

SLOVAKIA: Danubian children spread solidarity across the Basin

Slovakia's Danube Day saw a major celebration in Bratislava involving a huge number of organisations, (coordinated by the Ministry of Environment) - all working together to make 29th June a day to remember. Games, scientific experiments, discussion forums, art competitions and symbolic tributes got everyone acting for their rivers.

The Incheba exhibition space in Bratislava was the venue for a grand festival – *Danube: Space for Life*. The pouring rain outside didn't dampen spirits as everyone pulled together to make the 3rd Danube Day a great success. Janka Dulayová director of the Public Relations department of the Ministry of Environment officially opened a day of inspiring, educational and above all fun activities. Visitors tested their skill in water experiments, environmental quizzes and light-hearted competitions; learnt about the Danube with special boat trips and lectures and had their breath taken away as falcons swooped within centimetres of their heads. 700 children from Children's Homes across Slovakia took part in the celebrations which were widely publicised in the media.

Crowds were enthralled by performances from *H&N* and *Up To Date* dance troupes; youth musicians from *Domka*; young artists and demonstrations by the Red Cross and police dog handlers. Official agencies presented current best practice to professionals and the public.

Very awaited highlight of the whole day program was the awarding ceremony. Prizes from the Ministry of Environment, Coca-Cola Slovensko, s.r.o., Západoslovenská energetika, a.s., Bojnice Zoo, Bratislava ZOO, Slovak environmental agency, Volkswagen Slovakia, Bratislavská vodárenská spoločnosť, a.s., AULANDIA Aqua & Spa Paradise, Nestlé Slovensko, s.r.o., TEKMAR Slovensko, were awarded for the drawing competition, poetry competition, the *Danube Day Mascot* Children's Home competition and the youth photo contest, *Danube and Us* (and an international touring exhibition of photos officially opened).

Danube Day: more than just water!

For general information view www.danubeday.org or email: jasmine.bachmann@unvienna.org.

The Danube Day message was presented in speeches by Viera Kimerlingová, Deputy Mayor of Bratislava–Petržalka district, Tatiana Mikušová, Assistant Mayor of Bratislava, and Zdeněk Vilímek, Czech & Slovak Public Affairs and Communications Director of Coca-Cola. A concert by Misha and Bystrík provided a fitting climax to a great Danube day out.

A highlight from last year, Slovak children sent their *Danube Greetings* - messages of international goodwill - to the region. Organised by Global Water Partnership, children were united across the country in a tide of solidarity: Roma children from Postarka; pupils from Zefyrina, Veľké Kapušany and Trebišov schools on the Topľa and Ondava rivers in the east; children from Lokca Primary on the Orava in the north and pupils from Ladce and Caka primaries on the Vah and Hron in the west. The wishes, drawings, poems and photos symbolically linked children from the tributaries to those on the Slovak Danube and abroad.

With more than 96% of the country's rivers flowing into the Danube, the river is close to all Slovak hearts. Danube Day was a fitting tribute to the importance it plays in everyone's lives.

“Let the hearts of Europeans unite as rivers unite, flowing into the Danube.”

Pupils from Ladce Primary, western Slovakia, sending their *Danube Greetings* to everyone celebrating Danube Day 2006.

Partners

Ministry of the Environment • Self-governing region of Bratislava • City of Bratislava • Bratislava – Petržalka district • Bratislava – Old Town district • Slovak Environmental Agency (SAŽP) • Museum of Hungarian Culture and Danube Area – Komárno • Slovak Hydro-meteorological Institute (SHMU) • Slovak Museum of Nature Protection and Speleology (SMOPAJ) • Slovak Water Management Company (Bratislava branch) (SVP OZ BA) • State Nature Protection of the Slovak Republic (SOP SR) • Water Management Construction (VVB) • Water Management Research Institute (VUVH) • Danube Environmental Forum (DEF) • Global Water Partnership CEE (GWP)

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CEE) and Global Water Partnership Slovakia (GWP Slovakia) • Coca-Cola Slovensko, s.r.o. • Západoslovenská energetika, a.s. (ZSE) • Bratislava Culture and Information Centre (BKIS) • DUSLO, a.s. • Incheba EXPO Bratislava • DIAGO, s.r.o. • Slovalco, a.s. • The Slovenská plavba a prístavy – lodná osobná doprava joint-stock company, a.s. (SPaP-LOD) • Volkswagen Slovakia, a.s. • Aulandia, Aqua & Spa Paradise • Bojnice ZOO • Bratislava ZOO • Regional Association for Nature Conservation and Sustainable Development (BROZ) • Bratislava Water Company (BVS) • National Park Donau-Auen • State enterprise Forests of the Slovak Republic • Fire and Rescue brigade of the Slovak Republic (HAZU) • Slovak Red Cross • Slovak Police Force • Regional Headquarters of the Slovak Police • Falcon Group of St. Bavon • MICROCOMP – Computersystém s.r.o. • Eximbanka SR • RECAR, a.s. • Nestlé Slovensko, s.r.o. • TEKMAR Slovensko, s.r.o. • Grotto, s.r.o. • EUREST, spol. s.r.o. • Sharkam, spol. s.r.o. • Nautik TV • Prešporské noviny • Bratislavské noviny • Župné noviny • Petržalské noviny • Enviromagazín • EUROREPORT plus • ZOOM-M • Fifík • Radio Regina •

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