

Danube Day 2014 in Moldova

Danube connections – celebrating the past and looking to the future

Where the Danube and Prut rivers meet, the village of Giurgiulesti in Cahul was the location for Moldova's Danube Day.

700 national and local government officials, NGO representatives and local people gathered for a **day of festivities**, speeches and Danube solidarity. Opened by Environment Minister Valentina Tapes, officials demonstrated how drinking water is tested and spoke about the Danube's importance to Moldova and Europe. The event was a cooperation between the Environment Ministry, Cahul District authorities, Giurgiulesti village, Cahul Centre for Ecological Consultation, Global Water Partnership Moldova and local NGOs.

"The Danube is one of the many threads that connect us with Europe. This, the second largest river on the continent, provides opportunities for support. The European Danube Strategy is a chance for our country." Stefan Chitoroagă, Director of Moldsilva State Forestry Agency.

Age-old traditions were celebrated through music, dance, food and wine. Children from villages along the Lower Prut presented images showing the beauty and diversity of the Lower Prut meadows in a photography competition; others tested their river knowledge in a Danube quiz.

"Via the waves of the Danube, European values reach Moldova and bring the European spirit to our country and society".
Dumitru Drumea, GWP Moldova.

Further evidence of the value young people place on their rivers came from the **Danube Art Master schools competition**, which challenges every pupil in the Basin to create a piece of artwork inspired by their river. This year, the International Danube Art Master crown went to Moldova for the first time! Elena Gorobeț from Elizaveta impressed with her creativity and the environmental message underlying her work. On first glance, the natural elegance of her bird sculpture stands out; but take a second look to see a more alarming message: the body made from a dumped beer bottle.

Through my artwork, I tried to represent the undeniable splendour of water and nature in general... The idea... appeared instantly because water is life. Therefore it must be protected by all its 'friends' and 'members'. Elena Gorobeț, International Danube Art Master of 2014.

To qualify for the international Global Water Partnership-ICPDR final, Elena had first to win the national round of the contest, which was organised by the Ecological Movement of Moldova. To view the wealth of creativity inspired by rivers across the Danube Basin, see Facebook and Flickr.

Danube Day Partners

Ministry of Environment; Cahul District authorities; Cahul Environmental Inspectorate; Centre for Ecological Consultation, Cahul; Global Water Partnership Moldova; Ecological Movement of Moldova; Magistrate's Office and community of Giurgiulesti; Naturton Foundation, Germany; Moldsilva State Forestry Agency; local NGOs and schools.

Danube Day 2014: Get active for a living Danube!

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): benedikt.mandl@unvienna.org.