

Danube Day 2013 in Serbia



Get active for the sturgeons!

Serbia's Danube Day lasted all summer-long. Festivities began on June 1st in five cities on Sava Day. By October, 350 organisations in 28 towns had marked the day with over 130 actions.

The highlight was **Danube Day in Belgrade**. The fun began at **Zemun Quay**, where the Danube came to the streets, and then moved onto **Ada Huja Natural Park**, an oasis in the city being revitalised as part of Danube Day actions. Festival-goers were treated to great music and dance, children's theatre, eco activities, hands-on science, drama workshops and river quizzes. A popular activity, and new for 2013, was boat painting. Groups were presented with large, whitewashed wooden boats, paint-brushes and tins of brightly coloured paint. The resulting riot of colour saw boats adorned with hearts, fish, flowers and riverside scenes. The event was led by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry & Water Management & Coca-Cola System, with numerous partners e.g. WWF.

The event marked the finale of Serbia's search for its **Danube Art Master**, part of a 14-country art extravaganza that invites children to create 3D art illustrating what their river means to them. Entrants demonstrated their environmental understanding. Artworks portrayed positive aspects, with Jovana Kодиć and Martina Stanojević winning for their thought-provoking installation: 'Pure Drops: Salvation for the Danube Fish'. Featuring a mermaid and strips of blue ribbon floating in the river, Jovana and Martina will take their artwork onto Budapest for the international final. Organised nationally by the Young Researchers of Serbia, the international stage is run by Global Water Partnership (GWP).

Other highlights included a **River Sava ships pageant**, a regatta and a **Sava-Danube cruise in Belgrade** involving senior officials and Head of the EU Delegation in Serbia, Vincent Deger. Raising awareness, the **7th Danube Eco Camp on Great War Island** gave environmental studies' students the chance to work on practical water conservation issues.

Outside of the capital, events took place in 27 locations. Throughout the **Danube municipalities**, Danube Day was celebrated with festivals, conservation tasks, river adventures and competitions.

Backi Monoštor's Danube Regenerate Festival in north Serbia was a big incentive to get active for the Danube. Teenagers from Sombor, Subotica, Novi Sad, Zrenjanin, Belgrade, Osijek, Zagreb and beyond congregated to hear great music and participate in eco workshops. WWF hosted a 'Water Maze' exhibition and workshop, highlighting the proposed 5-country Mura-Drava-Danube Biosphere Reserve.

More than 2000 visitors marked the day in the village of **Srem Banoštor** with fish soup, Danube music and dance, fishing, football, horse riding and doughnuts: local women prepared 1000 cakes for the locals and visitors from Belgrade, Novi Sad, Sremska Mitrovica, Zrenjanin and Kikinda. The fish soup competition was a serious business and the Tambura orchestra provided musical accompaniment throughout.

“Without the Danube in Banoštor... we cannot imagine life here... The truth is, for us, the river means life... That's why we celebrate.” Radivoj Rakic, Banoštor Mayor

Danube solidarity was celebrated through the arts and sport in the **3rd Blue Danube Week**, taking place in Donjii Milanovac, Kladovo and Negotin, as well as cities in Romania and Bulgaria. Highlights included a festival of children and youth songs, children's workshops and classical concerts. Blue Danube Week is an initiative of the Danube Competence Centre working with city/municipality authorities.

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.