



Danube Day 2009 in Ukraine

The Danube and its younger sister, the Tisza, celebrate in style

Festivities spread from the west to the south of the country; from close to the origins of the mighty Tisza River to the end of the even mightier Danube.

The Tisza and the village of Dilove in Zakarpattya Oblast formed the backdrop for the biggest ever Danube Day in **western Ukraine**, where a **Tisza children's festival** took place. Attended by officials and hundreds of children, the day included a traditional song writing festival, eco-fashion show, the Danube Art Master contest, river quizzes and a race to collect up discarded plastic bottles. Despite baking heat and sudden downpours, the packed audience stayed to the very end, protected somewhat by their "I Love Danube" baseball caps! Tisza children were joined by youngsters from the Prut and Siret basins. The day culminated with the cutting and eating of a huge Danube cake. Organisers noted an increased awareness and knowledge of the Danube Basin among young people at this year's event. In fact the day proved so successful that organisers plan to tour a presentation in Zakarpattya schools. Organisers commented that "All Ukraine was watching or reading about this event!"

Teams of young people from Rakhivsky, Tyachevsky and Beregovsky regions worked hard in the run-up to Danube Day, carrying out conservation works which they then presented at the Dilove celebration. As part of their river clean-up actions, inventive youngsters turned the collected rubbish into remarkably stunning outfits which they proudly modelled at the **eco-fashion show**.

The final stages of the 2009 **Danube Art Master competition in western Ukraine** also took place. 15 year-old Vasyl Vataman, from Rakhiv county, impressed the judges greatly with his artwork entitled "Water gives life", a working model of his home village with streams flowing into the Tisza. Vasyl described his hopes for his village: that it be protected from floods but enjoy sufficient drinking water. Beating 5000 other entries, Vasyl went on to be crowned International Danube Art Master for the entire Danube region at an awards ceremony in Budapest.

In the **Lower Danube** region of Ukraine, the main event was organised by MAMA-86 and four other environmental NGOs. The day saw 140 participants from NGOs from Ukraine and Moldova, national experts, local authority officers, journalists and young people take part in a marathon **Izmail-Reni-Giurgiulesti-Izmail boat tour**. A frank discussion about the development of a National Danube Action Plan took place with business stakeholders, along with a press

conference and folk concert. A wreath was laid on the water to symbolize the unity of the Danube region. The trip also saw the culmination of two youth competitions. Izmail Youth Club and the Dobra Volya NGO held an **“I Love Danube” environmental grants competition** where a project to study Swan Lake scooped the top prize. The crowning of this year’s **Art Master for the Lower Danube** region also took place: 16 year-old Antonina Talko won for her sculpture “Danube - powerful song of the European countries” depicting a vase filled with garlands in the colours of all the Danube countries.

Youth events in the Lower Danube area involved more than 300 children in actions led by Danube Clubs in Izmail and Vylkove. At the Danube’s 0km, teams of children and adults carried out **rubbish collections**, putting a stop to plastic bottles and tin cans on their international tour of the Danube. Young people from Kyiv, Odessa, Vylkove and Kiliya also took part in camping expeditions.

The sound of ship horns reverberated across the Danube Basin at 14:00 (CEST) on Danube Day as Danube workers paid a very special tribute to their rivers. The annual **Greet the Danube ship blast** saw ships along the Danube rivers from Germany to Ukraine simultaneously sound their horns in a salute to the rivers.

“In such moments, I felt we are doing something really useful in our lives.”

Organiser of Danube Day in western Ukraine

Danube Day Partners:

Tisza region: Ministry of Environmental Protection of Ukraine; Zakarpattya Water Management Board of the State Water Committee; Zakarpattya Branch of the All-Ukrainian Ecological League; ICPDR Tisza Working Group; Rakhiv local authority; The Western Centre of the Ukrainian Branch of the World Laboratory; Eurocar.

Danube region: State Committee for Water Management; Izmail local authority; Odessa oblast Department for Environmental Protection; Danube Basin Department for Water Management; MAMA-86 environmental NGO; Coca-Cola Beverages Ukraine; Black Sea Department of the Ukrainian Ecological Academy; Dobra Volya (south Ukrainian NGO); Balatska Tetyana Danube Youth Club in Vylkove; Ecological Association of c. Renee; Renee local authority; Oblast Centre for National Cultures in Renee; Institute of Economic - Environmental Research (National Academy of Sciences); GWP Ukraine; Danube Biosphere Reserve (National Academy of Sciences); WWF Danube-Carpathian Programme; Balkan Environmental Association; Danube Hydrometeorological Observatory.

Shared Waters – Joint Responsibilities

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 (ICPDR): jasmine.bachmann@unvienna.org.