

Life path



The Hungarian Hydrological Society (MHT) acknowledged the lifetime achievement of Professor Hans Wessel and honoured him with an honorary foreign membership award. On this occasion we respectfully publish salute of Prof. Ijjas and Prof. Bogárdi on behalf of friends and former students of Prof. Wessel.

The Hungarian Hydrological Society (Magyar Hidrológiai Társaság – MHT) is one of the oldest professional-scientific organisations in Hungary. In 2017 was the 100th anniversary of its foundation. It is an association established to deal with water sciences. It has three thousand individual members as well as 150 institutional and company members. The honorary foreign member title is one of the highest honours of the MHT. Those foreign persons who were awarded with this title this century:

2000 Wolfram Dirksen (Germany) and János Szolgay (Slovakia); 2001 Janus Kindler (Poland); 2005 Arnd Böhme (Germany); 2009 Marcello Benedini (Italy) and Pavol Miklánek (Slovakia); 2013 Vladimir Zabcic (Croatia); 2017 János Bogárdi (Germany) and Charles J Vörösmarty (USA); 2019 Mitja Brilly (Slovenia) and Franz Nobilis (Austria); 2021 László Hayde (Netherlands); and 2024 Hans Wessel (Netherlands).



In 2024, on the occasion of founding the River Basin Administration (RBA) Centre and establishing close and fruitful cooperation with Hungarian scholars and researchers 35 years ago, the MHT acknowledged the achievements of Hans Wessel and honoured him with a foreign honorary membership award. With this acknowledgement, the MHT expresses its honour and thanks for what Professor Wessel has done to promote the international and European integration of Hungarian water management.

Professor Wessel is a retired professor of public law and public administration from Delft University of Technology (DUT), with main responsibility for law and administration in the field of physical planning, the environment and water management.

In 1989, with the help of prof. J. H. Kop and prof. J.C. van Dam, professors of water sciences, he founded the Centre for Comparative Studies on River Basin Administration (RBA) at DUT. In the early 1990th, within the framework of the existing cooperation of the DUT and the Budapest University of Technology (BUT), he visited the Department of Water Resources Engineering of BUT. Recognizing the common interests he initiated to start the Rhine-Danube comparative research and education pro-

gramme that became the start of a more than 30 years long cooperation, the RBA partnership and friendship. This cooperation was strongly supported by prof. Kozák and prof. Józsa at BUT and prof. Bándi at Eötvös Lóránd University of Budapest.

The first main action of the Rhine-Danube cooperation was the Environmentally Sound River Basin Development (ESRBD) EC supported TEMPUS Joint European Project (Ijjas-Kardoss: ESRBD TEMPUS JEP0266, Final Report, 1990-1993). The project plan has been prepared by prof. Wessel and prof Ijjas with the help of ass. prof Kardoss (BUT). The JEP, approved at the end of 1990, was among the first EC supported JEPs that have begun their activities. In the first year three universities were participating in the project: DUT, BUT and the University of Karlsruhe. From the second phase of the JEP other universities were also involved: Agricultural University of Wageningen, Eötvös Lóránd University of Budapest, Pollack Mihály College (Baja), University of Belgrade, University of Novi Sad, University of Sarajevo, University of Timisoara and Technical University of Vienna.

In the period of 1990-93 six Rhine-Danube Workshops, five TEMPUS JEP Workshops (one of them together with the Equipe Cousteau) and three intensive short courses were organised. 26 study reports were completed, 46 mobility grants have been provided, 18 for MSc, 9 for PhD students and 19 for the university staff members.

In spring of 1993 the RBA's group of foreign guest researchers included six Hungarians from BUT: prof. Ijjas, Ferenc Kiss Guba and Anna Csiti associate professors, Edina Pinczés and Gábor Dávid MSc students and Károly Pálovits PhD student (see 1. photo).

The success of the first TEMPUS Joint European Project led to a larger scale cooperation and exchange of Dutch and Hungarian professors and MSc and PhD students. The impact of Professor Wessel's work and DUT is evident in the successful careers of many Hungarian water scientists who participated in the RBA's programs.

Professor Wessel and the RBA engaged in numerous collaborative projects with Hungarian experts. These collaborations included hosting Hungarian researchers and students in Delft, organizing joint workshops and conferences, and co-publishing research findings. These efforts significantly contributed to the international recognition of Hungarian water management achievements.



Photo 1. Prof. Wessel with the regular staff and with the foreign guest researchers of the RBA in the spring of 1993
Sitting in the middle of the middle row: Hans Wessel professor, director of RBA, and István Ijjas, guest professor (BUT). Guest researchers in the back row from left to right: Ferenc Kiss Guba and Anna Csiti associate professors (BUT), and in the back row from right to left: Edina Pinczés and Gábor Dávid MSc students (BUT), P. Boeriu guest professor (University of Timisoara) and Károly Pálovits PhD student (BUT)

1. kép. Wessel professzor az RBA állandó dolgozóival és vendég-kutatóival 1993 tavaszán

Középső sor közepén ülve: Hans Wessel professzor (Delfti Műszaki Egyetem) és Ijjas István vendégprofesszor (Budapesti Műszaki Egyetem - BME). Vendég kutatók a hátsó sorban balról jobbra: Kiss Guba Ferenc és Csiti Anna adjunktus (BME), a hátsó sorban jobbról balra: Pinczés Edina, Dávid Gábor MSc hallgató (BME), P. Boeriu vendég professzor (Temesvári Műszaki Egyetem) és Pálovits Károly PhD hallgató (BME)

The adoption of the DUT's International Project Education system in BUT was a key action in the early 90s. Prof. Dijk (DUT) and Prof Wessel had a leading role establishing this Dutch-Hungarian Project Education cooperation. Thank to prof. Wessel with whom the first DUT-BUT Summer Project Work was organised in 1990. In the period 1990-1995 the cooperation resulted 13 international summer projects (joint project teams of students from the Netherlands and from Hungary), 7 projects in the DUT and 6 in the BUT, for a total number of 116 students. 41 students from Hungary participated in the joint projects, eight of those students made their final thesis works later in RBA.

Professor Wessel and the RBA partnership supported the Hungarian experts and institutions in joining European research and education organisations, net-

works and projects, such as the TECHWARE, ETNET-ENVIRONMENT, EUROWATER, EUROWATER-CEC, EUWATERMAN, EWA Ring, ICER, the HARMONICOP, the HYDROWET, ERASMUS, and many others. His support enabled Hungarian researchers to contribute to and benefit from global and European advancements in water sciences.

Looking back to the significance of prof. Wessel's activities, on 19th September 2008 he was awarded with the Memorial Plaque of "Vásárhelyi Pál" by prof. Lovas, the Dean of the Faculty of Civil Engineering of BUT.

For his international scientific activities in 2002 he was awarded the International Cannes Water Prize. Two Hungarians, prof. Mosonyi and prof. Bogárdi were honoured with similar Cannes Prize.

*István Ijjas
 former president of MHT*

*Veronika Major
 Editor-in-Chief*

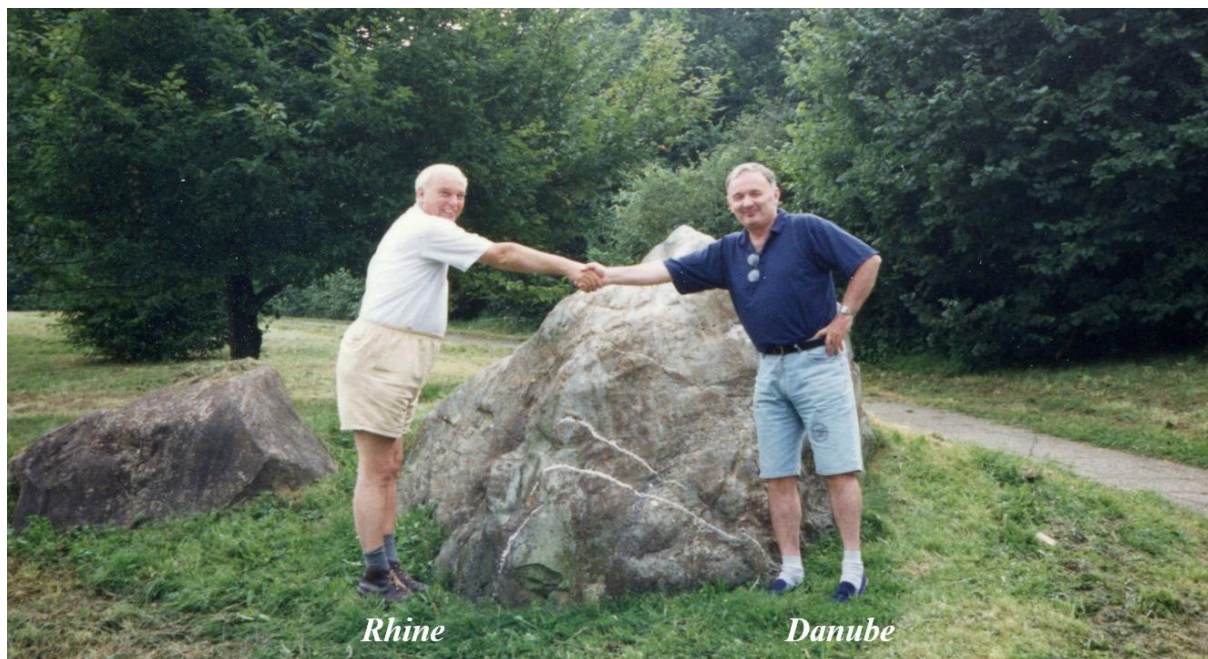


Photo 2. Professor Wessel standing in the catchment of the Rhine and Professor Ijjas in the catchment of the Danube, in the Black Forest, in front of the stone marking the border of the watershed of the two rivers (Photo by Ijjas)
2. kép. Wessel professzor a Rajna, Ijjas professzor pedig a Duna vízgyűjtő területén állva a Fekete Erdőben, a két folyó vízgyűjtőjének határát jelölő kőtömb előtt (Fotó: Ijja)

Tribute to Prof. Wessel by Prof. Bogárdi on behalf of friends and former students

The recent award of the foreign honorary member of the Hungarian Hydrological Society to Professor Hans Wessel is a well-deserved recognition of his long-term engagement as scientist to interdisciplinarity, river basin management, administration and scientific collaboration.

Prof Wessel established an interdisciplinary centre for river basin management at the Delft University of Technology. Irrespective of his academic background in law, he was a well esteemed professor at a technical university.

Obviously if your concern is the management of trans-boundary river basins, then the Rhine and Danube rivers are automatically the top priorities on your scientific agenda. We may call Hungary as the heart of the Danube basin. Hence his interest in Hungary and its water resources problems emanates from this coincidence. His engagement in Hungary shows on the other hand that scientific collaboration can be the root of friendship as amply documented in the books of Prof. Ijjas and myself (volumes 3 and 6 of the series “Building the future in water resources management”, 2019 and 2022).

Thus, beyond praising Prof Wessel for his scientific ideas and achievements as well as his dedication to introduce interdisciplinary thinking in engineering curricula, we must also acknowledge his human virtues and warm personality.

I met Professor Wessel in 1989, shortly after having started my tenure as professor for hydrology, hydraulics, and water resources management at the Wageningen Agricultural University. He was the first Dutch colleague who invited me to attend a water resources management workshop in Groningen. This was the start of a more than thirty year-long friendship and collaboration. We participated in the then ongoing ERASMUS cooperation network masterminded by Prof André van der Beken (see 3. photo). Spirit and principles of this collaborative platform was transferred to the then emerging TEMPUS-PHARE programs targeting the cooperation with Central European candidate states to join the EU. Prof Wessel and I participated in each other’s initiatives.

Friends and former students of Prof. Wessel congratulate him for receiving this important award. Our thanks are accompanied with our best wishes of good health and pleasant memories of our collaboration.

*János J. Bogárdi
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From left to right

seating : 1. A. Van der Beken (B)

2. J Bogardi (NL)

3. J. Wessel (NL)

4. R. Verhoeven (B)

Staying : 5. A. Monjoie (B)

6. J. Hipolito (P)

7. A. Quinet (B)

8. L. Ubertini (I)

9. J. Ledieu (B)

10. G.L. Vandewiele (B)

11. J.A. Mawsley (UK)

12. R. Sellin (UK)

13. F. Siccardi (I)

14. E. Cabrera (E)

15. B. Hendriksen (NL)

16. H. Orth (D)

17. J. Vandenabeele (B)

Not on the photograph : G. de Marsily



Photo 3. Meeting of the professors of water resources management participating in the European Community ERASMUS cooperation scheme, Brussels 1989.

In the first row from left to right: André van der Beken (coordinator), János Bogárdi, Hans Wessel, Ronny Verhoeven

3. kép. Az Európai Közösség ERASMUS együttműködési programjában részt vevő vízkészlet-gazdálkodási professzorok találkozója. Brüsszel 1989.

Az első sorban balról jobbra: André van der Beken (koordinátor), Bogárdi János, Hans Wessel, Ronny Verhoeven