The Danube - the river that unites Europe -

Development of the tourism sector as integrative element for the countries of South-Eastern Europe

The German Technical Cooperation (GTZ)
Program for economic development and cooperation (WBF) in Serbia
Key goal: The development of the Danube as an economic region

Boosting economic activity in the Danube region is one of the key goals of the economic development and employment promotion programs implemented by

- the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) GmbH [www.gtz.de](http://www.gtz.de) on behalf of
- the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) [www.bmz.de](http://www.bmz.de)

These programs promote tourism, investment and environmental protection in the Danube riparian states in South-Eastern Europe:

- Croatia
- Serbia
- Bulgaria and
- Romania
Promoting tourism is a priority area

Together with the national coordination teams and the Danube communities developing and implementing a tourism concept for the Danube region:

- Identification of tourism potentials and designing new tourism products (e.g. Danube cycle route from Budapest to the Black Sea)
- Consulting of tourism enterprises (e.g. CEFE trainings)
- Supporting marketing activities (e.g. map production, internet presentations and fair promotion)
- Supporting economic cooperation along the Danube
Opportunities for the riparian countries

Tourism development is:

- a key element in South-Eastern Europe integration into European community and promotes cross-border cooperation between the states, regions and communities
- creating new jobs in tourism sector, making a significant contribution to income and employment promotion
- harnessing unique cultural and nature potentials along the Danube
- spreading the positive image of the „blue Danube“ to the South-Eastern Europe
- helping establish tourism products on sustainable basis, focusing on nature, rural areas, wine tourism, cycling and cruises
Activities for joint project planning and coordination

- In February 2004 first Conference was organized, with aim to integrate all decision makers of countries and regions along the Danube in South-Eastern Europe in the process to develop tourism.

- Decision to concentrate in the first phase to develop Danube cycle route from Budapest to the Black Sea.

- Working group was founded with representatives from Croatia, Serbia, Romania and Bulgaria to elaborate activities to improve knowledge and image about the region.

- Working group meets regularly in Belgrade, Sofia, Temisoara, Vukovar, Russe, Budapest, Oberreifenberg to identify working fields, define priorities and make action plans.

- Participants from Ministries, regions, local communities, NGOs, agreed on responsibilities to work on tourism concepts, creating tourism products, marketing activities and education measures.
Activities for product development and promotion

- Jointly production of the first cycle map from Budapest to the Black Sea as PPP Project with Kartographie Huber, Munich

- Jointly presentations and press conferences of the Danube region of responsible Ministers from Croatia, Serbia, Romania and Bulgaria on ITB in 2005 and 2006

- Jointly participation with own stand on the several fairs ITB, Eurobike Friedriedshafen etc.

- Jointly creation of the Danube website [www.donau-info.org](http://www.donau-info.org) to present Danube region of the South-Eastern Europe

- CEFE trainings special adopted for start-up in tourism were carried out in four Danube communities
Why “new” Danube cycling route?

- Cycle tourism is niche, but growing sector - 2.45 Million Germans have been on bicycle holidays in 2004 (+8.9% 2003)

- Donauradweg is famous brand (Passau - Vienna)

- Further development in Hungary is already going on

- There is already demand for the Danube cycle route in the SEE!!! Cycle tourist from Germany, Austria are already cycling along the Danube in SEE.
Steps to produce Danube cycling map from Budapest to the Black Sea

- Consultation with national, regional and local authorities, tourist organizations, authorities of national parks, NGOs, cycle experts etc.
- Scanning of all possible routes (dams, local streets, existing cycle paths, partly with photo documentation)
- Mapping of tourist infrastructure (hotels, motels, pensions, camps, restaurants, tourist information centers)
- Searching for alternative means of transport (e.g. ferries, buses)
- Checking regulation in the National parks, hunting areas etc.
Some projects results

- Cross border cooperation in South-Eastern Europe is strengthen
- First new sustainable tourism products in the region are developed (e.g. Donauradweg)
- Number of cycle tourists has doubled in 2006
- Improvement of image the Danube in SEE
  - more than 10 articles in German and Austrian media;
  - cc. 1500 visitors on the Danube-Web-Site monthly
- Increased level of education through CEFE trainings
- In several regions increase of tourism enterprises and improvement of products standards
- Danube region put for the first time as priority for tourism development (e.g. in Serbia defined budget for Danube more than 8 Mio € for 2007)
Success story - Bilje, Croatia

- Bilje (6,000 inhabitants) is situated near the Danube and the Nature Park Kopački Rit.

- In 2001, the first family registered beds for tourists. Today, the Municipality of Bilje has 200 registered beds and guests from 63 countries and 5 continents and an annual turnover of about 250,000 EUR. Thus, the tourism sector of Bilje has become a development generator.

- The first bicycle tourist visited Bilje one and a half years ago. Up till then, there was no idea of bicycle tourism; then the Danube Route was signposted. When the first house was registered as Bike & Bed – people laughed! Today, there are 10 Bike & Bed Houses and local farmers supply an increasing amount of home-made and eco-products, such as meat, eggs, honey, paprika, flowers, wine etc.

- In the meantime, the national government, the district and local community support the development of tourism offers.
Planned activities for 2007

- Support of signposting of the cycle route in Serbia and Romania
- Education of start-ups through CEFE trainings in five Danube municipalities
- Support of the development of tourism products in selected Danube communities
- Support for jointly promotion on several fair and conferences
- Supporting promotion activities like study tours for German travel agencies and journalist
Get in touch with us!

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