

Danube Day in Slovakia

It will be "Ships Ahoi" for this year's Danube Day in Slovakia with boating adventures, scientific excursions and white-water rafting. A day of water fun will take place in Čunovo and Gabčíkovo and special events are also planned in Komarno and Liptovský Mikuláš.

Čunovo and Gabčíkovo are the venues for a host of **water related activities on and beside the Danube**. The day will begin with boat trips from Bratislava to the Danube Day festivities. As well as enjoying the beautiful scenery, school children, students and adults will learn about Danube history and wildlife and the actions being undertaken to look after the river and its inhabitants. Arriving at Gabčíkovo, pupils and the general public will have the chance to learn about the workings of the Dam and carry out exercises on the water gauge station and mobile hydro-metric unit, as well as get involved with measuring river discharge and water quality.

For those looking for adventure, there will be free entry to the Čunovo Wild Water Facility and for those who prefer to stay dry, entry to the Gabčíkovo Information Centre. With a spectacular diving display and performances by the River Police and Red Cross; opportunities to learn more about the work of the Hydro-meteorological Institute and the chance to get your hands dirty in a river clean-up operation, there will be something for everyone. As in previous years, Slovak children will also create '**Danube Greetings**', messages of international solidarity, to send out to everyone celebrating Danube Day.

The event will also see the culmination of the search for Slovakia's young **Danube Art Master** of 2008. Organised by Daphne, Institute of Applied Ecology (Bratislava), the competition is part of a basin-wide project overseen by the Danube Environmental Forum. Pupils are invited to let their creativity run wild and make a piece of art inspired by their river. The talented winners will be crowned at the Gabčíkovo celebration.

The sound of ship horns will reverberate across the Danube Basin at 14:00 on Danube Day, as Danube workers pay a very special tribute to their river – a river that provides them with food, water, power, recreation and, crucially, their livelihoods. The annual **Greet the Danube ship blast**, organised by the Global Water Partnership (GWP), will see ships along the Danube rivers from Germany to Ukraine simultaneously sound their horns in a river salute.

Along with additional events in Komarno and Liptovský Mikuláš, Slovakia's Danube Day will inspire and stimulate. It will encourage everyone, young and old, to protect their rivers and consider the multitude of different peoples who, like them, rely on the Danube waters.

Further information:

Please contact **Jana Babiakova** of the Ministry of Environment (jana.babiakova@enviro.gov.sk; +421 2 5956 2561). Information will also be available soon at: www.enviro.gov.sk and www.danubeday.sk.

Organisers:

The main organizers are the Ministry of the Environment and A-agency. Co-organisers consist of sub organisations of the Environment Ministry; government institutions and non-governmental organisations (including the Danube Environmental Forum Slovakia; Daphne – Institute of Applied Ecology; the Slovak Hydro-meteorological Institute and Global Water Partnership Slovakia (GWP). Partners include: the Gabčíkovo Dam Facility; Ministry of Education; schools (including the Grammar school for the environment); Slovak Television; Radio Slovakia International and other media organizations.

The Danube rivers: let's use them – not abuse them!

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