

Danube Day 2008 in Croatia

Artistic endeavours toast the Danube

Film, art, culture and fish stew helped make Danube Day a success in Croatia! Events took place in the east of the country in Vukovar and Osijek.

The sight of Danube ships parading from Vukovar to Vučedol launched Danube Day in Croatia. Residents of Vukovar were welcomed by Ružica Drmić, Director of the Directorate for Water Policy and International Cooperation; the District Deputy Prefect; the Mayor of Vukovar and representatives from Croatian Waters for a celebration of the Danube in art, music, dance and food. Beautiful art was provided by local children on the theme of "Life next to the River Danube", while age-old songs, Slavonian dance and tamburitza music were performed by the Ilok Art Company. The traditional fish stew also went down very well with the participants.

Also based in the city was a new collaboration between Danube Day and the Vukovar Film Festival. As part of the festival, a "Danube Photo Exhibition: From Source to Delta" promoted Danube Day and connected young Vukovar residents with the multitude of peoples living in the Danube Basin. The exhibition presented scenes along the entire Danube. Now in its second year, the international festival is directly bound with the Danube. This comes from not only showcasing the most interesting cinematography from ten Danube Basin countries, but also because the actual cinema is literally floating on the river! Thought to be the only one of its kind in the world, the open-air cinema consists of a converted barge moored in the city. Linking up with the festival raised the profile of the Danube with an audience notoriously difficult to engage: the younger generation of Danube users.

Art was also centre stage at Osijek's Danube Day, where the ecological association, Green Osijek, held a Danube awards ceremony for the winners of the Danube Art Master competition. The culmination of Croatia's search for its young Art Master of 2008, pupils were invited to let their creativity run wild and enter a piece of art inspired by their river. 60 children took part in the final stages of the contest at the Esseker Centre in Osijek, where the artworks were displayed along with information promoting the Danube and water issues. Two national winners were selected to go through to the international finals for a chance to win a trip to Vienna.

In the month prior to Danube Day, Croatians also celebrated the Sava River for international Sava Day. An eco-camp for young people at Lonsko Polje Nature Park and publicity activities were organised by the Ministry of Regional Development, Forestry and Water Management, the Sava Commission, local communities and Coca-Cola Hellenic.

Danube Day Partners

Ministry of Regional Development, Forestry and Water Management • Croatian Waters • Green Osijek • Vukovarsko-srijemska District • City of Vukovar • KUD grada Vukovara - Vukovar art company • Vukovar Tourism Association • Coca-Cola Hellenic Croatia • Schools incl. 16 primary schools from the Slavonija and Baranja regions • Fishing clubs • Media partners including STV, Glas Slavonije, Slavonski Dom, Radio Osijek, Gradski Radio and Slavonski Radio • Esseker Centre, Osijek.

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.