

42nd UPU International Letter-Writing Competition**Theme: "Write a letter about why water is precious"****Author: Daniel Korčák (Czech Republic), aged 15***In Ostrava – Polanka nad Odrou on 25 March 2013**Dear Water of the River Odra!*

To begin with, I'd like to say hello and start by telling you how much I appreciate you. I will start a tiny bit broad.

You are the water of one of the largest Moravian rivers, and as such you belong to the extended family of all waters in the world. All waters, starting with a small forest brook, up to the vast expanse of endless oceans. As water, you give life, strength, energy, joy as well as suffering. You are both salt and fresh, hot and icy, clear and opaque, simply as we know you.

You, as the water of the river Odra, arise in a large forest close to the village of Kozlovice in the Libavá military zone. We people, because we appreciate you, built a small chapel above your spring so that everyone who wants to find you can find you and have a look at the birth of a river. There, you are still a small, shy and fearful water that avoids every tiny stone. But you strengthen and grow at every stage of your journey. You combine with the waters of small brooks and streams and change into the water of a tiny river.

We people build our houses, farms, flour and saw mills around you to utilize your strength. You flow through small towns and villages, fields and forests until you reach the outskirts of the town of Studenka where the bed you created begins its charms. You twist and turn, hide and peep out again at places unexpected, creating unique rivers, meanders and pools. From Studenka through

Jistebník up to Polanka, we slightly changed the path of your travel, built ponds for you which you, water, fill to the brim and help us create our fishing management.

Sometimes you also trouble us, and that is when you raise your level and leave your bed. As if you are reminding us that you are an element beyond all control, and we respect you as such.

On your journey, you created a unique nature reserve, Polanecká, Niva, sought after by many tourists and lovers of nature. In the river you create, we bathe, fish, children play with you when building stone dams, athletes on boats struggle against your power, and many seek peace and quiet in your whisper. In the reserve near your river, there is your sister, healing water, which is stored deep under the earth and waits to be carried to the nearby spa where it helps heal our ailments.

You leave the reserve. Now, you are an adult, great water changing into a self-confident river, and slowly flow into the largest city of the Moravian-Silesian Region, Ostrava. You may not even know, but you are again helpful here. You cool the towers of a heat power plant, help us clean streets, irrigate fields, and remove everything that is dirty or unclean. Finally, you flow through water management plants we built for you, and they purify and brighten you so that you do not mind working for us. In Ostrava, you meet the waters of further two large rivers – the waters from the Odra Hills with those from the Jeseníky and Beskid Mountains. When you leave Ostrava, you are the water of a powerful, proud river and you head to the next water, and that is the water of the sea.



My letter to you might end up here, but it will not because this is only the conclusion of your journey as the water of the river Oder and the beginning of another story of yours. Now, you belong to all waters embracing our planet. You may appear as waters spurting from the depths of a geyser, as water of a rain in a summer storm, as an avalanche at the foot of a hill, as water vapour in the clouds, or as water in my glass ready to quench my thirst.

I could write many other lines about you, but even so not everything could be expressed because your story is endless and your journey has no destination.

Therefore I want to use this letter to thank you that you are, because without you there would be nothing. People, animals, plants, life, world. Thanks to you, water, our planet is called blue. I realize how important you are, I humbly look at you, and am always looking forward to seeing you.

Your friend Dan