Blue Week, festival that celebrates the international Danube Day, was organized for the fourth time this year. It took place from 28th to July 5th, in three Danube countries - Bulgaria, Romania and Serbia, and four towns - Ruse, Drobeta Turnu Severin, Kladovo and Belgrade.

Thanks to the partnership of Tourism organization of Belgrade, Association Cyclomaniacs from Drobeta Turnu Severin, Danube wineries, Focal Point Destination Danube and Municipality of Ruse, a series of events were organized - all around themes of culture, nature and active tourism, promoting the ideas of sustainable tourism, biodiversity and cross-border cooperation.

**RUSE**

The activities in Bulgarian town Ruse began by cleaning the Ruse Quay, which was organized by locals from OK project “Do It For The Danube”. Since we all benefit from the Danube, the idea behind this project is to return the favor to our river: during the festival, all partners at the individual events are therefore invited to implement one relevant participatory activity, that the Danube benefits from.

After that, visitors had the opportunity to enjoy free guided tour at Sexaginta Prista – part of the Roman Emperors Route. In a roman Bazaar, they could experience the ancient way of living, by tasting wines and traditional food. The event also offered a Roman cohort, noblemen, artists, craftsmen and potters, minters and merchants, as well as the reenactment of a slave market.

Blue & Wine Expo was organized within the wonderful premises of Dohodno Zdanie, an imposing Neoclassical edifice on Freedom Square in the city centre, built in 1898–1902 to accommodate the local theatre performances. Today, Dohodno Zdanje is a cultural monument and one of the symbols of Ruse. Ten wine regions from four countries took the chance to present themselves at beautifully decorated and branded stands. In the “public corner” visitors had the chance to sit close to the buffet and watch image movies or test their knowledge by participating in our Danube Quiz.

In the evening, blue and white lampions were lit and launched in the air to symbolically present the “Flow of friendship”.

**DROBETA TURNU SEVERIN**

The same day, Juny 28th, was quite an experience for the Danube cyclists, taking part in Bike Fest. A couple of hundred cyclists ride their bykes early in the morning, from Karataš Camp in Serbia, to Drobeta Turnu Severin in Romania - around twenty kilometres, across the state border, along a hilly terrain. After the cyclists from two countries met, they took part in a mass city ride.

In the first hours of afternoon, they had the opportunity to take a break, while other visitors took part in a series of events at the town’s new and modern central square. Info centres, bike expo, photo exhibition were only a part of the programme: apart from the stands where one could buy cycle gear or etno fashion, a few hundred people also enjoyed choreographies performed by the youngest inhabitants of Dr. Tr. Severin, BMX cycling performance, or an attractive raffle. A lot of visitors used the opportunity to “write a letter to a friend”, which meant that they wrote something to a virtual friend, somewhere along the Danube - the letters were put in a large bottle and proceeded further on.

The cyclists then made a return ride to Karataš Camp in Serbia - with the assistance of local police and customs authorities, they all made it with no problems: all ages, different sizes and experiences. In the Camp, there was a party going on from the evening, until the morning the next day: with DJ and live music, cycle games and rides. In the late evening, blue lampions were launched into the Danube water.

**BELGRADE**

Preserving the nature and getting to know the nature, was the main theme of Belgrade events on July 5th. Located at one of the most beautiful spots in Belgrade - just below Nebojša tower, and medieval fortress of Kalemegdan, DCC stand attracted a few hundred visitors who had the opportunity to take part in Danube quiz and win interesting prizes, to inform about the river and its tourism potentials, but also to find out why the Great War Island - an oasis in the centre of the city, is so valuable: guys from “Supernatural” made a series of presentations about biodiversity and ecological importance.

In a number of kayaking tours that were organised, visitors, VIP guests and journalists could see and feel the Danube for themselves - they were all wet and quite tired after half an hour of kayaking, but it was worthed.

The event ended with the exhibition and tasting of the wines coming from twelve wine regions, all part of Danube Wine Route.
The third Annual EUSDR Forum took place on June 26th and 27th, in the Municipality of Vienna. More than 1,300 visitors had the chance to learn more about the Destination Danube, its features and touristic attractions under the themes of cultural, active and nature tourism. DCC’s “The Roman Emperors and The Danube Wine Route” which combines 20 Roman sites and 12 vine regions from 4 countries has also been introduced.

DCC organised a workshop where 75 participants learned more about “Destination Danube - Tourism Development Model” through the presentation of DCC General Secretary Boris Čamernik. The workshop has been moderated by Secretary General of NFI, Christian Baumgartner. Guest speakers were Sabine Meigel (Donaubüro gemeinnützige GmbH Ulm) who presented Danube Festivals as cooperation model, Tim Kaysers (Landschaftspark Junge Donau) showed a best practice model on region and tourism development and Günther Lichtblau (Umweltbundesamt) presented the Transdanube project on sustainable mobility in the Danube Region.

The main focus was to examine sustainability and competitiveness as the key elements for successful implementation of the Destination Danube tourism development model.

www.danubeforumvienna.eu

CO-WANDA PROJECT

Co-funded by the EU South East Europe Transnational Cooperation Programme, CO-WANDA project (Convention for Waste Management for Inland Navigation on the Danube) started on the 1st of October 2012 and will last until the end of September 2014. The key objective of the CO-WANDA initiative is to draft an International convention for ship waste management valid for all the Danube riparian countries. In the last phase, major emphasis was put on research in the fields of waste prevention & pre-treatment, infrastructure development and refinement of financial schemes to provide technical input for the International Danube Ship Waste Convention (IDSWC) www.co-wandaproject.eu

REGATTA IN BUDAPEST

The Danube Regatta - competition of sweeps and dragon boats driven by university crews - took place on May 1st, on one of the most spectacular reaches of the Danube. The competitors rowed from the building of the Parliament, to the main building of the Budapest University of Economics.

Around twenty thousand people who came to see the Regatta, also had the opportunity to enjoy concerts, an air race and a variety of other events. It was all organized by Antall József Knowledge Centre, Budapest, Hungary.

HERITAGE - NETHERLANDS EXPERIENCE

Participants from Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia and Croatia took part in an educational workshop that was held on May 28th, at the Roman heritage site of Viminacium. The workshop led by Dennis van der Avoort and Renate Cevaal, tourism experts from the Netherlands, focused on the interpretation of cultural heritage and the potential of cultural heritage for touristic purposes.

As a next step in the project, a study trip to the Netherlands will be organized from 22-26 September. During this study trip, the participants will see practical showcases of the touristic use of cultural heritage and take place in a workshop with different experts in the field of cultural heritage.
Danube Bike Path from the Danube springs to the Black Sea

From June 10 to June 27, Cătălin Andrei Sănătescu (38) and Costi Băleanu (46), traveled the Danube Bike Path from the Danube springs to the Black Sea, generally following the Eurovelo 6 route that overlaps in Germany and Austria better known local Donau Radweg.

In the recent years, training and mountain running competitions helped us access high endurance projects more easily, so this year we decided to cycle along the Danube banks from the springs to the Black Sea. Our goal was to pass through the centre of European civilization, but at the same time to stay close to nature.

Both of us are members of Cyclomaniacs Association of Drobeta Turnu Severin, Romania, which completed several projects to popularize cycle tourism in the Danube area, many of them in partnership with DCC. Both of them helped us to begin this trip.

Our route was approximately 2,800 km long, passing through seven countries, four capitals and diverse landscapes - from high mountains to endless plains. We traveled in a “bike-packing style”, carrying our luggage with all the necessary things. Most of the times we spent the nights in the tent, but every few days, we preferred to sleep in the hostels to rebuild our strength. Our personal hygiene was taken care of on camping sites, or at the refuges specially designed for cyclists (Radler Oase, for example).

We traveled on average 150 km a day, spending a lot of energy, and we had to eat properly. Mainly, we restocked at the supermarkets, but almost on daily basis enjoyed local specialities as well. We appreciated German bakeries, spicy food in Hungary and famous Serbian pljeskavica (with which we are more familiar with).

Bicycle route infrastructure is exceptional in Germany and Austria, good in Slovakia and a bit dangerous in Hungary, Serbia, Romania and Bulgaria, where the bicycle route follows mainly national roads, busy with other vehicles. In our opinion, the most attractive part of the route is between Donaueschingen (Germany) and Tulln, Austria (near Vienna), where the banks of the Danube are arranged as a huge recreational park. The Danube fauna is extraordinary. We have seen swans, wild ducks and an impressive number of other waterfowl. Somewhere towards the springs of the Danube, there is a large population of beavers. Deers and rabbits are everywhere.

A special area is the Austrian Wachau winery, that is downstream from the town of Melk (with his famous Benedictine monastery) to Krems. Terraces carved into the mountain and planted with vines, give the place a special charm.

If the Upper Danube is rich in wonderful things made by humans, the most beautiful natural landscapes are definitely Danube Gorges, over 100 square km area between Golubac (Serbia) / Pescari (Romania) and the dam Đerdap I. Here Danube cuts its way through the rocks, and the canyon sides are breathtaking.

In Romania, our country, people in villages we passed through greeted us in various languages - all, but Romanian. They are so used to see foreign tourists cycling, but never Romanians. In Maglavit, at the supermarket, after a brief conversation with the seller, a gentleman asked us where we learned to speak Romanian. We replied that we had learned it from our parents.

“But your parents, where did they learn the language?”, he replied.

FROM JUNE 10 TO JUNE 27 CAȚĂLIN ANDREI SANĂTESCU (38) AND COSTI BĂLEANU (46), TRAVELED THE DANUBE BIKE PATH FROM THE DANUBE SPRINGS TO THE BLACK SEA, GENERALLY FOLLOWING THE EUROVELO 6 ROUTE THAT OVERLAPS IN GERMANY AND AUSTRIA BETTER KNOWN LOCAL DONAU RADWEG.

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FACULTY OF APPLIED ECOLOGY – FUTURA
futura.edu.rs

Goal of the study program is to educate and train experts for integrated protection, control, recovery and preservation of integrity and quality of environment, with the emphasis on the synthesis of the structure of geophysical, biochemical, information-technological and legal-economic analysis of the environment.

TOURISM ORGANISATION OF SMEDEREVO
www.toosd.com

Tourism organisation of Smederevo, founded in 1953, is one of the oldest and most successful tourism organizations in Serbia. It is well known for promotional and commercial activity, preservation and presentation of cultural, traditional and gastronomical highlights of Smederevo region.

FLORA TOUR
www.floratour.sk

Being aware of the uniqueness of the magical space of Danube region, we founded our travel agency FLORA TOUR which for more than two decades offers customers high quality with added value of experience. Over the years, FLORA TOUR operating particularly in incoming tourism, has developed its product portfolio. Today we provide all tourist services in Bratislava and Slovakia.
UPCOMING EVENTS

July 26th
LIGHT FESTIVAL ON THE OLD DANUBE
Decorated boats, hits and oldies, along with a giant fireworks show, will create a party mood on the Old Danube. Make sure you reserve your boat in time.

August 1st to 17th
AFRICA DAYS ON DANUBE ISLAND
Captivating rhythms, imaginative costumes and delicious food transform Danube Island in Vienna into a center of happiness. During more than two weeks, Africa Days celebrate pure joie de vivre for the tenth time in Vienna.

August 14th to 31st
CARNUNTUM EXPERIENCE
Carnuntum Experience is an August festival in which vintners of the Römerland Carnuntum-Marchfeld Danube Region join with restaurant owners and the arts community, to stage more than 70 events each year.

August 15th
DANUBE IN FLAMES
On this evening, the Danube in Aschach/Feldkirchen, Austria, will be “in flames”. At dusk, guests can see brilliant fireworks on the Danube, synchronized to great music and myths. All this can be enjoyed either on shore or on board of a ship, including an exquisite 3-course menu and a live band.

September 2014
MEDIEVAL FESTIVAL “BUDIN”
Sound of steel, whistling bows, lovely scent of mead and the waft of the glory of our ancestors are getting together once more between the walls of the legendary fortress “Baba Vida” in Bulgaria. The culture of the medieval people from the east and the west, from the north and the south will meet in an epical clash in 2014 again.
The second edition of the Medieval festival “Budin” will show to its guests the armory and clothing of the old Bulgarians, Serbs, Kournians, Vikings, Crusaders and many more. Some of the oldest orthodox icons from the region will be exhibited in the fortress.
The Saturday evening offers the masterly medieval performance from the neofolk band „Ambient Folklore“. Become a part from the glorious past and meet the history in September due the Medieval festival “Budin”.

Tourism Agency of the Republic of Moldova organize the International Tourism Forum on „Development of wine tourism in the countries of the Danube River Basin“, with the main purpose of presenting the development trends of wine tourism in the countries of the Danube River Basin and identifying the possibilities and opportunities to create joint wine tourist routes. The state authorities responsible for the field of tourism invited to participate in this Forum, will have the possibility to get acquainted with the development of wine tourism in Moldova and the main wine cellars from our country such as “Cricova” and “Milestii-Mici”, as well as the tourist and wine complex “Chateau Vartely”.

October 18th and -19th
24H HIKING ON THE DONAUSTEIG
A whole day hiking event will take place on the Upper Austrian hiking trail Donausteig. The participants will hike 63,5 km 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 18 October at 7 am.
Further Information and Registration http://www.donausteil.com/detail/article/24h-wanderung-am-donausteig.html

October 15th to 17th
INTERNATIONAL TOURISM FORUM