



Danube Day 2010: call for action and cross-border co-operation

Vienna, 25 June – 81 million people in all Danube countries are invited to ‘Get Active for the Rivers’ on 29 June as part of the celebrations for the 7th annual Danube Day. The main goal of this year’s celebration is to engage people and to emphasize the connections between the countries and the water conservation interests of all inhabitants.

Danube Day is coordinated by the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR). “In order to sustain the Danube rivers today, and for the benefit of future generations, people in every sector of society must join a united effort,” says Philip Weller, Executive Secretary of the ICPDR, “After the devastating floods, which hit the region heavily some weeks ago, it is important to emphasize the connectivity between all countries and the need to for integrated water management.”

Danube Day celebrations are organized by governmental and non-governmental institutions, companies and schools. A long-standing partner is also the ‘Green Danube Initiative’ composed of the Coca-Cola Hellenic Group, The Coca-Cola Company and the ICPDR.

Doros Constantinou, Chief Executive Officer of Coca-Cola Hellenic explains, “We at Coca-Cola Hellenic are totally committed in helping to protect the environment. The vital significance of the Danube cannot be over stated. Older than the Rhine, it is the main source of water for millions of people; is a vital ecological hotspot in Europe as well as an important international waterway.”

The emphatic call for action this year is part of a continuing, multinational effort to protect and preserve the iconic Danube River and its tributaries, as well as the areas through which they flow. Planned activities include educational projects, clean-ups along river banks, and a wide range of informative entertainment programmes to actively engage people of all ages in supporting initiatives to protect the environment.

Serbia, for example, will celebrate Danube Day in 16 cities along the Danube. All of them will be represented in a puzzle depicting the course of the Danube river across the country, including cultural and environmental specifics of each point. An eco camp on Great War Island, a protected area in the center of Belgrade, will serve as a meeting point for students of biosciences who will collaboratively work on a case study on the management of Djerdap National Park at the border of Serbia and Romania.

Events will not only take place along the Danube itself but across the Danube Basin: the small Ukrainian town of Dilove on the Tisza, which claims to be the geographical heart of Europe, will witness the transit of the large Danube-Day-flag to Romania. The flag will travel all Danube countries as a symbol of connectivity beyond national borders.



Other events took place along the Sava river earlier this month, organized with coordination of the International Sava River Basin Commission. Mitja Bricelj, ICPDR President 2010, explains, “By moving our rivers into the spotlight we can alert people and motivate them to stand up for a healthy future of our lifelines! The celebration of Danube Day and Sava Day are vivid examples of the spirit of the Danube region – as also highlighted by the EU Danube Strategy currently being developed.”

In addition, the International Danube Art Master Schools Competition is again being held in all Danube countries in cooperation with the Danube Environmental Forum. The contest invites young people from 14 countries to submit artwork inspired by the rivers. The international winning entry will be announced in September in Vienna.

Danube Day commemorates the anniversary of the signing of the Danube River Protection Convention in Sofia, Bulgaria, in 1994. Ever expanding, it has become the largest river festival in the world.

To find out more about the numerous Danube Day events, please visit:

<http://www.danubeday.org>

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Note to the Editor:

The ICPDR (International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River) is an international organization consisting of 14 cooperating states and the European Union. Since its establishment in 1998, it has grown into one of the largest and most active international bodies engaged in river basin management in Europe. Its activities relate not only to the Danube River, but also the tributaries and ground water resources of the entire Danube River Basin.

The ultimate goal of the ICPDR is to implement the Danube River Protection Convention, and make it a “living” instrument. Its mission is to promote and coordinate sustainable and equitable water management, including conservation, and 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 on standards for emissions and by assuring that these measures are reflected in the Contracting Parties’ national legislations and are applied in their policies.

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