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## **Slovakia Wins International Danube Art Master Competition**

VIENNA, 13 October (UN Information Service) -- Two Slovak children have won the 'International Danube Art Master 2008' competition, announced Philip Weller, Executive Secretary of the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) on October 11. Mr. Weller made the announcement in Vienna at the Schönbrunn Marionettentheater (Puppet Theatre).

The winning submission was created by Tomas Spusta and Martin Kratochvíl. Their artistic sculpture depicts a majestic duck watching over the Danube River, creatively made from local natural materials such as wood and grass.

The International Master is selected from the winners of the national 'Danube Art Master' competitions in 14 Danube Basin countries including Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Montenegro, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine. All children and schools from these 14 countries were invited to apply. Some 4,000 applications were submitted.

The "International Danube Art Master 2008" competition was announced in the spring of 2008. The competition is a key element of Danube Day 2008, emphasizing the complexity of Danube rivers and their connection to land, animals, forests and people.

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

Other examples of prize-winning submissions at the national level included Moldova's "Danube Lives Through Us" sculpture, where an intravenous connects a person to a jar of river water, and Germany's "Mermaid" sculpture.

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

"We believe that this competition encourages children to learn more about the Danube and help protect it," said ICPDR Executive Secretary Philip Weller. "It is also an artistic reminder for adults and the representatives of Danube national governments of their joint responsibility to ensure that the Danube is protected for future generations."

The award ceremony in Vienna was attended by the national Danube Art Master winners (and their accompanying persons). After the ceremony, the winners joined a three-day environmental programme, supported by Coca-Cola and organized by the Global Water Partnership Hungary, which included trips around Vienna, the Schönbrunn Palace and Zoo and the Natural History Museum.

### **International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR)**

*The International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) is an international organization consisting of 13 cooperating states and the European Union. Since its establishment in 1998, the ICPDR has grown into one of the largest and most active international bodies of river basin management expert in Europe. ICPDR deals not only with the Danube itself, but also with the whole Danube River Basin, which includes also its tributaries and the ground water resources.*

*The ultimate goal of the ICPDR is to implement the Danube River Protection Convention (DRPC) and make it a living tool. Its ambitious mission is to promote and coordinate sustainable and equitable water management, including conservation, improvement and rational use of waters for the benefit of the Danube River Basin countries and their people. The ICPDR pursues its mission by making recommendations for the improvement of water quality, developing mechanisms for flood and accident control, agreeing standards for emissions and by assuring that these are reflected in the Contracting Parties' national legislations and applied in their policies.*

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