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Germany Wins International Danube Art Master Competition

VIENNA, 14 October (UN Information Service) -- A German secondary school has won the 'International Danube Art Master 2005' competition, announced Istvan Ori, President of the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) today. Mr. Ori made the announcement at Hungary's Ministry of Environment and Water in Budapest.

The winning submission was created by class 6 A of the Secondary School "Auf der Schanz", represented by Sebastian Bauer and Dominik Petersen of Germany. Their colourful, creative, artistic sculpture depicted children from Danube countries waving flags together on a boat on the Danube. Sculpture materials included a collage of stones, plants and wood taken from around the river.

The International Master is selected from the winners of the national 'Danube Art Master' competitions in 13 Danube Basin countries including Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Moldova, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine. All children and schools from these 13 countries were invited to apply. Some 2,200 applications were submitted.

The "International Danube Art Master 2005" competition was announced on Danube Day on 29 June, 2005. The competition was linked to the event's central theme – "The Danube is more than just water" – to illustrate the complexity of the Danube River Basin and how rivers connect with land, animals, forests and people.

Children were encouraged to visit local rivers and surrounding environments and to think about their importance and connections. 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 Croatia's 'Danube Wave' made from fencing, stones, wood and plants, and Ukraine's sailboat of leaves and pebbles in the sand.

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 Budapest was attended by the Danube Art Master winners, Mr. Ori and representatives from the Danube country embassies represented in Budapest. After the ceremony, the winners joined a three-day environmental programme, supported by Coca-Cola and organized by the Global Water Partnership Hungary and the Hungarian Ministry of Environment and Water, which includes trips to the Budapest Zoo, the Esztergom Danube Museum and a boat visit to the town of Szentendre.

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.

For further information and photos of the winning artwork, contact:

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