved in the social work of the local government. They are currently managing a support service and day-care centre as well. Two years ago, they also set up a play garden, in co-operation with the local government,

on the playground of Jázmin school. The playground is under constant adult supervision and has turned out to exceed all expectations, with many children spending their free time here every afternoon or at the weekends.

At the day-care centre, the group looks after approximately 20 elderly people, where they can find company and spend their days actively socialising, whilst their medical condition is also monitored. In addition, various programmes, activities, trips, and lectures are also organised for them. Many of these are open to the general public and "external" guests are invited and welcomed. The day-care centre also enables the elderly to practice their faith, as they can pray, attend mass, and celebrate church festivities together. The support service attempts to ease the lives of the disabled and provide assistance to them in their homes, with tasks such as bathing, preparing lunch, taking their medication, and cleaning. If needed, the service also takes them to the doctor's or helps them in arranging their official matters. They can take children to school if necessary. The local Charity Service rents out therapeutic aids, however, they can provide people in need with a series of equipment and accessories from wheelchairs to hospital beds free of charge or for a nominal contribution.

Tata is not just home to the local group, but also to the Central Trans-

danubian regional centre of the Charity Service, under the supervision of Lajos Bondor as of 2004, who is also the head of the Tata organisation. The managerial roles of the regional centre are assumed by Gergely Pataki, who formerly supported the professional supervision of the national institutions of the Charity Service in Budapest. They are responsible for the many institutions of three counties, including homeless shelters, day-care centres, children's homes, temporary shelters, child welfare services, play gardens, etc. As a regional centre, the Tata group has enormous responsibilities as all donations arrive here and must be sorted and transported to the respective services and groups of the entire region. The Charity Service consists of 34 members in Tata. In addition, their work is supported by a number of volunteers and, in case of larger campaigns, fundraisers, and donation collections, they can reach out to and deploy 150-200 helpers. An increasing number of students are applying to spend their mandatory 50 hours of volunteer work at the Charity Service.

This year, the national Charity Service has entrusted the regional centre with a new mission. In the upcoming years, a number of government-funded institutions will be transferred to ecclesiastical or NGO control, including the Charity Service. This is a further way in which the government wishes to improve service quality and equality of access, to decrease maintenance costs, and to strengthen the theological approach, which integrates service, patronage, and caring for people in the spirit of Christianity. The Hungarian Maltese Charity Service has assumed responsibility for accommodation for 1,116 people across the entire country. In the Central Transdanubian region, there are two institutions affected by the change in management: the Zöldfenyő Nursing Home in Esztergom and Basaharc, which provide accommodation and care for 150 people. Lajos Bondor, the regional head, thinks that the changeover represents a serious challenge for

the regional centre as they have never managed a residential institution before. By taking over both nursing homes, the budget of the region increases to 1.3bn HUF, while the number of employees will also increase substantially. In the first stage, the institutions will be taken over by the national Charity Service, so that the respective regional centres will have time to get accustomed to their new responsibilities. They will take full control as of next year.

FUNDING AND DONATIONS

The operation of the Charity Service is funded by multiple financial sources. On the one hand, the institutions they maintain receive normative government funding, while on the other hand, they are supported by local governments, as they perform and take over indispensable social tasks. The extent of the latter varies from town to town as local governments may decide at their own discretion how much they appreciate and value the work performed for local people. The third source of funding consists of the donations offered by individuals and private companies. The Local Government of Tata supports the Charity Service annually with the sum of 8.5m HUF. The local government has in a number of forums that they do not wish to shift social burdens onto local NGOs and churches, including the Charity Service, but rather strive to establish a close relationship with them, in order to identify needs and problems, and to seek out appropriate solutions. Among others, this is one of the reasons behind the establishment of the Social Round Table, of which the organisation is also a member. The town recognises the invaluable service of the Charity Service in the social sphere, thus it wishes to draw on their available resources in man-

aging the social care system to a larger extent than before. Many people cannot receive further social support from the local government for various reasons (for example, they have already utilised all possible support at their disposal). However, the town does not intend to leave them unaided and thus turns to the Charity Service for help to support these people from time to time. Beyond financial support, the town is more than ready to join the organisation's various initiatives as well; the establishment of the play garden on the playground of Jázmin school is an excellent example of such joint efforts. The Charity Service places special emphasis on supporting not only individuals with donations, but also the health and social care institutions of the town. Over the past few years, the nursing home, the hospital, and the Basic Social Provision Institution have managed to replace all their old wire beds with modern, adjustable ones, thanks to the generous help provided by the Service. Furthermore, many of the beds in Tatabánya hospital have also been replaced in this way.

Many look upon the Charity Service as the place where their old clothes can be handed down. However, collecting second-hand clothes represents only a tiny portion of the organisation's work. And they do endeavour to change this general impression or misconception. They attempt to make it clear to the general public that the structure of poverty has changed significantly. The disadvantaged are not in need of clothing any more; many of them are simply hungry and cold. What these people desperately need is long-life food, firewood, stoves, heaters and anything that might make their homes a bit more comfortable and liveable, such as household appliances and kitchen equipment. These are the things the Charity Service would most like to receive. Many individuals and companies in the town regularly help out financially and with donations in kind. Some also contribute to the work of the Charity Service by waiving the fee for the

services provided. Before Christmas last year, the Service organised its national campaign "Adni öröm" (It's good to give) again, in which long-life food was collected in Spar supermarkets. In the end, a total of 39 tonnes of donated food were gathered in the region, of which 3,054 kg came from Tata. The packages all reached their destinations by Christmas Eve, at the homes of those who needed them most.

THE HIGHEST RECOGNITION

Mayor József Michl was awarded the Officer Cross of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta this year, the highest distinction of the order that a civilian can be honoured with. He received the award at a ceremony held in honour of the order's patroness, the Virgin Mary of Mount Philermos. The ceremony was attended by the most prominent Hungarian and international representatives of the order, by high-ranking officials of ecclesiastical institutions and diplomatic corps, as well as by Imre Kozma, the President of the Hungarian Maltese Charity Service. The cross was presented by Kristóf Szabady, the President of the Hungarian Association of the Knights of Malta, to the head of the town for the support he has provided to both the Tata and regional organisations of the Hungarian Maltese Charity Service. At the ceremony, they emphasised the following: József Michl assists the work of the support service with outstanding care. In the past years, he has actively participated in the campaigns, events, and development activities of the Charity Service, including the establishment of the Maltese playground in Tata.



Hungarian Maltese Charity Service

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Tata

its administrative area is currently 78.17 km²

the number of permanent residents is now 23,343
(on 1 January 2017)

it is a district centre composed of the town of Tata and
9 surrounding villages with a total of close to 39,000 inhabitants.

its highest point is Kálvária Hill at 167 m.

its largest lake is Old Lake that covers an area of 230 hectares with
an average depth of 2.4 m, with the deepest point reaching 6.1
m. It has 4.3 million m³ of water and its catchment area is 460 km².

Old Lake is an internationally recognised water habitat under the
Ramsar Convention, where over 230 bird species have been
spotted so far.

it has received numerous awards in recent years, including the
award for Bicycle-friendly Town in 2008, the Hungarian Capital of
Biodiversity in 2010, the Europe Prize from the Council of Europe in
2013. In 2014, Echo Television named it the most beautiful
Hungarian town, and in 2015 it became the capital of marketing.

it is a child-friendly town that joined the UNICEF initiative in 2008.

it has close links with its nine twin towns: Alkmaar in the
Netherlands, Gerlingen in Germany, Dammarie-lès-Lys in France,
Arenzano and Montebelluna in Italy, Szőgyén in Slovakia, Szováta
in Romania, Pinczów in Poland and Magyarkanizsa in Serbia.

it is a student town with four primary, six secondary
and three art schools.

you can get plenty of interesting information about Tata and its
people on websites such as www.tata.hu and www.decem.eu as
well as on Facebook (Város Tata).

Brief history of the town

At the western foot of the Gerecse Hills, enclosed by the
Vértesszőlős Hills, lies a town steeped in history. Thanks to its warm
water springs and valuable natural resources, it became a
settlement as early as the prehistoric age, which is attested
by several archaeological finds under the former Piarist
grammar school. Old Lake was named in the Roman era.
King Zsigmond built a Renaissance castle on its bank in the
second half of the 14th century. This put Tata on the map:
Holy Roman emperors, monarchs, princes and envoys soon
started to meet in Tata.

The town of Tata was occupied by the Turks in 1543. During
the one hundred and forty-five years of Turkish rule, the castle
changed hands nine times and was in Turkish hands for
sixteen years.

Tata and the neighbouring villages were bought by József
Esterházy in 1727. The Esterházy family contributed greatly to
the rise and influence of contemporary Baroque
architecture in the town for two hundred years: the Holy
Cross Parish Church and the Esterházy Palace were built
during this period based on plans drawn up by chief town
architect, Jakab Fellner. The Esterházy family also made Old
Lake fishable, drained the marshland, and regulated the
network of streams, canals and brooks which provided
energy for water mills.

After the Austrian-Hungarian Compromise in 1867, Tata and
Tóváros started to be urbanised; several factories and plants
were built in this period. Tata-Tóváros was connected to the
railway network at this time. The Komárom-Budapest railway
line was built in 1883 -1884 with a station built in Tata. In the
second half of the 19th century, Miklós Esterházy built a
racecourse in Kertváros and introduced horse racing.

Tourist traffic picked up considerably in the first decades of
the 20th century: The outdoor stage, cafés, lakes and springs
attracted a lot of people from the capital who wanted to rest
in the countryside. The merger of Tata and Tóváros in 1938
urged by Zoltán Magyary helped the town improve even
more. In 1954, Tata was officially awarded town status.