**FLOATING CONFERENCES**

Important issues concerning the Danube and Danube countries were discussed during May and June, at four floating conferences, held on River Art cruise ship.

**DANUBE PARLIAMENTARIAN NETWORK**

Danube parliamentarian conference that lasted from May 20th to May 25th was a meeting of parliamentarians from European, national and regional parliaments, as well as tourism experts. During this conference, representatives of Montenegro, Romania, Austria, Serbia, Germany, Slovakia and European Parliament signed an official Initiative to form the Danube Parliamentarian Network. “If the Danube Strategy shall be a success, then it has to involve more citizens, ordinary people who live in the Danube Basin. Therefore, we have to have their elected representatives – the parliamentarians, pushing forward the Danube Strategy. That is why I think that this is a very historic outcome”, said Michael Theurer, Member of the European Parliament and MEP Danube Forum, after the initiative was signed.

The conference was held under the patronage of H.E. Mr. Martin Schulz, President of the European Parliament, and organized by the Danube Competence Center and GIZ. The participants cruised between Belgrade and Passau.

**SUSTAINABILITY**

Seminar “Sustainable Tourism at Inland Water Destination” was organized as a part of 95th session of Executive Council of UNWTO, and took place on May 26th and May 27th. This event gathered 130 high representatives from the field of world tourism: among others, Mr. Taleb Rifai, general secretary of UNWTO, and 16 international delegations. The participants had the opportunity to discuss examples of good practice in management process of inland water destinations, as well as the ways to create efficient partnership leading towards sustainable tourism at those destinations.

The seminar was organized by United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and Ministry of Finance and Economy of Republic of Serbia. River Art ship cruised from Belgrade to Kostolac.

**REGIONAL COOPERATION**

On May 28th and May 29th, representatives of municipalities, governing authorities of territorial cooperation programmers, central tourist administrations and other stakeholders from Bulgaria, Serbia and Romania, attended regional conference on territorial cooperation along the Danube. The conference was focused on the challenges of local, cross-border and regional development (especially within the scope of tourism), as well as the opportunities to expand the existing framework for cooperation in the 2014-2020 Programme Period.

The conference was organized by the Ministry of Economy, Energy and Tourism of the Republic of Bulgaria (MEET), in collaboration with Focal Point “Destination Danube” (FPDD) – a technical support unit for development of tourism in the Danube Region, established as a result of a joint project of MEET and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Germany.

The participants sailed from Vidin to Belgrade.

**CULTURAL ROUTES**

A floating conference, organized within the project “Cultural Routes in the Middle and Lower Danube Region”, was held from May 30th to June 2nd, with the main objective to promote The Roman Emperors’ Route and The Danube Wine Route. During this event, 86 representatives of Bulgaria, Croatia, Germany, Romania and Serbia, together with the representatives of major European tourism institutions, discussed the possibilities of cultural routes.

The tour operators, wine makers and tourism officials from each country, presented their routes’ locations and wine regions, while the specialized debates where dedicated to more targeted issues of cultural routes and cultural tourism, reaching target groups in wine tourism, sustainable tourism and perspective of outgoing agencies on source markets. The participants agreed that the cultural routes are a major tourism potential, since they offer not only the roman heritage sights, but also the possibility to discover the traditions, way of life and hospitality of the Danube regions and the local people. Participants agreed that the cultural routes are a major tourism potential, since they offer not only the roman heritage sights, but also the possibility to discover the traditions, way of life and hospitality of the Danube regions and the local people.

The conference was organized by DCC, and participants cruised from Belgrade to Bratislava.
ARGE Donau Österreich has just finished their branding process for the Austrian Danube region. The brand Danube Austria was designed with all partners of ARGE Donau Österreich, accompanied by the branding expert Dr. Robert Trasser (Trasser Markenberatung).

ARGE Donau Österreich was launched in August 2008 by the three heads of the provincial governments, with the idea that federal states with the largest population and the best-performing economies, should work together.

The joint venture has five partners: marketing association for the Upper Austria Danube region, the marketing association for the Lower Austrian Danube region, Oberösterreich Tourism, Niederösterreich-Werbung and Vipava Tourist Office.

ART WORKS

As a part of pilot project for development of children tourism, GIZ DCC organized competition for young people’s art works. The children who took part in the competition are 6th grade pupils from Elementary school Bilje, “Iulia Benesica” from Ilok and “Jovan Sterija Popovic” from Vrsac.

Best works / winners will have the opportunity to participate in the pilot tour Bilje-Ilok-Vrsac.

One of the main objectives of this pilot tour is to enhance the exchange of experiences and best practices of stakeholders in tourism and educational sector, as well as designing joint products and piloting their realisation. The project is a result of partnership between Educational Tourism Cluster, Friends of Children Serbia, Bilje+, TO Ilok and Red Cross Vrsac.

CA卵巢

DANUBE BLUE WEEK FESTIVAL

For the third year in a row, people from Belgrade, Donji Milanovac, Kladovo, Negotin, Turn Severin and Vidin, are taking part in the events organized as a part of the Danube Blue Week Festival. This year’s celebration includes different programmes for children, bike tours, concerts, boat carnival, jazz and wine happenings, opera and many more. Even though most of the events were organized around the Danube Day (Jun 29th), there are still some events you can visit and enjoy.

The first Danube Blue Week Festival was organized in 2011, when three municipalities in the Iron Gate region gathered together around the idea to celebrate the Danube. In cooperation with DCC and GIZ, tourism organizations of Majdanpek and Kladovo in Serbia, and municipality of Drobeta Turn Severin, managed to create a festival with attractive programme for visitors of all ages and interests. The basic idea was to color the Danube banks in blue, and to encourage partners to organize cross border events – focusing on widening tourism offer in the region.

After successful first year, in 2012, municipality of Vidin in Bulgaria joined the festival. This year, tourism organizations of Belgrade and Negotin are also organizing events under the umbrella of the Danube Blue Week Festival.

FAM TRIP

For the purpose of promoting the Roman Emperors’ Route and the Danube Wine Route, a familiarization trip for selected tour operators and travel journalists from Germany, France, and Netherlands will be organized mid-September 2013. During FAM trip, the participants will visit 8 roman heritage localities and 4 wine regions along the route (2 roman localities and 1 wine region in each of the four countries). They will have the opportunity to experience the Routes with related infrastructure, localities, side tourist attractions, and - at the same time - to establish contacts and directly discuss and negotiate business deals with local tourism sector.
CAPTAINS’ POINT OF DANUBE

INTERVIEW: Vladimir Palkovič and Jozef Kozanak, captains at River Art cruise ship

While important guests were discussing Danube issues at three different floating conferences in May and June, the River Art cruise ship were slowly moving from the lower to the upper part of the Danube, and the same way back.

During those twelve days, the weather was everything, but convenient for a river cruise – heavy rains and a few serious storms made the trip quite exciting. However, the River Art was in the hands of two experienced, calm and capable captains – Vladimir Palkovič and Jozef Kozanak, citizens of Slovakia, who have worked at the Danube ships for almost thirty years. They work in 6-hour shifts and take turns with each other. Bad weather did not disturb their routine, since they face much worse situations on day-to-day basis.

„The worse is when it is night, thick fog and we are the Sent George Channel in Romania. A lot of people take small vessels and go for fishing tours, which is very dangerous for them, and very unpleasant and difficult for us“, says Jozef Kozanak in an interview for Danube CC Bulletin.

That is the worst situation to cruise. But, what is the toughest part of the Danube for a riverboat captain?

JOZEF KOZANAK: It is definitely a German part, from Straubing to Vilshofen. The water level is quite low there, it is narrow and there are many ships.

Speaking from a captain’s point of view, what is specific for the Danube?

VLADIMIR PALKOVIČ: Huge differences between the upper, middle and lower Danube are something that is unique for this river. In the lower part, for example, the river changes its way, its route, when the water level are high. Then, you have to inform in advance where to go, and where does it flow. The upper, German part is also specific, since it is unusually narrow.

How do you manage the ship in a narrow part of the Danube?

VLADIMIR PALKOVIČ: We have to pay extra attention and make sure that there are no other ships around. If there is, one of the ships has to wait for the other to pass by. The rule is that the ship that floats up the river flow, waits for the one that goes down the flow.

This bottom of your ship is 160 cm under the water level. Is it enough? Are there any dangerous objects on the Danube floor?

JOZEF KOZANAK: Yes, there are many shipwrecks, in Serbia and Romania in particular. In some spots, there are a few dozen of them. These ships sunk during the battles in the World War II. The Germans, Slovaks and Hungarians cleaned their part of the river, but the lower part is still covered with metal. Fortunately, we know the dangerous locations. Either the river changed its flow above the ships, or sand islands were formed on the wrecks.

Is there some sort of ship control on the Danube, something like air control on the airports?

VLADIMIR PALKOVIČ: We communicate among ourselves, and with individual port authorities. In Germany, Austria, Hungary and Slovakia, there is Automatic Informative System – AIS, which enables you to use GPS navigation, warns the captains of any danger, etc.

Captain’s cabin gives you the opportunity to enjoy the best possible view of the Danube. Which is your favourite, most beautiful, part of the river?

VLADIMIR PALKOVIČ: Wachau Valley in Austria and Kazan in Romania and Serbia.

JOZEF KOZANAK: Novi Sad and Apatin curves in Serbia. Not so much for the beauty, but for nice memories of my youth.

In addition, what is your favourite part of the day, looking from the cabin?

JOZEF KOZANAK: Whenever the Sun goes up or down. That is romantic.

DANUBE OFFICE ULM/NEU-ULM, GERMANY

The Danube Office is a private limited project agency, which was founded in 2002, with the goal to promote inter regional communication, cultural exchange and knowledge transfer along the Danube. Their activities include organizing International Danube Festival in Ulm. In 2012, the festival gathered nearly 300,000 people, who enjoyed 120 events, on ten stages, during ten days. As a partner in the Transdanube project, the Danube Office participates actively in the EUSDR.

THE DANUBE OFFICE
www.donaubuero.de
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DANUBE PHOTOS

Within the Blue Week Danube Festival, two photo exhibitions were organized. The Danube motifs inspired Romanian photographer Sorin Onisor, whose works were exhibited in Turnu Severin. In Donji Milanovac, visitors could also see photographs of the Danube, taken by amateur photographers.

In the future, however, this will be the place for your photographs: landscapes of the Danube, its wild life, nature, people, traditions, heritage, buildings, or any other aspect of the river.

Send your photographs to My Danube Travel Facebook page, so the selection of the best could be made.

The best one published, will be awarded at the end of the year.