

## **Ukrainian Teenager Wins International Danube Art Master Competition**

VIENNA, 29 September (UN Information Service) – A young artist from Ukraine has won the International Danube Art Master 2009 Competition, the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) announced today.

The winning submission was created by 15 year-old Vasyl Vataman, with the artwork entitled “Water Gives Life”, which can be viewed at the following link: <http://www.icpdr.org/icpdr-pages/dam2009.htm>. The work, a miniaturist recreation of the Danube ecosystem, presents the strip of the Danube that is familiar to the artist: his village cut in half by the river with its particular features like a wooden bridge, fountain, a small house and roads.

The International Master is selected from the winners of the national Danube Art Master competitions among children, young people and schools in the 13 Danube Basin countries Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine. Over 5,000 applications were submitted.

“This competition transcends national borders, emphasizing the complexity of the Danube and its connections to land, animals, forests and people,” said Philip Weller, Executive Secretary of the ICPDR.

Participants were encouraged to visit local rivers and surrounding areas and consider what the environment means to them. They were then asked to reflect their thoughts and aspirations through environmental art using materials from in and around the river.

Other prize-winning submissions at the national level included works such as “From the Black Forest to the Black Sea” by an artist from Serbia, depicting the entire flow of the Danube using blue-painted rice, and “Danube Way of Peace” from Austria.

The competition was jointly organized by the ICPDR and the Danube Environmental Forum (DEF), the largest network of environmental NGOs in the Danube Basin.

The award ceremony held in Budapest, Hungary, was attended by the national Danube Art Master winners from all Danube countries. After the ceremony, the winners joined a three-day environmental programme, supported by Coca-Cola, which included a trip to the Danube Bend, a visit of the Danube Museum in Esztergom and a visit to Budapest Zoo.

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