



Danube Day 2008 in Serbia

Taking action for the Danube rivers

As 2008 President of the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR), the spotlight was on Serbia to host a grand celebration. With public festivities, high level meetings, fun activity days, eco camps, competitions and exhibitions, Serbia's Danube Day did not disappoint, getting everyone talking, thinking and taking action. Events were held across the country – from the capital city to small villages – in Belgrade, Novi Sad, Smederevo, Indija, Sombor, Donji Milanovac and beyond. International cooperation was at the forefront and events began with a meeting to strengthen international relations: the Sava Commission and the ICPDR signed a joint memorandum on Sava Day.

The 28th and 29th June brought fun, action, information and festivities to the citizens of Belgrade. Children from Grocka, Vinča and Ritopek got events off to a great start by performing beautiful folklore dances to launch two days of celebration. A workshop on pollution saw experts present a project aimed at solving problems in Vinča. The day ended with a guided tour around the most significant prehistoric Neolithic Tell settlement in Eastern Europe.

Day Two began with hard labour! – a huge river clean-up programme along the Danube banks involving students, NGOs, Coca-Cola staff, SEKOPAK, river restaurants and the media. With the work completed, the fun could start: children's activities; a creative workshop for children with special needs and a boat trip around Great War Island were all a hit. Next celebrations moved to Kalemegdan where awards were presented for the ten best entries in the Danube Art Master competition. Visitors viewed an exhibition of Dragoljub Zamurović's Danube work and traditional handi-crafts and toured the fortress. A concert by the band "Gora" topped a marvellous day out. "Fish Fest 2008" also celebrated Danube Day with a soup contest.

Events carried on well beyond June 29th. July saw 60 students from three Serbian universities and the University of Maribor in Slovenia take part in a two-week Danube Eco Camp on Great War Island, focussing on pollution, the pilot project in Vinča and related EU legislation. In September, a major exhibition of Dragoljub Zamurovic's work took place.

It was 'All Aboard' boats and buses in Novi Sad for a series of environmental tours. Pupils and the public enjoyed boat trips from Novi Sad to Fruska Gora and took part in the "Danube Golden Kettle" contest to make the best fish soup in Serbia! It was back on dry land for pupils from local primary schools who joined double-decker bus tours to the river to carry out conservation tasks and the Isidor Bajic music school performed a special concert.

The message spread far in Serbia: in Donji Milanovac, a "Danube My Sea" art workshop captivated children; Sombor was the location for a river walk and lectures and Indija hosted the Third Danube Folklore Festival, emphasizing the joint cultural heritage of Danube countries. In Belegiš-Surduk, music and art were highlighted; Bezdan residents carried out a river clean-up; Smederevo held a chess competition, children's workshop, river walk and sports programme; while in Deronje, "Tambourine Fest 2008" joined in the Danube Day celebrations.

"Danube Day is one of the symbols that points out our need to live together with our rivers instead of just living alongside the rivers."

Aleksandar Prodanović, Director of the Water Directorate of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management.

Danube Day Partners

Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry & Water Management – Water Directorate • Coca-Cola Hellenic Serbia and Montenegro • Secretariat for Environmental Protection for the City of Belgrade • *Srbijavode* Public Water Management Company • *Vode Vojvodine* Public Water Management Company • *Zelenilo - Beograd* Public Utility Company • *Gradska cistoca* Public Utility Company • Republic Agency for Waste • *Jaroslav Cerni* Institute for Water Resources Development • Toyota Serbia • SEKOPAK • DEF Serbia • Singidunum University – "Futura" Faculty for Applied Ecology • World and Danube NGO • City Council of Novi Sad • *Gradsko zelenilo* agency for green areas (Novi Sad) • *Isidora Bajic* music school (Novi Sad) • DDOR Novi Sad • Calipso Boat Rental • AD *Minakva* Novi Sad.

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.