

Danubeparks Newsletter 27.05.2010

This newsletter contains again some information about the latest developments in the DANUBE PARKS project as well as an outlook on upcoming events. The main article informs on the Danube Strategy and DANUBE PARKS' position and activities in this regard.

Latest Developments

New Protected Area Slovanský Ostrov Island



In Slovakia, a new Protected Area has been designated – with the help of the Slovakian DANUBE PARKS partner [BROZ](#). At the inauguration ceremony of the **Slovanský Ostrov Island** (directly on the border zone to Austria, beneath the castle of Devín), BROZ partners also presented the DANUBE PARKS Network and its activities. The newly designated area is an important step forward to linking the Protected Areas of Slovakia and Austria on the border zone. Within the DANUBE PARKS project, Austrian and Slovakian partners work towards a **common**

management strategy for the border zones of the concerned Protected Areas.

Transnational Monitoring of Indicator Species



DANUBE PARKS plans a transnational, Danube-wide monitoring of **Little-ringed Plover and Sandmartin** in 2011. This will give valuable information on the quality of the river, as both birds are **indicator species for dynamic and natural river habitats**. Currently, the experts of [Duna-Ipoly](#) and [Donau-Auen](#) National Parks as well as [BirdLife Austria](#) are analysing the information given by all partners, which will build the basis of a [Workshop](#) in June in Duna-Ipoly National Park. This will be the occasion not only for detailed discussions on the plans for 2011, but also for

training on the methodology of the monitoring.

Evaluation of DANUBE PARKS Communication



The DANUBE PARKS Network goes even more international: We fixed a cooperation with the [Bristol Business School](#), where a group of experts from the MBA course has evaluated internal and external communication of the DANUBE PARKS Project. On May 24th, they have presented their valuable findings to a team of the Donau-Auen National Park and DANUBE PARKS. The day was concluded by an excursion and many fruitful discussions.

Upcoming Public Events

June 5th Opening of the mobile [A Chance for the Blue Danube](#) in Tulcea, Romania (Danube-Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority)

June 29th Awarding of prizes to the winners of the competition “A Chance for the Blue Danube” in Tulcea, Romania (Danube-Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority)

July 3rd-4th Danube Festival in Mohács, Hungary ([Duna-Dráva National Park](#))

July – October Hosting of the mobile exhibition “A Chance for the Blue Danube” by various partners:

July: Kalimok-Brushlen Protected Site (Tutrakan, Bulgaria)

August: Duna-Dráva National Park (Mohács, Hungary)

September: Duna-Ipoly National Park (Budapest, Hungary)

October: BROZ (Bratislava, Slovakia)

Taking a closer look at: The Danube Strategy

European roadmap for the future of a diverse region

The European Commission (EC) started to develop - together with the concerned member states - an EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR). The Strategy should lay down the priorities of future development of the region and streamline relevant funding instruments towards these. An accompanying Action Plan will already give concrete topics and activities where action is most important and urgent.

The Strategy for the moment will reside on **three pillars** :

- Transport, energy and information society
- Environment and risk prevention
- Socio-economic development

Of all relevant countries or regions of countries, only eight are members of the European Union, while six of them are not (yet). The following map gives an overview on the **Danube Basin and concerned countries** :



picture source: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperation/danube/index_en.htm

The state representatives of all countries in the Danube Basin are obviously heavily involved in the development of the Strategy. However, also the civic society had the chance to raise their voice: There has been a **public consultation process** where statements could be handed in by citizens, organizations or public authorities. The process has been closed on April 12th – until that date, around 70 statements reached the EC. Also, **public conferences** take place in many countries of the region: There have been events already in Ulm, Budapest, Vienna/Bratislava and Ruse. The closing conference will be held on June 9th-11th in Constanta (Romania).

DANUBEPARKS has been in close contact with various relevant institutions lately, in order to put our topics onto the agenda and to anchor the Network itself in the list of Flagship Projects.

Some **activities of DANUBEPARKS** in the last weeks included:

- Submission of a statement in the public consultation process
- Participation in the Vienna / Bratislava Conference on April 19th-21st and poster presentation of DANUBEPARKS
- Close contact to INTERACT and submission of material for an article in their next newsletter, directed to EU government officials
- Participation by Bulgarian DANUBEPARKS partners at the Danube Strategy Conference in Ruse (Bulgaria)

The most important **DANUBEPARKS topics and positions** , which we also focus on in the Danube Strategy process, are the following:

- The **protection of natural heritage and biodiversity** of the region is the basis for sustainable development.
- **Protected Areas are key stakeholders** in the protection of biodiversity.
- The successful protection of biodiversity – because of the unbounded nature of habitats and species – is only possible with **strong transnational cooperation** of Protected Areas.

- Nature protection is a **trans-sectoral activity**, involving stakeholders of transport, energy, sustainable tourism, various state bodies, and so on. Nature protection stakeholders therefore have an important contribution to make to a sustainable and inclusive regional development.
- Habitats and the fauna and flora inhabiting them need areas to expand – an **interlinked network of habitats** therefore needs to be the goal of nature protection. Considering effects of climate change, the value of well-functioning natural areas (e.g. inundation areas) will still increase. All projects disturbing habitat connectivity (e.g. transport routes or energy stations) therefore need to be carefully checked and discussed also by nature protection stakeholders.
- The **hydro-morphological changes** along the Danube have had severe negative impacts on the ecosystem; coordinated counter measures are needed. All projects of further changing the water bodies for navigation purposes need close cooperation with nature protection stakeholders already in the planning stage, and always need to integrate all possible revitalisation measures in their projects.
- Biodiversity protection first and foremost needs the **full implementation of already existing EU regulations** (e.g. FFH and Birds Directive, Action Plan for Danube Sturgeon, Water Framework Directive). Full financial and institutional support for implementing stakeholders is necessary. The protection of biodiversity is also making a contribution to socio-economic development of the region, as is the case with one of the Flagship species of the Danube River, the Sturgeon.
- The **development of sustainable nature tourism** offers needs to be supported. It can on the one hand offer sustainable income for local population; on the other hand it helps the conservation of biodiversity by awareness-raising for the importance of nature protection with local and foreign visitors.

DANUBEPARKS welcomes the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, but also urges all relevant stakeholders to not give economic development the rule over ecological and social issues. For the macro-regional development to be sustainable, all three pillars need to be considered and integrated of equal value, and transnational as well as trans-sectoral approaches in the planning and implementation are vital for achieving this.

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Danubeparks - network of protected areas

A-2304 Orth an der Donau, Schloss Orth

Phone +43 2212 3450

Fax +43 2212 3450 17

e-mail office@danubeparks.org

www.danubeparks.org