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Back Budapest 2017 - 300 days to go!

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Q&A with FINA President Dr. Julio C. Maglione

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300 days ahead of the FINA 2017 World Championships how do you see the preparations for next year's big event?

Though we had the last site visit in June, we are constantly updated on the preparations and we think the Hungarian organisers are on the right track. We had also discussions in Rio, where we met Prime Minister Viktor Orban in the company of our Vice-President Tamas Gyarfás and Government Commissioner Balazs Furjes. Mr. Orban ensured us that the Government's backing was and would be firm to deliver an outstanding event. The construction of the main venue, the new aquatic complex, is well ahead of any deadline set previously.



There will be a couple of historic venues in the World Championships like the Batthyány Square in the heart of Budapest (high diving), the Városliget (synchronised swimming), the Hajós Alfréd Pool (the „Mecca of water polo”, as an American coach said), Balatonfüred at the lake Balaton (open water swimming) and of course the new Dagály Pool. Do you agree it will be a really unique World Champs?

Yes, it will be a fantastic event in a city regarded as one of the most popular destinations in recent years. Many of us know the beauties of Budapest and it will be nice to see these magnificent landmarks connected to our World Championships. I think the event will give a tremendous boost for this wonderful city and for the whole country in many areas, but we do think that besides the economic impact, the sport legacy will get the greatest benefits. Inspiring the young generations, enjoying the outstanding support of the Government, and the opportunities the new and refurbished aquatic facilities offer, all serve the interest of Hungarian aquatics.

Another Olympic period is behind us. Do you think we will see the well-known faces

on the podium, or there will be some new stars who will surprise the world?

I think the Olympics already presented us with bright new stars, in all of our aquatic disciplines. This shows a clear trend and is the best possible appetizer for Budapest 2017. May I add that Hungarians also excelled in Rio, so the many thousands of spectators in the stands will have a unique opportunity to support their heroes and local stars. But many confirmed and well-known faces will also shine in Hungary, thus adding some more medals to their impressive roll of honour.

What are the most important tasks for the organisers in the next 300 days? What is your message for Hungarian aquatic sport fans a little less than one year before the World Championships?

Delivering the FINA World Championships on a high level requires the utmost dedication from everyone working for the success of the event. We do know our Hungarian friends, led by Tamas Gyarfás, and they are generally not satisfied with a good level, they wish to produce the best all the time. We are standing by them and we will give all the help from our side to be able to reach their goals which are, obviously, our goals, too.

As I said before, if I were Hungarian, I couldn't wait for the moment when the first tickets were going on sale. The FINA World Championships are truly a once-in-a-lifetime experience for the locals, as they will watch not only the greatest Magyar stars, but also the very best athletes on Earth in our six disciplines. We would encourage everyone to try to attend as many events as possible, I know swimming and water polo enjoy priority among the Hungarian fans, but one should not miss the opportunity to see what the greatest divers and synchro swimmers are capable of, not to mentioning the high divers whom, I'm sure, will thrill the crowds with their spectacular dives, performed in a really unique environment.