



## Danube Day 2009 in Bulgaria

### Danube Day spreads message of international cooperation and friendship

Danube Day in Bulgaria spread the message far and wide with events in Sofia and towns across northern Bulgaria - in fact in all seven Danube provinces. National radio and television coverage ensured an even greater audience with coverage of the national Danube Art Master contest reaching an estimated 10,000 people. News of Bulgaria's Danube Day even reached Japan!

Inspiring young people to consider the people and wildlife that depend on the Danube rivers was a central theme, but there were events to suit everyone – young and old. Fun educational activities raised awareness of issues and highlighted the message that real solutions to the rivers' problems can only be found if all the Danube nations work together.

Numerous events were organised by Danube River Basin Directorates and councils in towns across northern Bulgaria. Workshops, sports events, competitions, concerts, river clean-ups and exhibitions stimulated people's interest and empowered them to take action. In **Russe**, the mayor, Bozhidar Yotov, opened festivities which included a yacht parade, cycling and fishing contests, brass band and cheerleading display, as well as a climbing demonstration up the front of the Hotel Riga! In **Lom**, children cleaned areas along the Danube and organised an eco carnival, dressed in clothes made from waste found by the river. Visitors also enjoyed several special exhibitions. The city of **Silistra** celebrated with a three-day water sports competition: 8 teams from Bulgaria and Romania took part in rowing, sailing and target-shooting contests. **Vidin's** events attracted a wide range of visitors from the volleyball and streetball competitions to a special tour of Baba Vida Castle and an international "I Love Danube" folklore fair in the Danube Park. **Kozloduy** residents took part in sports events, educational river cruises, a rowing contest and photo exhibition. In **Belene**, people got stuck in cleaning their town beach as well as enjoying fishing, sport and art activities. Secondary school pupils celebrated the Danube with pedal power in a cycling competition in **Svistov**. While art and fishing events were featured in **Tutrakan** and **Nikopol**. **Tzenovo** hosted the first "Eagle of the Danube" festival attended by pupils from international schools based across the Danube Basin. There was also a beach cleaning event, fun day and visit to the Jatrus archeological ruin. In **Oriahovo**, children had fun exploring local riverbeds using sonar to assess the state of their rivers. They also put up bird boxes and

ecological info-boards, took part in art, singing, sport and boating contests and sung together along the Danube as part of a children's show in Drugba Park.

A photographic record of the 2009 events was made to illustrate the Danube's environmental importance.

The artistic theme continued as children from across Bulgaria got creative in the 2009 **Danube Art Master** competition. The event attracted good media coverage with broadcasts on national radio and VTV television. Reaching an audience of up to 10,000 people, the interviews also encouraged participation in the development of the Danube River Basin Management Plan (being finalised in 2009). An exhibition of winning work will be launched on International Wetlands Day: 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2010.

50 works from the 2007 and 2008 Art Master contests carried their messages of environmental consideration and international cooperation to Japan as part of a the **2009 Year of Friendship between Danube countries and Japan**. The travelling exhibition visited the cities of Nagoya, Sano, Munakata and finally Yamagata, where they were displayed at the Festival of the Danube Countries. 2008 Art Master works were also on show at the opening of a Centre for the Conservation of Wetlands in Dragoman, near **Sofia**, on Danube Day. The new wetlands centre is initiative of the Balkani Wildlife Society, supported by the DEF.

In addition, the sound of ship horns reverberated across Bulgaria and the Danube Basin at 15:00 on Danube Day, as Danube workers paid a very special tribute to their river. The annual **Greet the Danube horn blast**, organised by the Global Water Partnership (GWP), saw ships along the Danube from Germany to Ukraine simultaneously sound their horns in a Danube salute.

### **Danube Day Partners**

Ministry of Environment and Water; Danube River Basin Directorate of Pleven; DRBD Regional Water Offices located in Sofia, Vidin, Veliko Tarnovo and Vraza; Coca-Cola Hellenic Bulgaria; Bulgarian administrations in Ruse, Vidin and Silistra; Centre for Environmental Information and Education; Coca-Cola Bulgaria; Environmental Partnership Foundation; Danube municipality administrations; District; Eco Community NGO; WWF; Global Water Partnership (GWP); Association IKA; Embassy of Bulgaria in Tokyo; Balkani Wildlife Society; other local NGOs and schools.

## **Shared Waters – Joint Responsibilities**

For general information about the 14-country Danube Day celebrations, view [www.danubeday.org](http://www.danubeday.org) or email the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR): [jasmine.bachmann@unvienna.org](mailto:jasmine.bachmann@unvienna.org).