The joint cultural heritage of the Danube was the overarching theme of this year’s activities of the Danube Competence Center at ITB Berlin that took place from 5-9th of March. Once again, a comprehensive package of promotional activities was realized, addressing both tourism professionals as well as consumers and involving many partners from Danube countries.

DCC booth offered info desk with DCC brochures and general information about the tourism offer along the Danube, while images and movies about the Danube were continuously presented on 4 screens. Furthermore, Danube.travel was presented through a touch screen, so visitors were able to use the portal on spot. All the visitors could also enjoy interactive game “Kennen Sie die Donau” , with a multifunctional gift for the participation.

The stands of all participating Danube countries were visited by “Discover the Danube” guided tours, during which journalists, tour operators and political VIP guests were familiarized with the latest tourism trends in each country. It was an opportunity to witness the high level of cooperation among Danube countries, evidenced in cross-country thematic routes and products such as the Danube cycling trail, the Route of Roman Emperors and the Danube Wine Route. Within the frame of the ITB Convention program, the traditional Danube Forum was organized, focused on tourism as a decisive factor for preserving and enhancing joint cultural heritage. After a motivating opening statement by Gordana Plamenac, CEO of the National Tourism Organization of Serbia, the panel guests Isabel Garaña of UNWTO, Penelope Denu of the European Institute for Cultural Routes as well as Wolfgang Schneider of German tour operator Ikarus Tours and Izabela Kubikova of Bratislava-based Flora Tours were sharing their experience about cultural routes and cross-country cooperation from different angles. After the forum a networking event facilitating an informal exchange among incoming agencies from Danube countries and international tour operators has been organized.

Another highlight for tourism professionals from participating Danube countries was the participation in the Bloggers Speed Dating event organized by ITB, which facilitated networking with a substantial number of bloggers, in line with new trends in travel reporting.

On the weekend, the visitors took part in Danube passports game, with a raffle and a an opportunity to win attractive prizes, such as a Danube river cruise for two persons sponsored by Nicko Tours or hotel weekends for two persons in Hungary, Austria and Germany. ITB itself communicated all Danube activities very broadly through all communications channels, such as trade newsletters, social media and newspaper supplements, significantly raising the awareness of the wealth of options that the Danube has to offer. This year the fair had some 114,000 trade visitors (2013: 109,616) and 60,000 general public visitors.

From 1 April 2014, a new EU funded DCC project – “Cultural Routes in the Middle and Lower Danube Region II – Roman Emperors Route and Danube Wine Route going to Market” – is operational. Located in the Middle and Lower Danube Region, The Roman Emperors and the Danube Wine Route is already part of the European network of cultural routes. The Project in question is a follow-up to the Project implemented from 1 May 2012 – 31 October 2013. It is about making The Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route ready to be placed on the tourism market by enhancing and stimulating competitiveness of the tourism products along the Route; strengthening internal cohesion of the Route localities and key stakeholders; and by improving visibility and market uptake of the Route. DCC lead consortium (8 partners from CRO, SER, BUL, and ROM) will implement the project during 18 months. The Project Kick-off meeting will be organized on 20 May 2014 in the Roman City and Military Camp ‘Viminacium’ in Serbia. As a side event, there is also a Workshop Coalition building with tour operators and identification of pilot tourism packages along the Route. The Workshop will be facilitate by Mr. Nick Greenfield from the European Tourism Association (ETOA).
DCC NEWS

Biodiversity Call 2014

DCC Biodiversity call for project proposals was closed on 31st of March. This year, 15 project proposals were successfully submitted, after which they were forwarded to the commission for further analysis.

Evaluation is now in the process and results are expected during the third week of May.

CLOSURE OF PROJECT LIFECYCLE MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP

Third and the last workshop of Project Lifecycle management, organized by DCC and Nature Friends International, was held between 11-12 April. Topic of this workshop was related to further understanding of EU Danube Strategy, basic principles of EU funding, how to efficiently look for project partners and funding opportunities.

During the three workshops, more than 20 participants had the opportunity to learn how to efficiently run all development stages of the project. Before the official end of the workshop, networking dinner was organized on the cruiser Heart of Gold, where participant enjoyed the view of Belgrade from the Danube.

FELIX ROMULIANA 2014

Tourist season on Felix Romuliana sightseeing was officially opened on 1st of April. The opening ceremony presented number of projects that have been realized, and that are related to innovation in presentation of cultural heritage. Innovations within the site are costumed entertainers, with whom the visitors will meet and take pictures. For those who wants to explore the locality on their own, audio-guide is now available in English, German and French.

Visitors will also be able to learn more through electronic and printed out materials. As a part of Technoohour project, which tends to promote Roman and Byzantine countries from the region, informational holograms were installed.

Another project is being implemented in collaboration with the “Association of visually impaired and blind people”, referring to setting panels through the palace with Braille: it will be the first site in Serbia with facilities for visually impaired and blind visitors.

Officially, the new website of the National Museum in Zajecar is launched, as well as a domain that will show Felix Romuliana.

DANUBE. MAGAZINE 2014

The ARGE Donau Österreich published their yearly glossy „DANUBE. magazine 2014“. The magazine that is published for the third time, is produced in German and in English (online version only) and provides insights into the Austrian Danube region.

It offers images and stories about culture, hikking, nature, culinary delights and biking along the Danube in Austria. The German magazine can be ordered for free: info@donauregion.at.

Both language versions: www.donauregion.at/detail/article/ARGE-donau-osterreich.html

UPCOMING EVENTS

APRIL

SURNATURAL

Ada Hula Belgrade, Serbia 27-04

At the Supernatural festival on Danube Island Ada Hula, a workshop will be organized about the development of eco-tourism product by watching

MAY

WEEKEND TOURISM FAIR

Ruse, Bulgaria 15-17/05

Wineries from Danube region will present the selection of their wines at the DCC stand and wine tastings at this year’s jubilee 10th “Ruse Weekend Tourism Fair”.

DWR & RER II

Vini Tunacum, Serbia May 16-17, 2014

With the project “Roman Emperors Route and Danube Wine Route” going to tourism market with the kick-off meeting and a workshop of partners.

DONAUWÄEG DCC YEARS PRESS CONFERENCE

Vienna, Austria 20/05

Donauwäeg (Danube Bike Path) celebrates 40-year anniversary and DCC will be present at the press conference where activities will be announced.

JUNE

3RD ANNUAL FORUM EUSD

Vienna, Austria 8/06

Under the Forum Slogan: “We grow together – together we grow”, DCC will present its activities at its stand and organize a Workshop “Destination Danube – Tourism Development Model”.

BLUE WEEK / BLUE & WINE

Ruse, Bulgaria 28/06

Wine Expo gives the space to wine producers, local tourism organizations, wine associations, wine experts and connoisseurs from Bulgaria to meet and discuss business and networking opportunities over the glass or two or exquisite Danubian wines.

BLUE WEEK / EXPO

Drobeta Turnu Severin, Romania & Kladovo, Serbia 27-29/06

The event brings together cyclists from Serbia and Romania in cross-border cycling tour, second-hand bike exchange, bike repair and other activities related to cycling.

JULY

BLUE WEEK / BOAT CARNIVAL

Belgrade, Serbia 18.07

Festival “Blue Days” Danube, Belgrade will be presented at this event, organized on Belgrade rivers and their banks that involves exhibitions, competitions, Belgrade boat tour, boat carnival, fireworks

DONAU FEST ULM

Ulm, Germany 04/13/07

Experience the Danube among other Danube countries at DonauFest Ulm through Stories of the Danube – stories of gastronomy, culture, legends and myths

INTERVIEW: ZELJKO VLADIC, WINNER OF MY DANUBE PHOTO CONTEST

All those who are interested in photography and love the Danube, had a unique opportunity to enjoy both on March 3rd, at the exhibition of Zeljko Vladic, winner of My Danube Photo contest.

Photo contest. Remarkable landscapes and vivid portraits of people living on the banks of the Danube, could be seen in the premises of Cultural center of Donji Milanovac. In an interview for DCC Bulletin, we tried to find out why the Danube is so inspiring for Zeljko Vladic and what exactly he is trying to capture in his photographs.

Why and when did you feel inspired by the river?

Danube is a large and inexhaustible river and as such it awakens an inexhaustible inspiration in me. I was born near the Danube and quite often I had an opportunity to see unique and beautiful sights that in the end made me wish to capture them within the photos. In the beginning, it happened a lot of times that I would see breathtaking moment which I wanted to capture, and in one moment I decided to take camera in my hands and really do it.

We have seen how do you experience the Danube through the camera lens, but would you describe it in words?

Even though it may sound like a phrase, I would need 1000 words to describe only one photo of the Danube. I can’t even start to talk about the Danube as such it awakes an inexhaustible inspiration in me. I was born near the Danube and quite often I had an opportunity to see unique and beautiful sights that in the end made me wish to capture them within the Photos. In the beginning, it happened a lot of times that I would see breathtaking moment which I wanted to capture, and in one moment I decided to take camera in my hands and really do it.

We have seen how do you experience the Danube through the camera lens, but would you describe it in words?

Even though it may sound like a phrase, I would need 1000 words to describe only one photo of the Danube. I can’t even start to talk about the whole river, but if I must do it, I would say that it is a magnificent and strange river. Especially because it is wild and peaceful at the same time.

For Roman emperors, it was a great feeling only to stand on its banks or enjoy a marvelous view every evening, as soon as they woke up.

Apart from photography, do you have any other activity related to Danube?

I am coming from an old fishermen family, so I am related to Danube in a number of different ways. For us, it is normal to fish on almost regular basis, so sport fishing is my favorite hobby. Also, I am using the Danube for recreation during the summer period. Especially for cycling, swimming or sailing. Iron Gate region in which I live, is a really unique place along the whole flow and you can never get tired of the Danube here.

Is Iron Gate your favorite place on the Danube?

Unfortunately, I can’t speak about the total length of the Danube, since I haven’t traveled a lot. That’s why I would highlight the area around the Lepenski Vir, Donji Milanovac and Iron Gate as my favorite. Nature, river itself and history in this part of the Danube, is something what makes the Danube one of the most beautiful rivers in Europe. Nevertheless, I would really like to visit the upper part of the Danube, especially wineyards near Vienna. Wilderness of the Danube Delta is also something that attracts me.

If you could influence future development, what would you change in Serbian part of the Danube region?

It would be good to balance modern ways of environment protection with improved infrastructure within the Iron Gate region. This would lead to the rise of tourism in the region and also, it will improve the protection of beautiful nature. I would really like to see more tourists here, so this would definitely be a priority for me. We really need to give more chances for the Danube in Serbia to develop.

If you could influence future development, what would you change in Serbian part of the Danube region?

It would be good to balance modern ways of environment protection with improved infrastructure within the Iron Gate region. This would lead to the rise of tourism in the region and also, it will improve the protection of beautiful nature. I would really like to see more tourists here, so this would definitely be a priority for me. We really need to give more chances for the Danube in Serbia to develop.

If you could influence future development, what would you change in Serbian part of the Danube region?

It would be good to balance modern ways of environment protection with improved infrastructure within the Iron Gate region. This would lead to the rise of tourism in the region and also, it will improve the protection of beautiful nature. I would really like to see more tourists here, so this would definitely be a priority for me. We really need to give more chances for the Danube in Serbia to develop.

If you could influence future development, what would you change in Serbian part of the Danube region?

It would be good to balance modern ways of environment protection with improved infrastructure within the Iron Gate region. This would lead to the rise of tourism in the region and also, it will improve the protection of beautiful nature. I would really like to see more tourists here, so this would definitely be a priority for me. We really need to give more chances for the Danube in Serbia to develop.
For four years in a row, Blue Week Festival has been celebrating the Danube through a series of events, organized and happening simultaneously in Serbia, Bulgaria and Romania. So far, some 30 events around the International Danube Day (June 29) brought together more than 20,000 visitors.

This year, the Blue Week Festival is organized in partnership with Tourism organization of Belgrade (SER), Association Cyclomania from Drobeta Turnu Severin (ROM), Focal Point Destination Danube (BUL) and Municipality of Ruse (BUL).

On June 27th, cyclists will start their route from Kladovo to Drobeta Turnu Severin to meet their fellows and participate in second-hand bike exchange, bicycle repair and unavoidable grill party on the Bike Fest. The day after, “Blue&Wine” Expo in Ruse will take place, while the Belgrade Boat Carnival is ending the event.

In accordance with the DCC philosophy of sustainable tourism development, local partners will be responsible for organizing the environmental activities “Do it for the Danube”. Therefore, Blue Week won’t be just play, but also work.

We are kindly inviting you to join us at the events and Discover the Danube in a different way.

**15th to 17th May: RUSE WEEKEND TOURISM FAIR**

The DCC together with its members will participate at jubilee 10th “Ruse Weekend Tourism Fair” from 15th – 17th May 2014 in the Dohodno Zdanije in Ruse. Next to diverse exhibitors from the region, residents of Ruse and neighbouring cities will have the opportunity to get acquainted with the Blue Week activities and meet the Danubian wine makers. A wine tasting event will be organized in the Museum of History in Ruse, announcing the upcoming Blue & Wine Expo in Ruse. These events would not be possible without the kind support of our partner wineries.

**1st May: DANUBE REGATTA IN BUDAPEST**

In organisation of Antall József Knowledge Centre, the Danube Regata will take place on May the 1st. High educational institutions of Budapest will also participate in the event, together with three guest teams from Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia.

As a part of the competition programme, different races are organised, as well as various side events including concerts and air race performed by renowned Hungarian pilot and world champion Péter Besenyő. The visitors will be able to observe rowing and air races more closely from a grove on the lower quay. Races will be accompanied by a run in dragon costumes, but also a special ship full of cheerful people made available by the public transportation company BKV. More than 20,000 visitors is expected.

**27th June - 5th July: BLUE WEEK 2014**

“Zeleni dni” - Green Days, promotes creativity, entrepreneurship, responsibility and solidarity with the objective of tourism potential improvement. It is a joint effort of Bulgarian Association for Alternative Tourism (www.baatbg.org) and Odyssea-in Travel Ltd (www.odyssea-in.com)

Main event is the international conference “Food and Nature of Bulgaria in Favor of the Green Sustainable Business”, organized with the support of the Ambassador of France. Accompanying events are two photo exhibitions, one in cooperation with US Embassy about American National Parks, and another one on the topic of “Biking on the roads of Bulgaria”, followed by concerts and documentary movie. Announcing the Green Days, 3rd edition of the mountain biking and running race “Bike for Chepan” will take place on 27th of April.

**8th to 11th May: SOFIA GREEN DAYS 2014**

**4th-13th July: INTERNATIONAL DANUBE FESTIVAL ULM/NEU-ULM, GERMANY**

During July, over 300,000 people are expected to gather in the twin towns of Ulm and Neu-Ulm. For ten days, both banks of the river will be a hive of activity - as international artists and guests from the ten countries through which this iconic river flows, gather for the International Danube Festival (German: Internationalones Donaufest) to showcase the very best of the music, literature, dance, food and drink these diverse countries have to offer.