

Danube Day 2008 in Romania

Back to school to promote the Danube!

Romania's Danube Day was huge, with festivities and workshops in towns along the length of the river. Bucharest hosted the main event with a focus on environmental education. It was literally back to school for Lucia Ana Varga, the State Secretary in the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, when children took over the role of teachers for the official launch of the *Danube Box* education kit (known as *The Blue Danube Book* in Romania).

The State Secretary was joined in the classroom by directors of *Apele Romane* National Administration, Greener Association, Save the Danube and the Delta Association and Coca-Cola HBC Romania, as well as ambassadors, politicians and local authority officials, and watched by press representatives who covered the event widely. Translated and adapted for Romania by the Save the Danube and the Delta and Greener Associations, with support from the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, *The Blue Danube Book* will be implemented in schools across the country, with the assistance of the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth. Following the event, children, teachers and officials travelled to Giurgiu, where white flowers were thrown into the Danube to symbolize respect for the river.

All along the Romanian Danube, people celebrated. In Galati, a thousand people went to an awareness-raising riverside festival organised by the Eco-Counselling Centre of Galati. Crowds of people joined in art master classes led by local students and viewed the stands showcasing water, health, ecology and navigation issues - encouraging people to realise that everyday actions affect others. Children, parents, grandparents and teachers gathered to see 17-year old, Nina Ciobotaru, crowned Romania's Danube Art Master for her inspired artwork "By Taking Care of the Danube, You Take Care of Yourself". Nina's artwork reflected the theme of this year's competition: the ways in which we can work together to manage land, livelihoods and the river environment to benefit all. Later in the year, nine other winners from the 125 Romanian entries joined Nina for the international stage of the competition.

The Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, *Apele Romane* National Administration, local authorities, water directorates and NGOs organised events in each Danube county, ensuring extensive media coverage. In Giurgiu, 800 people congregated at the harbour to enjoy cruisers, dance, festivals, art and sports and learn more about rivers. Similar events took place in Tulcea, Calarasi city, Braila, Teleorman, Ialomita, Dolj, Mures and also Mehedinti, where Eco Sud Vest Association ran a Danube Art Master contest. Art Master competitions, exhibitions and events were also held in Cluj (Silvanus Ecological Association), where 120 students entered art pieces; Braila (Eco Alpex NGO); Turnu Magurele

and Botosani. Other highlights included: an ecological caravan organised by the Catamarasti-Deal Eco-School and supported by the Siret Water Directorate; a children's awareness trip, international forum and practical activities led by the Arges-Vedea Water Directorate and a clean-up day for Teleorman youth (Olt Water Directorate). The Dobrogea-Litoral Water Directorate led a Danube children's awareness campaign. Water Directorates also held Danube Day basin committee meetings.

“The Blue Danube Book has an important role in educating children about Danube Basin values and traditions, as well as raising their awareness about the protection and conservation of the aquatic ecosystem.”

Lucia Ana Varga, State Secretary in Ministry of Environment & Sustainable Development.

Danube Day Partners

Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development • Ministry of Education, Research and Youth • *Apele Române* (Romanian Waters) National Administration • Eco-Counselling Centre of Galati (ECCG) • Greener Association • Save the Danube and the Delta Association • Coca-Cola Hellenic Romania • Global Water Partnership CEE and Romania • CODECS Foundation for Leadership • Giurgiu Water Management Agency • Giurgiu County Prefecture • Giurgiu County Council, City Hall and Local Council • Giurgiu Schools Inspectorate • Border Police • Giurgiu Palace of the Children • Ion Vinea Culture Centre • Giurgiu Fishery Inspection • Giurgiu Skipper Office • Eco-Counselling Centre Galati • Tulcea Water Management System • Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority • Tulcea County Prefecture • Environmental Protection Agency Tulcea • Tulcea City Hall and County Council • Danube Delta National Research-Development Institute • Tulcea School Inspectorate • Schools from Chilia Veche, Sulina, Grindu, Partizani • Calarasi County Prefecture • Calarasi Water Management System • Calarasi County Directorate for Sports • Calarasi Environmental Protection Agency • Mehedinti County Prefecture • Mehedinti County Council • Jiu Water Directorate • Mehedinti Water Management Agency • Mehedinti Environmental Protection Agency • Drobeta Turnu Severin City Hall • Drobeta Turnu Severin Water Works • Eselnita, Gogosu and Orsova City Halls • Mehedinți Schools Inspectorate • Drobeta Turnu Severin Harbour Authority • National Agency for Fishery and Aquaculture • Giurgiu Harbour • Danube River Harbour Authority • Buzau-Ialomita Water Directorate • Arges-Vedea Water Directorate • Teleorman County Council • Turnu Magurele Local Council • Teleorman Water Management Agency • Euro Teleorman Association • Arges Water Management Agency • Siret Water Directorate • Olt Water Directorate • Ialomita County Prefecture • Timiș County Prefecture • Banat Water Directorate • Dobrogea-Litoral Water Directorate • Civic Resources Centre • Dolj County Prefecture • Dabuleni Local Council • Mures Water Directorate • Toplita Culture House • Toplita City Hall • Buzau-Ialomita Water Directorate - Ialomita Water Management Agency • Buzau-Ialomita Water Directorate -Buzau Water Management Agency • Jiu Water Directorate • Fine Art Painters Association, Galati • The V.A. Urechea Public Library • Lower Danube Cultural Centre - The Painting Students Club • Photo Artists Association • Natural Sciences Museum Complex, Galati • Water Works Department, Galati • Galati Town Hall • Vasile Alecsandri National College • Elena Doamna Industrial Group • Dan Barbilian Primary School • Catamarasti Deal Eco School - M. Eminescu Commune • Kindergartens: No. 60, 14 (Ghiocelul) and 44 • The Children's Palace, Galati • Eco Sud Vest Association • Silvanus Ecological Association • Eco Alpex NGO • Centre for Environmentally Sustainable Economic Policy.

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.