

Danube Day 2013 in Bulgaria

Active for the rivers across northern Bulgaria - from Vidin to Silista!



Danube Day flowed across northern Bulgaria from Vidin in the west to Silistra in the east. Many of this year's events focussed on the Arts: Danube spirits were enlivened through performance, traditional and modern, and artistic endeavour.

Danube solidarity was celebrated through music, dance and sport in **Blue Danube Week in Vidin**. The city's brass band heralded the start of the international festival. Highlights included a 'Dancing on the Danube' festival; a Danube-adapted production of Carmen and the July Morning celebration (Джулай Морнинг). Blue Danube Week is an initiative of the Danube Competence Centre working with city/municipality authorities in Bulgaria, Romania and Serbia.

Flowing east to the village of **Baykal in Dolna Mitropoliya**, residents and DRBD staff continued an age-old Danube ceremony. Tossing a wreath into the fast-flowing waters has been carried out in the village for as long as anyone can remember, nowadays it signifies a positive future for the rivers. A great feast organised by the River Eco Club brought everyone together in tribute. Artistic, musical and environmental workshops were enjoyed by many. Students and teachers from across Dolna Mitropoliya municipality had the chance to analyse water samples in a mobile lab. Each group returned home with a sampling set so everyone in their school can learn about the importance of a clean Danube.

Just south to **Pleven**, the 29th of June saw the culmination of the Danube River Basin Directorate's (DRBD) **Design-a-Logo competition** with an award ceremony and celebration. 24-year-old winner, Alexandrina Tozeva of Ruse, was awarded a lap-top for his wave inspired logo. The preceding day saw Pleven and Vratsa DRBD staff participate in a Regional Information Centre **workshop on Structural and Cohesion Funds** for European regional development.

Back down the river to Nikopol, pupils from across the municipality took part in **Nikopol's annual celebration**. Among the highlights was the dance of the apprentice sailors – infants in sailor outfits charmed everyone with their performance. Face-painting, pavement drawing, paper basket workshops and a shoal of sturgeons crafted out of plastic cartons brought smiles to everyone's faces.

Further downstream, **Svishtov** hosted a meeting on emergency **joint risk monitoring** in the Bulgarian-Romanian border region.

Svishtov resident, 16-year-old Gergiev Yassen, won this year's coveted **Danube Art Master** crown. The annual schools competition produced fishes galore as part of the 2013 'Get Active for the Sturgeon' theme. Children avidly collected driftwood, pebbles, shells, flowers and leaves along rivers to produce artworks in a riot of colour. Gergiev's land art highlighted the pressure sturgeons are under today, entitled 'And there were sturgeons...'. Progressing from this national round organised by the Centre for Environmental Information and Education, Gergiev will travel to Budapest for the international final.

Further east to **Ruse**, the Municipality Association for Tourism Development invited water fans to get into their boat, canoe or kayak for a 40km **Danube Water Marathon**. A fish BBQ and camp fire rejuvenated weary travellers and the city orchestra entertained into the evening.

In **Silistra**, 6-person teams battled it out on a 1km river race in their annual **Danube Day regatta**. Local NGO Danube Club and Silistra municipality weren't content with just one regatta this year: events spread across 26-29th June, including youth contests and a Feast of the Danube.

Danube Day Partners

Danube River Basin Directorate (DRBD) Pleven; DRBD Vratsa; Danube Competence Centre; Mayors and municipality/district/village administrations in the Danube region including Baykal, Dolna Mitropoliya, Vidin, Nikopol, Ruse and Silistra; Municipality Association for Tourism Development; Progress National Cultural Centre (Nikopol); Centre for Environmental Information and Education (CEIE); River Eco Club (Baykal); Danube Club NGO (Silistra); Regional Information Centre (Vidin) and local NGOs and schools.

Danube Day 2013: Get active for the sturgeon!

For more 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