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| *by* ***Andrea Sigl****, 2009* |
| From Linz to Constanta |
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| Between the 27th July and 13th August my husband and I, drove alongside the Danube from Linz to Constanta. The Danube cycling route maps were very helpful. Very early we figured out that the dotted routes and even the red marked roads close to the river shore were hardly passable with packed trekking bikes. Therefore we used the green alternative. We advanced well and enjoyed especially the Serbian part of the route. The people were very friendly and especially in Belgrade people were immediately on the spot and tried to help us when we took a look on the map. We kept on driving on the right side of the Danube and drove into Bulgaria at Bregovo. At this point we wished to have some more correctness and reliability concerning the map (Update 2008). Although the description of the supply situation matches with our general impression of Bulgaria, it was not the case for the rural part of Bulgaria. Especially in the areas of Vraza and Pleven, one can be happy to find except beverage, noodles, oil and candies also some bred in the little stores of the villages. Not to mention restaurants. It is more than advisable to carry a lot of food provisions. The main connection towards Topolovec/ Brusarci is not shown on the map. You have to turn off this road at Dobro Dol. The roads between Dobri Dol and Lom and the connection from Glozhene to Mizija were inaccessible. Despite numerous construction sites on the route the road was drivable. Thus you do not have to take the longer and heavy trafficked alternative routes. The ferry in Nikopol is currently out of order due to the fact that the main road Pleven –Nikopol is not accessible. The hotel in Nikopol is closed as well because of refurbishment. It is not advisable to arrive on a Sunday because all of the three restaurants are closed at that time. The worst thing that happened to us was on the road between Cenevo and Obretnik short before Ruse. Currently the entire traffic between Ruse and Sofia circulates on this way, especially the heavy loads and the aggressive and reckless manner of driving turned this section of the route into 15 Km of hell. The route from Belgrade to Pancevo including the Danube Bridge was a joyride compared to the other roads. The course of the road has been changed in Aydemir. The signposts only show the new road which is not on the new map that leads over the hills to Silistra. The old and short city gateway is just signposted as gateway to Aydemir. There are a lot of better and cheaper hotels in Aydemir and the city gateways to the west of Silistra as those in the centre. At this point we would like to warn all travellers that enter Romania from the right side of the Danube. There are no exchange offices at the border on the road to Constanta (after all 135 Km) and no cash dispensers or banks that change money. Therefore, it is more than advisable to exchange your money already in Bulgaria. A polite and friendly employee of the municipal office in Ostrov was so kind to change money at an approximate price. Another warning for Romania: The loose dogs show a much more aggressive character as those in Serbia or Bulgaria. We were regularly attacked and pursued by smaller and bigger ones. It was annoying on the paved climbs and very dangerous in the heavy trafficked area in and around Constanta. Maybe there are some tips and tricks of experienced bikers.Hubert and Andrea Sigl |