

DANUBE WATCH

THE MAGAZINE OF THE DANUBE RIVER • WWW.ICPDR.ORG

2/2017



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ICPDR **IKSD**

International Commission
for the Protection
of the Danube River

Internationale Kommission
zum Schutz der Donau

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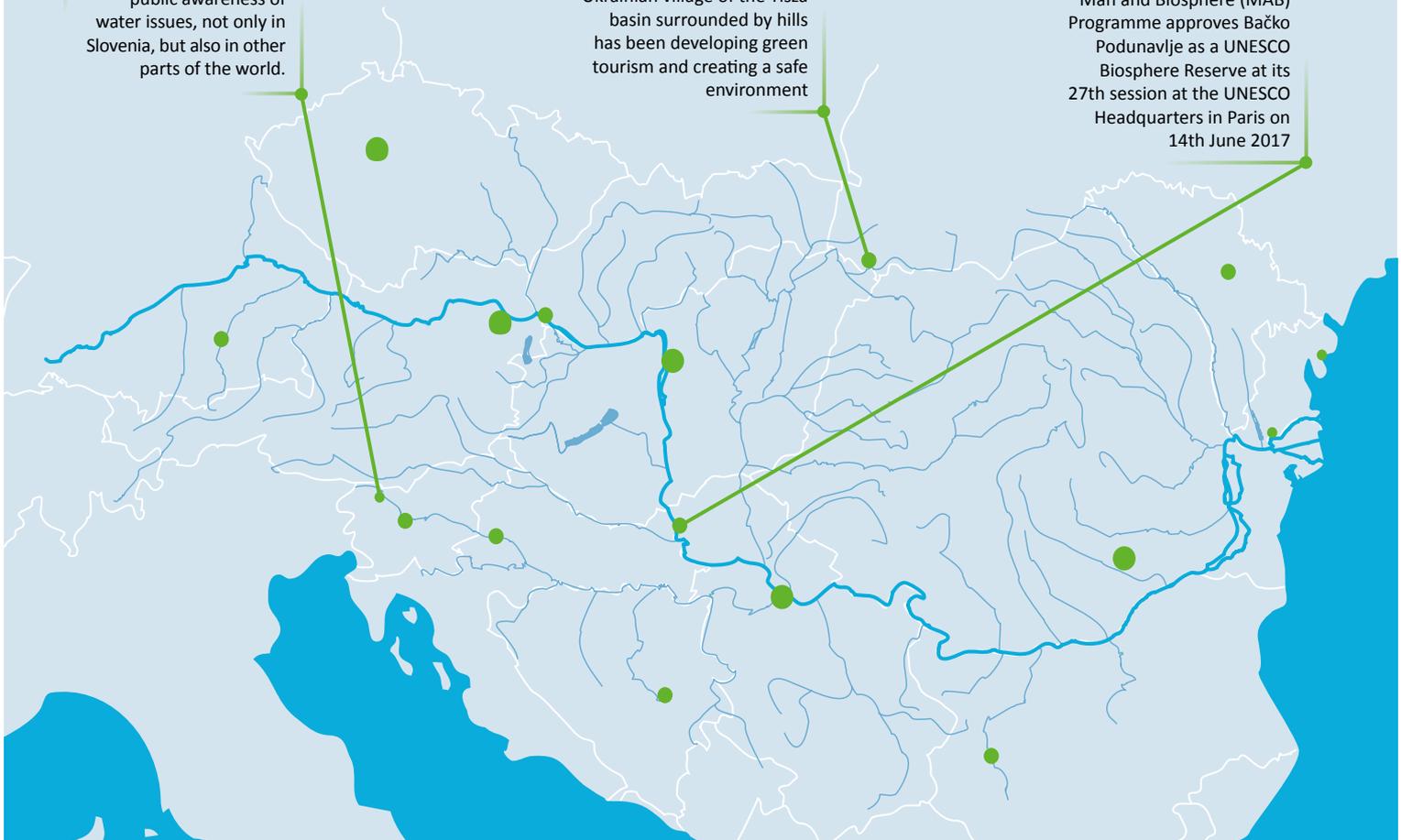
A Water Festival raises public awareness of water issues, not only in Slovenia, but also in other parts of the world.

Kvasovo, Ukraine 18

Under the lead of Mayor Vasyl Gubal, a small Ukrainian village of the Tisza basin surrounded by hills has been developing green tourism and creating a safe environment

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The International Coordination Council of UNESCO's Man and Biosphere (MAB) Programme approves Bačko Podunavlje as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve at its 27th session at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris on 14th June 2017





Dear readers,

Every year on 29th June, the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR), along with 14 European countries, celebrates the anniversary of the signing of the Danube River Protection Declaration. Danube Day 2017 was successfully organized for the fourteenth time this year and, as always, was a huge success. This was mainly due to the excellent participation of both the public and the media. The celebrations paid tribute to the river's vital role and also raised awareness of water pollution and how it can be avoided.

This year's motto was "Get active for a cleaner Danube" and thousands of motivated children from all over Europe joined in to participate in exciting projects, learn about the Danube, its inhabitants and its flora and fauna, and how to acquire the skills necessary to help preserve clean water.

In Europe, 20 Million people depend directly on the Danube for their water supply, and Danube Day therefore aims to inspire children and teenagers living in the Danube Basin to be more aware of their environment and to motivate them to engage in projects to protect the river. Danube Day highlights the importance of looking after the

Danube and its tributaries. Moreover, its objective is to show what can be achieved by not only working together and celebrating successful projects from the past, but also by creating new ones for the future of our Danube.

Danube Day is the biggest water-festival in the world and some countries have joint celebrations to show that they are co-operating with one another in matters concerning the Danube such as conservation and protection. Together with the ICPDR, these countries are striving to ensure sustainable water management, conservation and the rational use of ground and surface water, control of pollution and the prevention of major catastrophes caused by water. I would especially like to thank the people behind Danube Day celebrations in all the countries involved – they do a great job year after year and I would like to turn your attention to this special issue of Danube Watch covering the highlights of Danube Day 2017!

www.danubeday.org

Susanne Brandstetter is public relations manager for water at the Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management and Chairperson of the ICPDR's Public Participation Expert Group

ICPDR IKSD

International Commission
for the Protection
of the Danube River

Internationale Kommission
zum Schutz der Donau

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Danube Day; children getting active for a cleaner river



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Danube Watch is the official magazine of ICPDR, the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River. Danube Watch enhances regional cooperation and information sharing on sustainable water management and environmental protection in the Danube River Basin. It reports on current issues affecting the Danube Basin, and on action taken to deal with challenges in the river basin. Striving for scientific accuracy while remaining concise, clear and readable, it is produced for the wide range of people who are actively involved in the Danube River Basin and are working to improve its environment.

The ICPDR accepts no responsibility or liability whatsoever with regard to information or opinions of the authors of the articles in this issue.

News & Events

2016 Danube Declaration accessible to a broader public

On 9th February 2016 in Vienna, the ICPDR convened its third Ministerial Meeting of Ministers and high-level representatives responsible for water management from the 14 Danube River Basin countries as well as the European Commission. This Ministerial Meeting endorsed two important plans for the Danube: the Danube River Basin District Management Plan Update 2015 and the Flood Risk Management Plan. The meeting also adopted the 2016 Danube Declaration, which shows the highest level of commitment for the ICPDR concerning its future work of addressing the joint challenges facing the Danube Basin. The 2016 Danube Declaration, the outcome of the Ministerial Meeting, is an important document, which deserves to be brought to the attention of the public. One of the first steps towards increased recognition was the slogan for the 2017 Danube Day: “Get active for a cleaner Danube”, based on one of the three pillars of the declaration, which outlines the path towards a cleaner, healthier and safer Danube River by 2021. As a second step, a two-page summary is now available for all interested parties.



For more information, visit:
https://www.icpdr.org/main/sites/default/files/nodes/documents/summary_danube_declaration2016.pdf



15th Standing Working Group Meeting of the ICPDR in Brussels



For more information, visit:
<http://icpdr.org/main/15th-standing-working-group-meeting-icpdr-congregates-brussels>

On 8-9th June 2017, the ICPDR held the 15th Standing Working Group Meeting in Brussels. Key issues were discussed over the two-day meeting, ranging from expert group reports to new projects and initiatives, the preparation of the 4th edition of the Joint Danube Survey and visibility measures including a short version of the Danube Declaration. The European Union holds the 2017 Presidency of the ICPDR and President Gammeltoft chaired the meeting, which was held in the prestigious chamber where the European Commission regularly meets. Peter Gammeltoft also used the opportunity to reaffirm the priorities of the EU Presidency of the ICPDR. These priorities also include the development of ICPDR Guidance on Sustainable Agriculture and the pilot activities of the Mixed Environment Transport External Expert Team (METEET). The Directorate General for Environment (DG ENV) of the EU organised a Technical Assistance and Information Exchange (TAIEX) workshop to inform the countries about EU funding opportunities. The focussed and lively discussions that this workshop stimulated demonstrated once again how well cooperation mechanisms within the ICPDR work between its contracting parties.

Neptune Water Award 2017



The Neptune Water Award (Neptune Wasserpreis), focussing on water and ecology, is the Austrian Ecology and Innovation Award. Launched in 1999, it is awarded every two years and was established to illustrate the importance of water as a resource for life, the environment, business, art and society. The initiative is sponsored by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management (BMLFUW), the Austrian Federal Ministry for Science, Research and Economics (BMWFW), the Austrian Association for the Gas and Water Industry (ÖGW) and the Austrian Water and Waste Management Association (ÖWAV). The main award for 2017 went to the project Social Pool.

For more information, visit:
<http://www.wasserpreis.info/>



Danube Water Conference: ICPDR invited to share technical expertise

On 17-18th May 2017, the annual Danube Water Conference, jointly organised by the International Association of Water Supply Companies in the Danube River Catchment Area (IAWD) and the World Bank within the scope of the Danube Water Program (DWP), served as an international platform for dialogue between countries and people from different sectors involved in the delivery of water services. Key sector representatives from entities including national utility associations, the regional network of associations of local authorities, water and wastewater utilities, line ministries, regulatory authorities, the donor community and other international stakeholders met in Vienna to discuss progress made and the challenges that lie ahead for the water supply and sanitation sector in the Danube region. The ICPDR President 2017, Peter Gammeltoft took part in a panel discussion with Guang Zhe Chen, Senior Director of the World Bank's Water Global Practice and shared interesting insights into funding sources needed to close the financial gap and achieve sustainable development goals (SDGs) for water and understand how the ICPDR, as Keeper of the Danube, addresses challenges in the basin.



For more information, visit:
<http://www.iawd.at/>

Over 350 Volunteers spend more than 1,000 working hours for the Danube Dry Habitat Corridor!



Facing the long-term effects of climate change, dry habitats are becoming more and more relevant for ecological connectivity. To tackle this issue, the Danube River Network of Protected Areas launched the first Danube Volunteers Day on 24th August. Fourteen events in nearly all Danube countries mobilised more than 350 volunteers to spend over 1,000 working hours at endangered dry habitat sites including dry meadows, steppic grasslands and "Heissland".

Youth and school groups, local NGO's, municipalities, the secretariat of the Danube Transnational Programme and various other stakeholders removed bushes, mowed steep slopes and restored sites for endangered species.

As part of the project DANUBEPARKS, Danube Protected Areas is striving to preserve the most valuable natural sites. Since January 2017, the project DANUBEPARKS CONNECTED, funded by the Interreg Danube Transnational Programme, has been working to strengthen habitat connectivity on a Danube-wide scale. In 2018, the second Danube Volunteers Day will focus on dynamic river habitats. Join us!

For more information, visit:
www.danubeparks.org





Summer School

Water in the sustainable development – current challenges and opportunities

Summer School Water in the sustainable development – current challenges and opportunities took place between 9-16th July 2017 at the Warsaw University of Life Sciences in Poland.

Alongside the GWP's strategic goals for catalysing change and strengthening partnerships, sharing knowledge and developing capacity to share knowledge are also equally important. The GWP CEE recognises the need for a better understanding of multi-disciplinary aspects of water governance – such as legal issues, a participatory approach, and conflict resolution techniques – and has designed this summer school to enhance the skills of students currently enrolled in different water related MSc and PhD programmes from universities throughout Europe.

The Summer School was attended by 23 MSc and PhD students from Ukraine, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Montenegro, Albania, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Austria, Germany, and

Water management education nowadays needs a better understanding of the multi-disciplinary aspects of water governance. The Summer School is therefore a great opportunity for MSc and PhD students to learn more about the current topics in the water sector: Integrated Water Resources Management, Nexus, Green Economy, Integrated Urban Water Management, and Water Security and Climate Resilience.

Mongolia with a background ranging from natural sciences, geography and engineering, to landscape ecology and law.



Gergana Majercakova is Communications Officer at Global Water Partnership Central and Eastern Europe (GWP). She is responsible for strategic communications planning, knowledge dissemination and outreach



The Summer School focused on the following themes:

- Integrated water Resource Management (IWRM) – water governance (law, policy), water and environmental economics, IWRM and sectoral planning, including concrete case studies on the application of IWRM tools (economic tools, stakeholder involvement, institutional roles, and water legislation reforms)
- innovations – technical and non-technical solutions in both urban and rural settings
- climate change – policy responses, floods and drought adaptation, with the focus on Central and Eastern Europe
- social aspects – the importance of communication, public participation and stakeholder involvement
- youth involvement in the water sector and inclusion in decision-making processes.

A mixture of academic professors, practitioners and representatives from world organisations proved to be an excellent combination for providing the participants with both theoretical and practical knowledge and enhancing the skills of this new generation of water managers.

The summer school also provided an open platform for participants from different universities to share experiences and exchange cooperation ideas related to their different fields of water studies. The IWRM concept, innovative water solutions and climate resilience were among the most discussed issues, along with youth participation and inclusion in decision-making processes. Exploring these current challenges from global, regional and local perspectives brought additional value to the experience, thereby enhancing the skills of these future decision-makers.



This year's summer school was organised by the Global Water Partnership Central and Eastern Europe (GWP CEE) in cooperation with the Global Water Partnership – Mediterranean (GWP-MED).

The school was supported by the UNESCO World Water Assessment Programme and Youth for Water and Climate initiative, under the patronage of the UNESCO Chairs on Sustainable Development and Ecological Awareness and the Sustainable Development Management and Education in the Mediterranean established by the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece. The Technical University in Zvolen, Slovakia also played an active supporting role.

Danube Day

Reflecting on the development of the world's largest river event



An interview with Maria M. Galambos, Chief Adviser, Department for International Relations at the Ministry of Agriculture in Hungary

“ Danube Watch: *You've been involved in Danube Day for a considerable amount of time now, how have you seen the event change over the years?*

I've actually been involved in Danube co-operation projects since the mid-80s and played an active role in the development of the Danube Protection Convention as well as the founding of the annual Danube Day to celebrate the anniversary of its signing. To witness the evolution of cooperation and be an active player in this important process has been an enriching experience. I've also been involved in the organising of Danube Day in my country Hungary from the very beginning.

Launching Danube Day was a significant step towards the development of important information dissemination and awareness-raising activities. These are the essential ingredients for building a true alliance in the Danube Basin and even beyond. These are fundamental in achieving the objectives of the Convention and the ICPDR. This event aims to mobilise not only stakeholders, but society as a whole. Getting only governmental players to participate would mean limiting the scope of the event to just the water and environment portfolio, which would clearly be inadequate.

To achieve this we needed the support of the public to show everyone in the basin what their respective governments were doing and what intergovernmental efforts meant. It was also necessary to raise awareness of the basin, of the role, responsibilities and opportunities of everyone in the international effort to keep our Danube clean, healthy and safe.

Different scale, different format, same message of getting active... for the river

Nowadays, the scale of the event is bigger. With events organised in 14 countries, it is the largest river event in the world, the geographical coverage is wider and sub-basin levels are better involved. Its character has also changed slightly, although it does differ from country to country. Within and even beyond the centrally designed elements of a Danube Day, each country has the liberty to tailor its event to its national needs and circumstances by trying to convey messages and involving as many people as possible. Danube Days are therefore very diverse these days. They can also be a series of events that don't solely concentrate on just one day (29th June) in order to appeal to more people.

After establishing the legal, institutional and technical basis for the intergovernmental framework for cooperation in the Danube Basin, it became clear that it is necessary for partners to also be involved in achieving our goals and achieving a real improvement in the quality of water. One result of this change in thinking led to the establishment of Danube Day on the tenth anniversary of the Danube Protection Convention.

ube Days in the countries and reach out to people at a national level. After all, national level activities are the basis for international results and ICPDR success. It can be particularly useful to demonstrate international cooperation with the involvement of neighbouring countries.

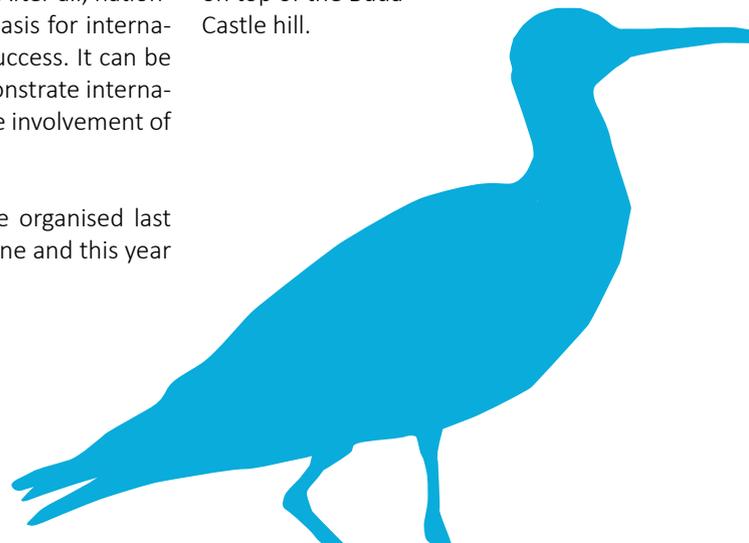
Joint events such as those organised last year by Hungary and Ukraine and this year



© Pelsőczy Csaba

with Hungary and Croatia have proved to be extremely popular and clearly demonstrate the interdependence, essence and necessity of cooperation. ICPDR presidency and/or Secretariat participation provides added value to such events. They also have a mobilising effect on local communities.

In the early years the slogans for Danube Days drew attention to the water and its related ecosystems, and also focused on the relationship of water and other spheres of life ('Water and Culture' or 'River of Life' for example). One of my best memories from the early years was cooperation with the cultural sector; it was very touching to see the Danube Day logo on top of the building of the Hungarian National Gallery on top of the Buda Castle hill.



Today, slogans are designed to involve people with regard to all aspects of the river. This year, the motto was “Get active for a cleaner Danube”, conveying the message of public participation.

Danube Days are also a successful tool for promoting other public relation activities and ICPDR “products” such as the Danube Box, an education toolkit available in several languages and country versions to assist teachers in bringing the Danube closer to the minds of future generations.

Danube Watch: *What are some of the biggest challenges in raising awareness at a regional level, especially in more remote areas? How would you try and mitigate these challenges?*

A great deal depends on the enthusiasm of individuals. My experience is that from the very beginning we realised that some awareness-raising was necessary to emphasise the fact that Danube Day is not only about the river itself, but also its tributaries. Danube Day is not just for stakeholders from businesses and institutions operating on the river, it’s for all the citizens of all communities.

A global yet local event with slogans translated into local languages

It is important that information materials are available in national languages not only in English. From this point of view it has been a nice recent development that the ICPDR is now developing and producing Danube Day posters and other related leaflets which are downloadable from the website (www.danubeday.org) in various formats. For national outreach, national language materials are essential and the present practice of the public participation expert group is therefore most welcome.

Danube Watch: *A significant aspect of Danube Day is its youth outreach. What are the hopes for children and their future engagement with the Danube River? Is it merely ‘information distribution’ or are there expectations for a more active role?*

This is my favourite issue and I can only emphasise that youth outreach is crucial. My short answer to this question would be: “it’s obvious that children are very open and their interest can be stimulated with regard to meaningful things in a number of different ways!” This also applies to the river and water issues in general, we just need to present them in a creative way. We realise this when talking to young people at Danube Day events, at the competitions organised for them, and during the interactive opportunities on offer to them.

Getting the children involved

Every child and young person has to be approached on their own level with the hope that all efforts invested in them will hopefully pay off in the future. Environmentally minded children can and will influence their family traditions. Children have an effect on one another’s behaviour, and starting early is essential if respect for water and the related environment is to become a natural way of life to them.

Danube Watch: *You have a great deal of experience working for the Hungarian Government. How is Danube Day helpful and useful for governments in the Danube region?*

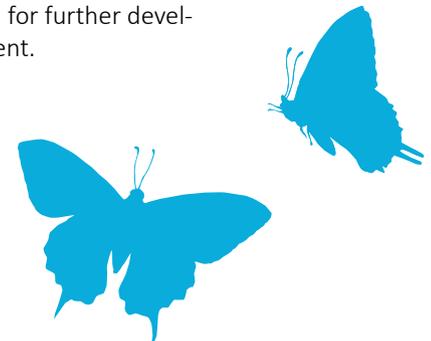
In Hungary, the Ministry of Interior currently holds the main responsibility for water issues in close cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture, which is in charge of environment and nature conservation as well) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade where the EU Danube Region Strategy is managed.

It’s important for governments to inform and involve people, to share information and to involve and get support for their activities from all spheres of society. Occasions such as Danube Day also help to attract media attention to a number of issues. For the ministries this

means a communication opportunity to a wider audience and for local communities a chance to make an impact.

On Danube Day, professionals from different fields can meet, exchange views and even argue with each other. Such festive occasions also allow us to take stock of where we are, what lessons we have learnt and what we should do next. Of course potential can always be explored and there is always room for further development.

—
“A good example of successful private sector contributions is a Hungarian fish breeder who volunteers every year to provide us with small fish to release into the river. This is a very popular part of the children’s Danube Day programme.”
—



DANUBE DAY 2017

Generating an immense response to the rallying cry to "Get active for a cleaner Danube", 550 organisations produced the biggest Danube Day since 2013! This tremendous achievement was inspired by the 2016 Danube Declaration that tasked signatories to make the waters of the basin cleaner, healthier and safer.

The event bounced back after a dip in last year's event numbers. In 13 countries, around 33,000 people joined in 230 events, organised by an established, unique cooperation of government, NGO, science and business sectors. A social media campaign by the EC Directorate General for the Environment resulted in 260,000 people seeing Danube Day messages.

Danube Day is celebrated every year on **29th** June

Since **2004** the event has been known as the "**International Danube Day**"

Danube Day celebrates the signing of the Danube River Protection Convention in **1994**

Danube Day 2017 took place for the **14th** time

550 partner organisations produced the biggest Danube Day since **2013**

Danube Day is celebrated in **14** countries

81 million people celebrate Danube Day

In Vienna alone, a total of **1000** children from **39** different schools got active for a cleaner Danube

230 events took place around Danube Day

5000 visitors monthly on www.danubeday.org between May and September

DANUBE DAY



The Danube connects **19** countries and **83** million people

33,000 people joined in **230** events in **13** countries

The Danube flows through **10** countries and receives water from **9** countries

The Danube has **300** tributaries

75 fish species live in the Danube and the Danube Delta

200 schools took part in the Danube Art Master **2017** competition

Getting the attention

Media is an important partner for publicising Danube Days and raising awareness around the Danube and water issues. Maria M. Galambos comments on her experiences with the media over the years: "Looking back, I have mixed experiences concerning this, particularly with mass media although their attention is increasing. As positive examples: some years we even managed to broadcast a TV spot, advertising the Danube Day and related events in advance. Once there was even a very nice live radio broadcast from our family event but we've never managed to get a whole TV day dedicated to the Danube, although once we were very close to it."

The EU DG-ENV social media activities surrounding Danube Day 2017 received a great deal of attention

260,000 people saw Facebook Danube Day messages on the DG ENV Facebook page **525** shares and **2,400** likes and reactions

On the twitter page of DG ENV, **6** tweets brought **149** retweets and **190** likes

Youth for Water and Climate – the role and potential of youth

In the run up to the Paris Climate Conference (COP 21) in 2015 young people from more than 20 countries decided to start a global initiative by issuing a White Paper. The paper contained over 50 recommendations, based on consultations from more than 20 countries around the world.

What is #YWC?

The White Paper was presented to delegates from several countries during the 11th Conference of Youth (COY 11), just a few days before COP21. The paper focuses on four key areas in which young people feel they can do something to address environmental issues: water and agriculture, water and health, water related risks, and sharing water resources.

ICPDR, along with several other organisations, government officials and the President of COP21, whole-heartedly endorsed this new initiative by signing a Declaration of Support.

Involving young people in youth forums, parliaments and other such innovative activities has always been an integral part of ICPDR's philosophy towards raising awareness for a cleaner and more sustainable Danube. Its delegates were therefore more than happy to pledge support to the aspirations of these young people.

The Global Water Partnership (GWP) then helped to make this new "global partnership for youth" more accessible to other young people by creating a dedicated web portal entitled **Youth for Water and Climate – #YWC**.

Two years on from the conference and a number of lessons have been learned that prove that young people do indeed have a great deal to contribute to the global effort to create a more climate resilient planet. Young people have a greater ability to change things than they are often given credit for and partners at all levels have expressed great enthusiasm for the initiative.

Based on this growing momentum, #YWC's ambition is to further empower young people so that they can fully real-

ise their potential and become leaders in addressing the challenges of sustainable management of water resources and climate change in a changing world.

Objectives

#YWC aims to help and encourage young people to develop viable concepts and proposals for projects that will contribute to achieving the fulfilment of global sustainable development goals (SDGs) and climate agendas. To accomplish this, a three-pillar approach has been adapted. Support will be provided to develop viable project proposals that take into account the challenges faced by young people.

Advice and assistance regarding fundraising and the promotion of projects will also be made available. This will be done by harnessing the resources available from a vast network of global partners, utilising different financial mechanisms, and facilitating the exchange of experiences between young people facing similar issues around the world.

#YWC in the CEE

The Summer School in Warsaw saw the founding of a new European regional YWC community. Inspired by interesting lectures about integrated water management and real-life case studies, young specialists from Central Eastern Europe decided to make the different aspects of their water knowledge more visible. Through the freshly established Youth Water Community for Central and Eastern Europe (YWCCEE), 23 young water specialists from various different backgrounds have come together to focus on water issues covering 13 countries.

Jelena Krstajic, one of the school's participants, speaks enthusiastically about the new initiative: "This has been one of the best networking experiences of my youth career to date. In fact, it was so good that

it resulted in an initiative by all of the school participants to create a new youth network. We have decided to actively encourage and support young people in CEE to become more actively involved in project proposals and their implementation, and also create a visible policy for development."

Jelena was sponsored in her position as an ICPDR intern by GWP CEE to attend the Summer School in Warsaw and explains: "There was a task to set up a project in which young people would take the lead. While setting up the project, the students realised that there is no youth organisation targeting water issues in Central and Eastern Europe, so the idea of YWCCEE was born. Whilst YWC is a global initiative, YWCCEE focuses specifically on this region.

The project has now been submitted for approval and while approval is still pending, interest in it is steadily growing. Called "Fishme, Ishme", the main objective of the project is the removal of plastic waste from the Ishme River in Albania.

YWCCEE has a board made up of regional representatives with three representatives for each region. There are three regions in total and eight of the regional representatives make up the organisational board. This will make tracking of the initiative's developments easier. From the eight representatives, Jelena was chosen to become the first President of YWCCEE. She will hold this post for one year before handing it over to the Vice president who is yet to be elected.



Jelena Krstajic

We invite all young professionals and students to visit our

Facebook page @ www.facebook.com/ywccee/ for more details and contacts, and to join our **#TOGETHER** we can make a difference motto

Jelena Krstajic is a former ICPDR intern and PhD Student in Hydrogeology at the University of Belgrade. She is the first President of YWCCEE

Protecting a shared legacy

The JOINTISZA Project: Strengthening Cooperation between River Basin Management Planning and Flood Risk Prevention to Enhance the Status of the Waters of the Tisza River Basin

The Tisza River Basin countries – Hungary, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, and Ukraine – have a long history of cooperating to protect this important region from the threat of pollution, flooding and droughts. Building on this legacy of cooperation, the JOINTISZA project is bringing together 17 partners from the five countries sharing the waters of the Tisza River Basin, all of whom are keen to work towards developing an updated Integrated Tisza River Basin Management Plan (ITRBMP).

The implementation of the JOINTISZA project will achieve the following outputs:

- an improved geographic information system (GIS)
- guidelines on best management of urban hydrology, and organisation of related training programmes
- a guidance paper on climate change-induced water quantity issues to assist in overcoming challenges
- a final draft of the updated ITRBMP
- a strategy for public involvement and participation.

JOINTISZA, like any basin-wide project, needs to communicate its objectives to a targeted audience. A series of external communication tools and methods are being developed to assist in the dissemination of project messages and ensure that accomplished outputs and results are communicated to all interested parties and stakeholders.

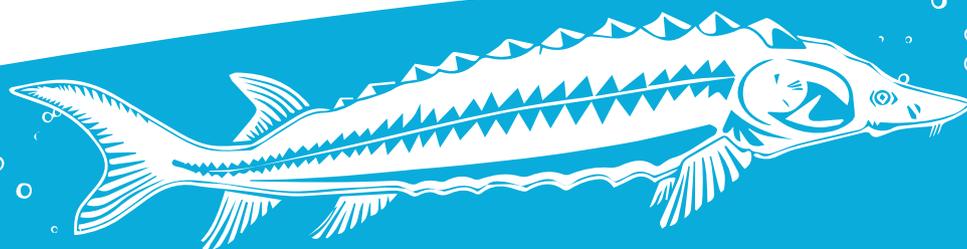
The Tisza River is the longest tributary of the Danube and the largest sub-basin in the Danube Basin, and for this reason, the project joined in this year's Danube Day celebrations. Public involvement and a participation strategy are key assets that will help the JOINTISZA project partners and RBMP planners to carry out a meaningful information, consultation and active involvement process. It will also influence planning and the creation of a supportive social environment for the implementation of the Joint Programme of Measures (JPM).

Imola Koszta is an expert on Water Management at the Regional Environmental Center (REC) and a member of the JOINTISZA project team, responsible for Communication Issues



JOINTISZA will strengthen transnational water management and flood risk prevention. It will also enhance the long-term status of the waters of the Tisza River Basin. Every year, in late spring or early summer, the Tisza bursts into life with millions of mayflies (*Palingenia longicauda*). Known as the Tisza mayfly, or long-tailed mayfly, it is Europe's largest mayfly. The annual appearance of these ephemeral, aquatic insects is an indicator of clean, unpolluted water. We hope that the project activities will contribute to the recurring presence of this unique species, and also ensure good quality water, in sufficient quantities, to improve the livelihoods of the people of the Tisza Rivers Basin through agriculture, forestry, pastures, mining, navigation and energy production.

More information can be found on the project website: www.interreg-danube.eu/jointisza





A Day of Action for the Black Sea

The International Black Sea
Action Day 31st October 2017

Black Sea

The Black Sea is the world's most isolated sea, connected to other oceans via the Mediterranean Sea through the Bosphorus, the Dardanelles and Gibraltar straits, and linked with the Sea of Azov in the northeast through the Kerch Strait. The catchment area of the Black Sea is six times larger than its surface, with the Danube being its main tributary. The Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution (or Black Sea Commission) is responsible for its protection and sustainable management.

© Norman Kuring, NASA's Ocean
Biology Processing Group

International Black Sea Day 2017 commemorates the 21st anniversary of the signing of the first Black Sea Strategic Action Plan (SAP). The BS SAP's objectives are:

- to bring a better future for the 16 million people from six countries resident on the shores of the Black Sea
- to commit the regional governments to undertake serious action in order to make a real difference to the rehabilitation and recovery of the sea
- to celebrate the lifework of the many people who devote their time and energy to help protect the environment

The Black Sea countries, Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, the Russian Federation, Turkey and Ukraine, signed the Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution (Bucharest Convention) on 21st April 1992 and the Black Sea Strategic Action Plan on 31st October 1996.

Although this Action Plan was revised and signed by the ministers of these six countries on 17th April 2009 in Sofia, 31st October has been the date on which the "International Black Sea Day" has been celebrated by the Black Sea countries every year since 1996. This is a regional event

designed to raise public awareness of the need for regional cooperation to protect and conserve the Black Sea, and is celebrated in the six riparian countries simultaneously.

The Black Sea Commission is an intergovernmental organisation responsible for the implementation of the Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution, and sets the legal framework required for regional cooperation and the activities necessary to reduce pollution and enhance the protection of the marine environment. The parties to this Convention, Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, the Russian Federation, Turkey and Ukraine are all represented in the Commission. The Permanent Secretariat of the Black Sea Commission is located in Istanbul, Turkey.

Professor Halil Ibrahim Sur, the Executive Director of the Permanent Secretariat of the Black Sea Commission, states: "the International Black Sea Day is a significant day because it attracts attention to the importance of cooperation required for the protection of the Black Sea. The Black Sea is one of the most important and vulnerable ecosystems in the world, but has also a great economic value for the millions of people living in the six riparian countries.

The Black Sea Commission helps these countries to find joint solutions to tackle both existing and potential problems in order to protect this shared heritage. It is necessary that the countries represented in this Commission shall strive to increase their efforts towards protection and sustainable use of this unique Large Marine Ecosystem."

The Black Sea Commission is the regional governing body created to implement the Bucharest Convention signed by the six coastal countries in 1992. On 31st October 1996, the Black Sea countries also signed the first Black Sea Strategic Action Plan for the Rehabilitation and Protection of the Black Sea, later on amended in Sofia in 2009. This plan defines the policy measures, actions, and activities required to achieve the environmental objectives of the Bucharest Convention. The Black Sea Strategic Action Plan recognises that collective action is required from all Black Sea countries to reduce the impact of pollution on the sea's ecosystems.

Hélène Masliah-Gilkarov is the Technical Expert for Public Participation and Communication in the ICPDR Secretariat, and the Executive Editor of Danube Watch

Link: <http://www.blacksea-commission.org/>

Creating environmental art and getting active for a cleaner Danube!

Pupils from countries all over the Danube Basin compete to become the 2017 Danube Art Master!

Danube Art Master, the 14-country Danube Art Master contest, which challenges children living in the Danube Basin to create sustainable works of art dedicated to their rivers, has returned. The international school competition, created at the initiative of the ICPDR as part of Danube Day, is held annually and chooses one Danube Art Master from among the many contestants from schools all over the Danube River Basin. The competition takes place within the framework of the International Danube Day celebrations. Winners are selected at both national and international levels and are rewarded with great prizes.

This year, children and teens from 12 countries took part in this popular art competition – the Danube Art Master with the Danube Day 2017 motto “Get active for a cleaner Danube!” Kids between six and 18 years of age created artwork using only natural materials taken from a riverbank, ideally the Danube or one of its tributaries.

The 2017 edition of Danube Art Master saw the introduction of a new and spe-

cial category: the contestants could also make short films or videos, conveying the message of a cleaner Danube. European Union and the United Nations Development Programme-Global Environmental Finance (UNDP/GEF) unit. An international jury, composed of national representatives from all ICPDR countries, judged the national winners’ artwork at international level.

The Danube Art Master competition is an excellent opportunity for children to discover the geography, chemistry and ecology of rivers in the field and away from their classrooms. But the

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

cial category: the contestants could also make short films or videos, conveying the message of a cleaner Danube.

The competition was jointly organised by the ICPDR and the Global Water Partnership in Central and Eastern Europe (GWP CEE) in cooperation with the largest network of NGOs in the Danube Basin – the Danube Environment Forum. The project is funded by the Eu-

ropean Union and the United Nations Development Programme-Global Environmental Finance (UNDP/GEF) unit. An international jury, composed of national representatives from all ICPDR countries, judged the national winners’ artwork at international level. The true heart of the competition is to unite children across the entire basin and encourage them to visit their local rivers and reflect on what the Danube’s waters mean to them. Whether created by using reeds, stones, driftwood or simply waste found along the riverbank, the diversity of the art produced illustrates the wealth of the Danube Basin and its unity under the banner: ‘We love the Danube’.



Law and Economics High School from Belgrade, wins trip to Europe with 26 photographs titled “On the beautiful blue Danube”

In October 2016, the Delegation of the European Union to Serbia, announced a competition for high school papers and our high school decided to participate in the category photo-papers and photo-reportage. Our students Sara, Nevena, and Kristina, together with myself, their teacher Daniela Kuzmanović, quickly got down to work, using every possible moment to capture every sunbeam, every wave and every movement of the Danube River.

This resulted in a set of 26 photographs named "On the beautiful blue Danube", which were submitted to the competition. These photos were created with the support of the Law and Economics High School and the Integrated Education System for Social and Natural Sciences. These 26 photos show the Danube pausing for a brief moment in our beautiful city of Belgrade before continuing on its journey to the Black Sea.

Competition was intense, with entries from 164 high schools from all over Serbia. The Commission, which consisted of reputable journalists, professional photographers and experts in education, had an extremely difficult task in choosing the winning entry but, after two months of impatiently waiting and anticipation, the results of the competition finally arrived with the news: "Congratulations, you have won the category for photo papers and photo-reportage."

The prize was a trip to three beautiful European cities – Ljubljana, Vienna and Budapest – from 9th May to 13th May. During our trip to Vienna, we visited the ICPDR Secretariat.

Daniela Kuzmanović has a Master's engineering degree in environmental protection and integrated education. She teaches Ecology at the Law and Economics High School of Belgrade



Sava Youth Parliament 2017

On 2-3 June 2017 the sixth Youth Parliament of the Sava River Basin was held in Belgrade (Serbia). The motto for this year's competition was "The Impact of Climate Change on the Lives of the Sava River Basin". The event was attended by sixty students and teachers from nine secondary schools in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia and Slovenia. The Sava River Basin Commission is an observer of the ICPDR.

The Sava Youth Parliament is a platform that offers young people the perfect opportunity to present environmental works which they submit for the competition. The topics this year were reducing and adapting to climate change, showcasing how young people can change the decision-making process and ways to disseminate the important issues discussed in this year's Parliament. The event was moderated by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), the International Sava River Basin Commission (ISRBC) and young researchers from Serbia.

The lucky participants made a boat trip to an island on the Danube River in Belgrade – the Veliko Ratno Ostrvo – to attend the welcome ceremony and an introduction to all the schools from the participating countries. Students took a walk around the island and learned about invasive alien species in the water, which are becoming more prevalent as a result of climate change.



The basic aim of the Parliament is that the students taking part recognise the importance of sustainable management, exploitation and protection of water resources. They participate in discussions on climate change and its impact on the life in the Sava River Basin.



The following day, a new committee was selected and a new president appointed. The Parliament consists of the president from the host country and a representative from each of the participating countries. The river Sava, which flows through Slovenia, Croatia, along the northern border of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and through Serbia before discharging into the Danube in Belgrade was at the heart of the discussions and highlighted the importance of water as a connector in the Sava River Basin.

For the young participants, the Sava Youth Parliament is an amazing experience, bringing all participating nations together around a common goal: preserving and protecting the Sava River Basin. Only by working together, can we solve the many problems that the world faces.

One winner Tim Kiseljak, a representative of YP from Slovenia, who came with his teacher, reflected on his experience with his classmates at the Bled Water Festival and spoke about working together for a good cause and encouraging young people to find their rightful place.

Samo Grošelj is Deputy Secretary for Protection of Waters and Aquatic Eco-system in the International Sava River Basin Commission (ISRBC). The ISRBC is an ICPDR observer

Vasyl Gubal “Children, adults, local citizens, environmental authorities, the church, decision-makers: all of us are united by rivers”

Mr. Vasyl Gubal is mayor of the village Kvasovo (900 inhabitants), located in the Tisza basin in Ukraine, not far from the Ukrainian-Hungarian border. Since 2009, Kvasovo has been actively participating in the Danube Day and it has twice hosted the Danube Day in its area. In 2014, the village became one of the first locations in the province of Zakarpattya, to begin sorting communal waste. It has installed containers for the separate collection of recyclables and constructed a landfill site with the support of various EU projects and Coca-Cola beverages, Ukraine. The villagers themselves have conducted several clean-ups on the Borzhava River to remove plastic jams coming from the upstream villages and shared this experience with others. Now Mr. Gubal aims to create a centralised wastewater treatment system in the village to reduce organic pollution.



“ **Danube Watch:** *Why is Danube Day and the protection of the Danube River important to you personally? What inspired you to go to such great efforts to bring the Danube Day message to your town?*

I personally and our community have been participating in the Danube Day almost from the very beginning. Living with the Borzhava River has shown us that we need to find a way to create synergy with the river. In 2001, the village suffered greatly from the catastrophic floods and later became one of the pilot projects for soft flood mitigation measures. Due to the location of Kvasovo in the Borzhava lowlands, a large amount of plastic waste is washed down from mountain villages upstream. This needs

The village has been developing green tourism significantly, and clean riverbanks and a safe environment are now the hallmarks of this small village surrounded by hills. The village has a strong connection with the church and very special caring attitude towards its river, the Borzhava, which has led to an initiative to install a large cross at its source high in the Carpathian mountains to receive blessings and to protect the village from floods and droughts. “Not only praying, but also working for the river” is the motto for Kvasovo.

to be disposed of locally and means we have to carry out clean-up initiatives if we want to have tourists and a clean environment. We like Danube Day because it involves our kids in a new and interactive way and encourages them to think and care about the river. During the last nine years, our village school and kindergarten have grown with this event, looking forward to it throughout the whole year. It is an opportunity for us,

as a small village, to be visible and heard, to show our talents and our worries and also to celebrate the birthday of our river with other communities.

Danube Watch: *What do you hope Danube Day and the work of the ICPDR in general can achieve?*

Environmental problems are becoming more and more important. We are observing more and more strange weather phenomena with extreme heat, or extreme cold and rain. This makes us feel vulnerable. Moreover, the development of industry and the ever increasing amount of disposable products all put substantial pressure on our rivers. If we want to achieve significant results in river conservation, we need to unite

the efforts of scientists, decision-makers and local communities. I believe that this is actually both the main task of the Danube Day and its greatest success.

Danube Watch: *What role do you think small communities can play in environmental protection/awareness efforts more generally? Not just in Ukraine, but throughout the Danube region?*

Local communities are actually the ones who put the actions into practice. For example, we conduct river clean-ups twice a month on Saturdays, we also collect and separate plastic and glass and are pushing hard for a centralised wastewater treatment system. However, for this to happen, people first need to understand why all these actions should be a priority for them in the hectic world we live in today. I believe the involvement of local communities should be increased if we want to ensure support for environmental protection at a local level.

Danube Watch: *Now that you have used your leadership role to inspire your local community to get involved with Danube Day, what suggestions could you make for other local leaders who wish to promote a similar agenda?*

We’ve had many meetings with other communities to share our experiences not only in the Tisza basin, but also in the Danube delta. People often ask me how we manage to attract funds and people to support the implementation of our environmental ideas. My answer is this: “Work hard, stay generous and hospitable to others, ask God for support and have a feeling for nature!” If you are open and want to make change, you can always join other people sharing the same vision. The ICPDR – and Danube Day in particular – provides the perfect platform for this.

Bačko Podunavlje - Creating a piece of the Amazon in Serbia

Biosphere finally gets green light



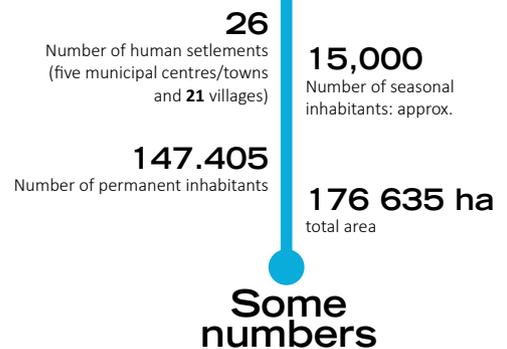
© Jaroslav Pap/Jaroslav Pap

More than six years since the Ministerial Declaration concerning the Establishment of the Transboundary Biosphere Reserve (TBR) 'Mura-Drava Danube' (Góđđlo, Hungary, 2011), this international vision seems today much closer to becoming a reality.

The International Coordination Council of UNESCO's Man and Biosphere (MAB) Programme approved Bačko Podunavlje as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve at its 27th session at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris on 14th June 2017. This project, which is led and carefully managed by dedicated Serbian conservationists and scientists, is also supported by colleagues from four other countries. TBR has finally made a successful start after a not so smooth nomination and designation process. The nomination for the project was first sent by Serbian authorities to UNESCO in 2016, and was actually the third such submission for the same area of the Danube floodplains in North-West Serbia; the first was sent as far back as 2001 and the second in 2013, but both were unsuccessful and approval was deferred.

The Transboundary UNESCO Biosphere Reserve will combine the cluster of thirteen protected areas along the Mura-Drava-Danube region and jointly manage the shared river ecosystem in a sustainable manner while boosting economic growth and development in the region.

“The synergy created by the various stakeholders for the project has proved to be very successful” says Dr. Biljana Panjković, Director of the Institute for Nature Conservation in the Vojvodina Province. This Institute coordinated the nomination process and has been declared the official management authority for the new biosphere reserve. The nomination was prepared by means of an extensive stakeholder consultation process and endorsed by state ministries, regional secretariats and sectors involved in the use of natural resources. The mayors from five local municipalities where the biosphere reserve is being established – Sombor, Apatin, Odžaci, Bač and Bačka Palanka – were also very active in this process. The nomination was finally submitted to MAB by the National Commission of the Republic of Serbia for cooperation with UNESCO by the Serbian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and afterwards actively promoted by the ambassador Dr. Darko Tanasković, the Head of Permanent Mission of Republic of Serbia to UNESCO and its associates. Panjković pointed out that the project would not be effective without an extremely proactive attitude, crucial assistance and the catalysing role of the WWF and its director in Serbia Duška Dimović, whose vision of joint cooperation for the conservation of a European Amazon was extremely motivating throughout the process.



FACTS & FIGURES

Bačko Podunavlje (Serbian for the area along the Danube in the Bačka region) Biosphere Reserve is located in north-west Serbia, stretching along the river Danube to the state border between Serbia and Croatia. Situated predominantly in both recent and historical alluvial zones of the left bank of the central Danube Floodplain, it's development is primarily influenced by natural events caused by the waters of the Danube (frequent flooding) and later by intensive human activity, the Biosphere Reserve today is a mosaic composed mainly of remnants of historical floodplains and man-made landscapes influenced by agriculture and human settlement.

Zonation

Bačko Podunavlje Biosphere Reserve contains three zones:

Buffer zone
(45 744 ha)

Central zone
(11 242 ha)

Transitional area
(119 649 ha)



© Jaroslav Pap

The biosphere reserve has three main functions:

Conservation The main natural values of the proposed reserve are concentrated in existing protected areas, which form part of the reserve. These protected areas are:

- The Gornje Podunavlje Special Nature Reserve, which is a RAMSAR site and a conservation area containing internationally important wetlands. This is an important area for birds, plants and butterflies.
- The Karađorđevo Special Nature Reserve area, which is an important habitat for birds.
- The Tikvara Nature Park and the Junaković Fores Nature Monument.

The Biosphere Reserve also consists of areas which are part of the National Ecological Network along the rivers Danube and Mostonga. These areas are extremely important for the conservation of biodiversity at a national level. The area hosts more than 1,000 species of vascular plants, 57 fish species, 11 species

of amphibians, 9 species of reptiles, 270 species of birds, 60 species of mammals and countless species of invertebrates, which all contribute to the general biodiversity of the entire river system of the Mura, Drava and Danube. Many species are on the Red List or are important at both national and international levels.

Development The area has the potential to serve as a site of excellence and a model region for promoting sustainable development. Forestry measures in the area are carried out by the Vojvodinašume Public Enterprise, which has had a certified system for the production of timber (FSC certificate SGS-FM/COC-005064) since 2008. Tourism is another sustainable economy. This relies on the extensive available natural potential of the area, but still lacks any serious promotion. Eco-tourism offers a significant number of options for visitors. These include both rural and nautical tourism such as horse riding, recreational fishing,

hunting, bathing and cycling. The Gornje Podunavlje Special Nature Reserve was granted The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas (ECSTPA) in 2014.

Logistics Thanks to the favourable surroundings and three university centres in the vicinity (Novi Sad, Osijek and Pecs), as well as a proactive scientific and expert community, the area is a demonstration site for a large number of research projects, initiatives and actions. Many of these are financed by European Union IPA Cross-border cooperation programmes between Hungary and Serbia, Croatia and Serbia and the Danube Transnational Programme.

Marko Tucakov was born on the left bank of the Danube, where Croatia, Serbia and Hungary meet. He has dedicated his career to the conservation and promotion of the Danube floodplains and is currently working at the Institute for Nature Conservation of the Vojvodina Province in Novi Sad, Serbia

Avram the Amazing Swimmer

Endurance swimmer Avram Iancu swims 2,860 km along the Danube River, from the Black Forest in Germany to the Black Sea in Romania, crossing ten countries and passing through four capital cities.

© (all photos) CANAH INTERNATIONAL

On 16th September, Avram made history by becoming the first person to swim the Danube without fins or a wetsuit. After starting his journey on 20th June at Donaueschingen in Germany, he finally reached the Black Sea in the Romanian town of Sulina. Avram swam an average of 32 km per day, but actually managed to swim 53 km on one occasion.

Swimming in the cold Danube, Avram faced many obstacles, including dams, whirlpools, eddies and unpredictable weather. To prepare, he worked out in the freezing waters of mountain rivers in Romania without a wetsuit for up to six hours a day. Due to the extreme nature of the conditions he faced, Avram's preparation was not only physical, but also psychological. On more than one occasion his body became exhausted, forcing Avram to rely solely on his positive disposition and sheer determination to complete his quest. Avram lovingly refers to his wife and three daughters as his 'best' coaches.

The Petrosani athlete, who is a librarian, came up with the idea of swimming on the Danube River after reading "the Danube Pilot" novel wrote by Jules Verne



This was not Avram's first experience of the Danube, having previously completed a 45-km marathon between Gropeni-Brăila and Galați, in Romania. In August, 2016, he became the first Romanian to swim the English Channel, in a gruelling 18-hour swim.

European hemp processor Canah, which produces nutritional foods from organic and conventional hemp seeds in Romania, first sponsored Avram when he was preparing to swim the English Channel. The company was proud to continue as his major sponsor for the Danube challenge. Avram impressed Canah with his natural confidence and resourcefulness. The company is all about healthy living, combining traditional and modern processing techniques to promote the nutritional value of the humble hemp seed. "We were his sole sponsor when he crossed the English Channel in August 2016, and were excited to be continuing this relationship throughout his Danube adventure," said General Manager Daniela Sfrija.

Dan Lazarescu, founder of Canah added "We recognise courage and determination when we see it, and as a keen swimmer myself I immediately understood the risks he was undertaking."

Besides extreme outdoor swimming, Avram also participates in other sports, including triathlon, mountain biking and mountain running. He is also the Romanian National Champion in Kyokushin Karate.

Avram was accompanied by a support crew, two of whom travelled in kayaks. On completing his epic journey he was full of praise for ICPDR, saying "I think the ICPDR is a great organisation because of its extensive activities in protecting the Danube and its interest with regard to my expedition. It's obvious that we share the same love for this great world river and I would like to take this opportunity to share my thanks for all their support."

You can follow Avram's journey on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CanahHempEssentials/>

And find out more about him at: https://www.canah.com/who_we_support/

From Black Forest to Black Sea: former entrepreneur Pascal Rösler paddles over 2,500 kilometers in 63 days

Stand-up paddler collects over 10,000 Euro in donations to guarantee Pure Water for Generations



Munich to Sulina

After starting out from the Isar river in Munich in mid July, Pascal Rösler finally reached his destination at the mouth of the Danube on the Black Sea on 20th September. The meter attached to his stand-up paddle board (SUP) shows that after 2,500 kilometres and 63 days, stand-up paddler Pascal had made a total of just under 600,000 paddle strokes: "Each and every stroke brought me closer and closer to the Black Sea and with the last stroke my journey came to an end. It was an intense encounter with nature and I have learned so much about myself. At the end of the day, it was a wonderful experience and we are more than satisfied with the amount of donations collected, which total more than 10,000 Euros", explained Pascal Rösler after his arrival at Sulina in Romania. The donations will support his non-profit organisation Pure Water for Generations eV (<https://pure-water-for-generations.com>), which he and his fellow co-founders set up earlier in the year with the aim of supporting the protection of water and rivers.



© (all photos) Wilfried Feder

So much help and support along the way

On average, Pascal Rösler spent six to eight hours on his SUP board. "Some people go to work in the morning, I paddle - full stop!" he commented. During his epic journey there were times when he never saw another person, either on the shore or on the river for dozens of kilometres. His only companions at such times were gulls, herons, cormorants and pelicans. On the route between Munich and the Black Sea, Pascal also met many new supporters and friends who have pledged to help him with his conservation projects in the future. "I met so many people who share my goals and are committed to preserving sustainable clean water. I was surprised how positive the response to our action was", he continued. Time and time again, people offered help along the route - whether it was fresh water, a bed for the night, or a good meal. It was an interesting experience to realise that the willingness to help was always the greatest from people living in the most simple of circumstances. Communication along the route was helped greatly by a website in nine languages and a promotional beer coaster.

Christof Czech was born in Tyrol, Austria, and now lives near Munich, Germany together with his wife and two children. A nature enthusiast he has been a member of the Board of Pure Water for Generations e.V. since May 2017. His motivation and goal is to preserve nature in general and water in particular for future generations

Bled Water Festival - Water is life, don't waste it!

Bled, one of the most beautiful places on earth. A lake, an island, a castle, and the perfect location to celebrate and raise awareness of the value of natural resources.

In 2014 a group of enthusiastic volunteers created a wonderful project called the Bled Water Festival. Its mission is to change and improve people's habits and to enhance and support the economy and business sectors. The objective of these volunteers was to emphasise the value of natural resources, especially water, and for this reason they created an international project for water related issues.

The main purpose of the Bled Water Festival is to raise public awareness of water issues, not only in Slovenia, but also in other parts of the world. Its primary aim is to provide solutions and promote water resources management. To achieve this, the volunteers have developed partnerships with ministries for the environment in Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia and launched an annual competition with regional awards in several categories in each of the participating countries. They have also started regional competitions in primary schools. This year's topic was Water Waste.

In 2016 the award 'Responsible towards water' was created (with the categories corporate, national and individual). This is awarded for examples of good practice and innovative projects in water management, and in 2017 the award was held at an international level.

The Bled Water Festival is a non-profit organisation that connects water organisations, international water experts, activists, filmmakers, business people and the general public by raising awareness of water issues and promoting good water management practices.

During the course of the Festival, many famous people from the participating states take part in supporting these environmental issues. Great actors such as Rade Šerbedžija, Boris Cavazza, Dunja Klemenc, Čedomir Kolar, Nikola Kojo, and Vanessa Redgrave are just some of the celebrities who attend the festival. Experts in the field of water and the environment including Dr. Mihael Jožef Toman (Professor at the Biotechnical Faculty in Ljubljana), Dr. Mitja Bricelj (General Secretary for the Slovenian Ministry of the Environment) and Dr. Janez Potočnik (Co-Chair of the UN International Resource Panel) also actively support the Bled Water Festival.

■ **Hélène Masliah-Gilkarov** is Technical Expert for Public Participation & Communication in the ICPDR Secretariat

■ **Marko Gajić** is CEO at Prevekso Languages, and CEO of the Bled Water Festival



Anyone who would also like to contribute to a better future and a better world for our children and grandchildren is welcome to join this socially beneficial project.

You can read more about our work at:

www.bledwdf.com

or follow us on our Facebook page

Bled Water Festival.

You can also contact us at: info@bledwdf.com



© (all photos) Bled Water Festival



Foldout to find out about Danube Day Celebrations 2017

Thirteen countries marked the 14th Danube Day: a superb celebration of the many ways that rivers enrich our lives.

DANUBE DAY 2017

The ICPDR would like to thank everyone involved in Danube Day 2017. Read about events and organisers at www.danubeday.org.

GERMANY

1

Creativity and environmental awareness were celebrated at the 'Danube Art Master' awards at Schloss Grünau. Teenager, Jakob Bauch, impressed ministry judges with his ingenious animation on pollution. In Baden-Württemberg, the public joined ministry officials for a tour of Sigmaringen Sewage Works, a model for how effective treatment can protect wildlife.



SLOVAKIA

4

Around 4500 Slovaks joined the festivities. An exhilarating day at Gabčíkovo saw rescue displays, riding, climbing, and for many, their first trip through the dam. Being engulfed in foam and bouncing on inflatables was a big hit, as were performances on the main stage. Cruises in Komárno and Bratislava brought 1400 residents closer to their river; while 36 districts undertook bank clean-ups. © Vodohospodárska výstavba



THE CZECH REPUBLIC

2

In Moravia-Silesia, Mosty u Jablunkova's end of term 'Children's Challenge', supported by the Environment Ministry, saw toddlers to teens join in river-themed puzzles, art and eco activities to win the latest ICPDR Danube goodies. © Veronika Matuszná

AUSTRIA

3

Austria embraced its rivers with 40 organisations contributing to Danube Day. A young Slovak delegation joined 1000 children in racing to solve action-packed eco challenges in the Vienna Stadtpark Puzzle Race. Actress Julia Cencig donned special wellies and partnered Minister Andrä Rupprechter for a group waltz. Across Austria, 900 pupils got creative in the Art Master contest. © Danube Day Austria

HUNGARY

5

Thousands got active at events in Barcs, Budapest and Győr. The Drava set the stage for a joint Hungary-Croatia day: neighbouring communities shared traditions, boat trips and fish soup; while international, state, local and civil society officials discussed flood and sustainable river management. Flood education was the focus for an EUSDR workshop in Budapest. While water-themed family fun attracted many to the Children's Island and Győr festivals. © Hungarian Ministry of Interior

SLOVENIA

6

Thousands of people were mobilised to act for cleaner rivers. Communicating concern for the Sava and Drava, young Art Masters from Zagorje, Voličina and Maribor were awarded alongside corporate winners of a 3-country Bled Water Festival stewardship contest. 15,000 people cleared 8 tonnes of rubbish in the 8th 'Moja reka' and 1000 pupils took on microplastic pollution in the 20th 'Water Detective' contest. © Mitja Sodja, foto-bohinj.com

CROATIA

7

The 'Month of Rivers' delivered action in Vukovar, Županja, Slavonski Brod, Sisak, Zagreb and Hungarian borderlands. High-level officials rolled up sleeves to assist divers in rubbish clearance and met with water management stakeholders in Vukovar. The ministry's youth awareness roadshow launched a new book and riverside fairs celebrated the 10th year of 'Our Beautiful Sava'. © Grad Vukovar/ Miroslav Šlafhauzer

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

8

Ilidža students were crowned Art Masters in 2017 for 'Bridge', their ingenious construction of plastic bottles and plaited bags. Traversing a Bosna tributary, it emphasized both the river's role in linking people, but also the pollution pressure faced by all Danube rivers.

DANUBE DAY



6.



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13.

SERBIA 9

20 actions in 12 towns energised young people to act for their rivers. In Prahovo, WWF Serbia's role-play and eco games cultivated sturgeon ambassadors within fishing communities. At Zemun Quay, the ministry held its annual family festival; and at the 10th 'Save the Danube' eco camp, students gained water management experience from national experts.

BULGARIA 11

2000 visitors enjoyed events in all 7 Danube provinces. Culinary delights were showcased at Vidin's floating feast, Kozloduy's fish festival and Baykal's wreath ceremony. Hard-working volunteers cleared banks in Lom and Nikopol. In Ruse, Romanian experts joined Bulgarian counterparts for a scientific conference; and in Belene's 'Danube Days', WWF inspired children to become sturgeon champions.

UKRAINE 13

Tyachiv's Ukrainian-Romanian festival featured basin-wide solidarity, celebration and sustainability! A platform for informal discussions, it nurtured cross-border relations between ministries, agencies, communities and children. Innovative actions - the 'River Quest' youth challenge; video 'Water Oscars'; 'Plastic Treasures' rubbish clearance contest; and unveiling of a beautiful mural of Tisza life - promoted the growth of Danube awareness well into the future. Pupils from 35 schools also vied to become 'Danube Art Master'. © Ostap Tsapulych

MOLDOVA 12

Revisiting traditions and forging sustainable futures were central to events that attracted 1000 visitors and nationwide coverage. Moldovan and Romanian counterparts met to facilitate cross-border cooperation. Regional customs were celebrated at folk festivals in Djurdjulesti and its port. Danube Day messages were spread through summer camps and lectures for Chisinau University students. © Dumitru Drumea

ROMANIA 10

With 70 activities in 11 Water Basin Administrations, thousands were inspired by events. State Secretary Negru joined 150 experts and stakeholders to discuss projects and visit Galati's Danube fiesta. Attracting 1000 visitors, there was something for everyone: a grand summer parade, treasure hunt, cruises, water pollution lessons, music, sport, art and rubbish clearance! © WBA Arges

| **Suzie Holt** (suzie@wyldwooded.co.uk) lives in the UK and is a writer on environmental issues. She has been involved in Danube Day since its start in 2004 and prior to that worked for WWF on the Carpathian Ecoregion Initiative.



**ICPDR – International Commission
for the Protection of the Danube River**

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