THE FIFTH BLUE WEEK FESTIVAL

Blue Week festival was organized for the fifth time, celebrating the international Danube Day. It started on the 27th of June, continued on the 4th and 5th of July, and took place in three Danube countries – Bulgaria, Romania and Serbia, and four towns – Ruse, Drobeta Turnu Severin, Kladovo and Belgrade.

The events were organized together with our partners Wild Serbia, Supernatural, Green Link, Tourism Organisation Kladovo, Cyclomaniacs and Ruse Municipality, focusing on culture, active tourism and nature, promoting the idea of sustainable tourism, biodiversity and cross-border cooperation.

REGIONAL PROGRAMME TO STRENGTHEN THE CROSS BORDER TOURISM AT THE MIDDLE AND LOWER DANUBE THROUGH THE DANUBE COMPETENCE CENTER - III

German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development officially gave the order to GIZ for implementing an additional phase of the “Regional programme to strengthen the cross border tourism at the Middle and Lower Danube through the Danube Competence Center (DCC) - III.”

This regional program in its 3rd (final) phase includes again the following countries: Croatia, Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia, Ukraine and Moldova. EU-Danube Strategy (EUSDR) will create the common political frame for all involved.

Overall goal of the programme is “The framework conditions for the cross border tourism at the Middle and Lower Danube are improved”.

To achieve this outcome, the program will work in 2 different fields of activity. In the first field, it concentrates on sustainable positioning and consolidation of the DCC.

Second field of activity shall support further development and implementation of cross border tourism projects. The foreseen cooperation with national tourism authorities will give opportunity to implement the aspect of cross border tourism into national strategic documents. This will be relevant for Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Serbia.

Referring the political situation in Moldova and Ukraine, program will concentrate its interventions on supporting civil and private sector tourism stakeholders.

The program plans to enter into closer cooperation with other donors in tourism. Partnerships with the private sector, i.e. for development of specific touristic products, will help to increase the efficiency of the program.

The program has a term of 2 years and 4 month (09/2015 until 12/2017).

The known staff stays on board – do not hesitate to contact them directly also in future.

RER AND DWR SERIES OF STUDY TOURS

From April to September, DCC and its project partners organized four tours in order to strengthen internal cohesion of the Route. During the four study trips, more then 50 representatives of Roman localities, wine regions and local stakeholders, visited most important locations along Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route. Except of classical guided tours along localities such as Viminacium, Andautonia, Alba Iulia and Sexagintha Prista, or wine presentations in selected regions (Sremski Karlovci, Ilok, North West Bulgaria and Dobrogea Hills), participants had an opportunity to learn more about further Route development through workshops. The workshops focused on branding and online presentation, development of wines from the Danube Region label and interpretation of cultural heritage.

RER AND DWR ONLINE CAMPAIGN

Starting on August 24th 2015, DCC executed Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route online campaign that lasted three weeks, aiming to increase visibility of the route within targeted markets in nine countries. Combining social networks, adds and media (including Facebook Ads and Google Adwords), we have reached more than one million people among which over 50,000 engaged with our content. Besides location, the interest based targeting was used in order to maximize the relevance of our messages to the audience, while A/B testing was also used in order to select the best performing add mutation.
Ms Daniela Schilly first came to Serbia fifteen years ago, when she was writing a travel guide about the Danube and researched the countries along the river. She stayed - at first as a freelancer, later on as an employee of the National Tourism Organization of Serbia, and finally as GIZ project leader of the regional program that supports developing tourism in the Middle and Lower Danube.

However, after more than a successful engagement and significant changes she initiated, Ms Schilly is moving on, and away from Serbia.

When it comes to the projects concerning the Danube, what is your biggest “pride and joy”?

In one word: cooperation. Through the Danube Competence Center we managed to not only connect institutions and stakeholders, but also to establish a ‘Danube network’, which is cooperating across national borders and industrial sectors. Our network overcomes historical, political and geographical obstacles and provides promising first results. And again it is the people behind the projects, who make the story alive. Establishing cycling, hiking, wine and Roman routes, organizing conferences and fairs, teaching and advising marketing tools: it is amazing to see the people along the river, who are implementing all this, and who dedicate themselves to this joint vision. This is what makes me happy and proud.

In your opinion, what part of the ‘Serbian Danube’ has not yet used all its potentials, and why?

Serbian society is still not fully realizing the Danube potential, not businesswise, nor for private use. Water sports, such as kayaking, sailing, windsurfing, and rowing are just starting to develop. The climate for river cruises is not developed well: many prerequisites, such as enough gas stations, harbors, and ship investments are still lacking. For land based tourism the story is similar. Bridges and ferries to cross the river, ensuring a good infrastructure to connect cycling and hiking routes, are missing. To improve this not only inside the states, but between Danube countries, a constant input and stable management of different regional leaderships is crucial – and again cooperation is the key to be successful...

What did you enjoy most in Serbia? Is there something that you will always remember, when you think of Serbia?

It is hard to summarize this in one word. I will miss this city with all its cultural attractions and art. I will miss the sun. I will miss the wonderful and peaceful nature and the hospitality of the people. I will miss the mentality and temperament of this country; its way of sharing fun and problems. I will miss my colleagues, friends and partners, even the ups and downs of daily work. It is not a word, more a feeling I have had when I left my family after finishing school; I was positively looking towards the future, but I became aware about what I love and what I will miss.

You were in Serbia together with your husband and three children, who moved here in 2007. How did they adapt, will they miss their time here?

My youngest daughter does not understand why we are moving. She feels Serbian, speaks Serbian nearly as well as a native speaker, and has spent her entire live here. My two older children and my husband also feel very at home in Serbia. They learned to speak the language and found their friends here. In their heads they know and accept that we have to leave, but in their hearts it is very difficult. It is clear to me that they will come back to this wonderful country.

What is your next working challenge, where is your next post?

I will take over the position of Secretary General of a German institution, which is partly financed by members, partly by the government. It works to overcome the losses of the World Wars and seeks to build up cooperation between nations and countries. I hope to continue to contribute to the vision that I believe in – build a peaceful Europe, by investing in cooperation, cross border exchange and cultural understanding.
WORKSHOP ON SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS - ODESSA, 4TH OF NOVEMBER

Project “SoLid: the Cooperation of Leaders for the Common Good” and Thalasso resort Sovinyon organize a workshop on sustainable business and tourism initiatives on the 4th of November 2015. It will be held on the base of Thalasso resort Sovinyon in Odessa, Ukraine.

The key note of the coming event is “the Danube region and the Black Sea coast. The inspiring projects of leaders for the sake of the Present and the Future (sustainable initiatives)”. The coming workshop will consist of: official part (projects sharing, integration, and panel discussions), part of Business to Business communication, restaurant party. The detailed program of the event is now at the stage of composing and the deadline of presentations submission and hotel booking is the 16.10.2015 (the 16th of October 2015).

Special booking rates are available for all the participants and guests of the workshop for the 3-5 of November 2015.

Contact information:
Kathy Andronova
+ 3 8063 946 964 7
solidwithlove@gmail.com

24-HOURS HIKE ON THE DONAUSTEIG
17-18 OCTOBER 2015

A 24 hour hiking event will take place on the Upper Austrian hiking trail Donausteig from 17 – 18 October 2015. The participants will hike 65,9 km on the Donausteig around the Schlägener Schlinge in 24 hours. Special offers with catering, overnight-stay and regeneration time after the hike in the Hotel Donauschlinge are available. The start of the hike will be on 17 October at 7 am. Further details can be found on: www.donausteig.com/veranstaltungen.html

WINE AUTUMN IN THE WACHAU - AUTUMN 2015

The area of Wachau is world-renowned for its Wachau Rieslings and its Grüner Veltliner. It is also home to a high concentration of internationally renowned and award-winning winemakers.

Wine-related events take place virtually all year round in the region. The focal points of the year are the ‘Weinfrühling’ (wine spring) period when the winemakers open up their cellars and the first new vintages can be sampled; and the ‘Weinherbst’ (wine autumn) in Autumnn, the main wine growing season.

At this time of year, the grapes are ripe and work is in full swing in the cellars to prepare for the new crop. It is during this time of year that you can experience the work of the winemakers and the wine growing tradition of the Danube at close hand.

Information & Bookings:
Donau Niederösterreich Tourismus GmbH,
A- 3620 Spitz, Schlossgasse 3,
T: +43(0)2713 / 300 60-60,
E: urlaub@donau.com, www.donau.com

VIENNA WINE HIKING DAY
26-27 SEPTEMBER 2015

Vienna’s 700 hectares of vineyards and 190 vintners in the areas around Kahlenberg, Nussberg, Bisamberg, and Mauer, where the Danube and the proximity of the Vienna Woods provide optimal climatic conditions, are unique among major cities.

The Vienna Wine Hiking Trail is accessible only on this weekend because it runs through private vineyards. There are three different routes, all with the opportunity to recharge along the way with some good food and wine.
At the end of August, a new tourism tour was launched in Danube Delta by the “Ivan Patzaichin – Mila 23” Association, as a result of the biodiversity project supported by the GIZ and DCC. Tourists are invited to share a day in the life of an authentic fisherman of a village Mila 23, and experience the unique culture and gastronomy, steadfastly considerate toward the rich nature of the Danube Delta. Tours will be available from May till October. For more information and reservation go to www.pescaturism.ecodeltadunarii.ro

The Danube Regatta, Hungary’s largest sports and cultural festival for university students, was organized for the third time.

The prestige of the 2015 Regatta was raised by two universities from the United States with a great heritage in rowing, Harvard and Princeton. The event attracted more than 20,000 visitors. Besides the rowing and dragon boat races, the free, day-long event offered a wide variety of land sport experiences with a great heritage in rowing, Oxford and Cambridge.

CURRENT PLANS IN THE TRNAVA REGION ON THE BORDER WITH HUNGARY

Since Slovakian region Trnava shares a border with a Hungarian county Gyor-Moson-Sopron, the plans are being developed for building a bridge linking the village Dobrohošť on the Slovak side, and the village Dunakiliti on the Hungarian side. The new bridge will form a border crossing and a shorter and safer road for pedestrians and cyclists. A number of new cycling trails are also part of the project. The project will be financed from funds received from the CBC programs.

TRAVELING ALONG THE DANUBE

During the ITB 2015, at the bloggers speed dating event, DCC team met Matthias Derhake, passionate traveler who is running a blog Traveltelling (www.traveltelling.net). After Matthias announced that he is planning to visit Danube Region, DCC got in contact with its members, announcing his arrival. Starting from the beginning of July, Matthias visited Croatia, Serbia and Bulgaria, constantly writing about touristic highlights in these countries on his blog and Facebook page. On links below you can find out what was the reason of his decision to stay on the Danube for two months longer.

CROATIA  SERBIA  BULGARIA

A number of distinguished guests and journalists gathered on May 20th in Felix Romuliana, near Zajecar, to introduce a unique and interactive tourism product - android application "Present yourself to Emperor Galerius as the custom dictates".

The application is a specially designed game, based on the “treasure hunt model”; where a visitor - step by step, following the “clues” - discover parts of the complex built by the Roman emperor Galerius. It is not created as a replacement for traditional guided tours, but as an innovative site interpretation through an interactive tourism product - android application "Present yourself to Emperor Galerius as the custom dictates".

Young people have been invited to submit their idea of an app and a first prototype or concept with focus on cultural heritage or tourism in the Danube Region. Numerous creative ideas from the Danube Region have been submitted and reviewed by a jury of experts from the fields of IT, Tourism and Science. At the end of July, ten finalists have been announced on donauraumapp.blogspot.de and invited to take part at the workshop, the Award Ceremony and the exhibition as part of the 4th Annual Forum of the EUSDR from Oct 29th-30th 2015, in Ulm/Germany.

The three best ideas will be awarded with the total amount of € 6000.

PRESENT YOURSELF TO EMPEROR GALERIUS AS THE CUSTOM DICTATES

A transnational app competition for young talents from the Danube Region was organized from March to June, by two project partners - Danube Office Ulm/Neu-Ulm and MFG Innovation Agency Media & Creative Industries.

Young people have been invited to submit their idea of an app and a first prototype or concept with focus on cultural heritage or tourism in the Danube Region. Numerous creative ideas from the Danube Region have been submitted and reviewed by a jury of experts from the fields of IT, Tourism and Science. At the end of July, ten finalists have been announced on donauraumapp.blogspot.de and invited to take part at the workshop, the Award Ceremony and the exhibition as part of the 4th Annual Forum of the EUSDR from Oct 29th-30th 2015, in Ulm/Germany.

The three best ideas will be awarded with the total amount of € 6000.

DORA - DONAUURAUM APP AWARD

A transnational app competition for young talents from the Danube Region was organized from March to June, by two project partners - Danube Office Ulm/Neu-Ulm and MFG Innovation Agency Media & Creative Industries.

Young people have been invited to submit their idea of an app and a first prototype or concept with focus on cultural heritage or tourism in the Danube Region. Numerous creative ideas from the Danube Region have been submitted and reviewed by a jury of experts from the fields of IT, Tourism and Science. At the end of July, ten finalists have been announced on donauraumapp.blogspot.de and invited to take part at the workshop, the Award Ceremony and the exhibition as part of the 4th Annual Forum of the EUSDR from Oct 29th-30th 2015, in Ulm/Germany.

The three best ideas will be awarded with the total amount of € 6000.

Present Yourself to Emperor Galerius as the Custom Dictates

Young people have been invited to submit their idea of an app and a first prototype or concept with focus on cultural heritage or tourism in the Danube Region. Numerous creative ideas from the Danube Region have been submitted and reviewed by a jury of experts from the fields of IT, Tourism and Science. At the end of July, ten finalists have been announced on donauraumapp.blogspot.de and invited to take part at the workshop, the Award Ceremony and the exhibition as part of the 4th Annual Forum of the EUSDR from Oct 29th-30th 2015, in Ulm/Germany.

The three best ideas will be awarded with the total amount of € 6000.