

## **Thirteen Countries to celebrate 3rd Danube Day**

### Series of Events Planned Across Danube River Basin on 29 June

VIENNA, June 2006 – A series of events have been planned for the celebration of the third Danube Day, 29 June, to commemorate the anniversary of the signing of the Danube River Protection Convention in Sofia, Bulgaria, in 1994. Danube Day has been initiated by the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR), a Vienna-based organization composed of representatives of the countries of the Danube River Basin, represented by their ministries. ICPDR is responsible for Water Management in the Danube Basin.

“Through the Danube Day, we hope to communicate the principle of “basin solidarity” – people living in cities along the Inn River, the Mur, the Drava, the Tisza, the Sava, and the Prut are all connected with one another through this great river basin. We want to ensure that all peoples of the Danube share in the celebration of being part of the Danube basin and at the same time, share the responsibility of protecting this river and its ecosystems,” says Philip Weller, Executive Secretary of the ICPDR. “A huge international festival will salute the mighty Danube. Danube Day is a tribute to the vital role the river plays in people’s lives: in providing water, power, recreation and livelihoods”, adds Weller.

The Danube river basin is the most international river basin in the world, connecting 13 European States (Austria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Moldova, Romania, Serbia-Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine) and covers 10 per cent of the European continent. Protection efforts for the Danube have always been an illustration of cooperation between these countries, despite political and socio-economic differences.

More than 100 Danube Day activities will take place in all 13 Danube river basin countries. Governmental bodies, local authorities, NGOs and academia are organizing them jointly. The celebrations include concerts, river cleaning activities, festivals, biking tours and more.

Danube Day 2006 follows the slogan DANUBE:RIVER OF LIFE. Fish play an important role in the Danube Rivers. Fish are more than just a valuable source of nutrition for the human population; their healthy numbers also serve as an important indicator of the biological quality of the river requested. Therefore a fish poster has been developed, which can be downloaded at the website of the Danube Day (<http://www.danubeday.org>) or requested at the ICPDR Secretariat.

An overarching activity on the Danube Day will be the "Danube Art Master" - a school competition that will focus on young people. The competition is being jointly organized by the

ICPDR and the Danube Environmental Forum, a non-governmental organization. The International Danube Art Master is organised for the 3<sup>rd</sup> time and all national winners will be invited for a trip to Vienna, Austria, in autumn.

Danube Day has become a yearly event. “Danube Day is an integral part of the communication activities of the ICPDR; from this year on, 29 June should be seen as a day for the manifestation of sharing the Danube river basin, one of the largest and most diverse river basins in Europe,” says Weller.

The United Nations Development Programme/Global Environmental Forum Danube Regional Project, Coca-Cola, ALCOA Foundation and many more organisations are partners of Danube Day 2006.

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

<http://www.danubeday.org>

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