

**9<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE PARTIES  
TO THE FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT  
ON THE SAVA RIVER BASIN**

**Zagreb (Croatia), December 9, 2022**

**DECLARATION**



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**WE, THE PARTIES TO THE FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT ON THE SAVA RIVER BASIN**, gathered in Zagreb on December 9, 2022, for our 9<sup>th</sup> Meeting, *recall* the vital importance of regional cooperation and coordination of the Parties,

*Conscious* of the great importance of the Sava River Basin, its environment and natural resources for economic and social prosperity, as well as the crucial importance of regional cooperation and coordination in line with the Framework Agreement on the Sava River Basin (FASRB), aiming at sustainable development of the Sava River Basin,

*Recognizing* the benefits that the Parties can gain from, and harms that can be avoided or mitigated as a result of the cooperation of the Parties through and within the International Sava River Basin Commission (Sava Commission),

*Acknowledging* the progress in the coordinated implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive and EU Flood Directive and *calling for* a further common planning approach for the entire Sava River Basin for mutual benefit and increased wellbeing of its people, society, and the nature,

*Welcoming* the new, transformative framework provided by the European Green Deal and its strategies and related processes, including the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans,

*Contributing* to the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 6 of the 2030 Agenda,

*Emphasizing* the importance of navigation in the Sava River Basin for the economic and social development of the region and the need to strengthen joint actions aiming to accelerate activities leading toward rehabilitation and further development of the entire Sava River waterway,

*Expressing satisfaction* with the remarkable progress achieved in terms of integrated information systems, *confirming* their importance and efficiency for the exchange of data and information relevant to the Sava River Basin,

*Bearing in mind* the commitments of the Parties expressed in the Declaration from the 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Parties, held in Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina) on October 24, 2019, declare the following:

***Regarding cooperation in the Sava River Basin in the frame of the FASRB, We***

- *Appreciate* the efforts of the Parties, the Sava Commission and its Secretariat and expert bodies in the implementation of the FASRB and *acknowledge* the significant overall progress towards the achievement of the jointly agreed objectives set by the FASRB and its protocols that have been made in the reporting period,

- *Having considered* the Eighth Country Reports on implementation of the FASRB and the work of the Sava Commission, *accept* the Report on the implementation of the Framework Agreement on the Sava River Basin for the period from July 1, 2019, to June 30, 2022.

***Regarding cooperation in integrated water management, We***

- *Approve* the second Sava River Basin Management Plan (Sava RBMP) as a major achievement in regional cooperation in the water sector, leading towards the fulfilment of one of the main objectives of the FASRB - *Establishment of sustainable water management*,
- *Acknowledging* the active participation and contribution to its development, *welcome* the approval of the second Sava RBMP by Montenegro,
- *Recalling* the importance of the first plan approved in 2014, *highly appreciate* the remarkable work of the Sava Commission, as the coordinating body, in developing the second, updated Sava RBMP,
- *Express* our gratitude to all other institutions and individuals who contributed to the development of the Sava RBMP,
- *Welcoming* the main achievements in the implementation of measures envisaged in the first plan, *commit ourselves* to implement the Programme of Measures foreseen in this updated Sava RBMP, in order to contribute to meeting the common objectives – to prevent further deterioration and enhance the status of aquatic and water dependent ecosystems, promote sustainable water use, enhance protection and improvement of the aquatic environment, surface and ground water and contribute to the mitigation of the floods and droughts effects, while being aware of the existing differences between the Parties – EU member states and non-EU member states,
- *Bearing in mind* that the measures are the responsibility of the Parties, we *request* the Sava Commission to provide all necessary assistance to the Parties in communication with relevant international institutions, in order to find out more opportunities and mechanisms for funding the implementation of the measures on the basin-wide level,
- *Having in mind* gaps, uncertainties, challenges and arising development opportunities recognized in the basin-wide planning process, we *commit ourselves* to making additional efforts to ensure adequate resources for the continuation of the activities coordinated by the Sava Commission, *calling* for transboundary solutions that will integrate social, environmental and economic principles for sustainable and resilient development of the Sava River Basin,
- *Welcome* efforts of the Parties to implement the measures of the Flood Risk Management Plan in the Sava River Basin, in order to contribute to prevent or limit hazards, and reduce and eliminate adverse consequences from floods, and we *commit ourselves* to ensure adequate resources in the second planning cycle for preparation of all relevant steps in accordance with the Protocol on Flood Protection to the FASRB,
- *Welcoming* the signing and successful implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation on regular functioning and maintenance of the Sava Flood Forecasting and Warning System – Sava FFWS, we *commit ourselves* to undertaking all necessary actions related to the regular functioning, maintenance and further developments of Sava FFWS,
- *Acknowledging* the development of the Outline of the Sediment Management Plan and permanent data and information exchange on planned and executed dredging, we *reconfirm* our

commitment to ensure support for the further implementation of the Protocol on Sediment Management to the FASRB and the development of the full-fledged Sediment Management Plan for the Sava River Basin,

- *Reconfirm* our commitment to undertake final harmonization of the Protocol on Emergency Situations to the FASRB, taking into account its significance for the implementation of the FASRB.

### ***Regarding rehabilitation and development of navigation, We***

- *Reconfirm* our commitment to rehabilitate and develop navigation on the Sava River and its navigable tributaries, being aware of its importance for further economic and social development of the region, while respecting applicable environmental legislation, as well as the Joint Statement on Guiding Principles on the Development of Inland Navigation and Environmental Protection in the Danube River Basin (Joint Statement),
- *Welcome* the progress in the process of demining the Sava River banks, with special emphasis on the planned worksites for waterway rehabilitation and maintenance, bearing in mind that demining of those locations is a prerequisite for carrying out the necessary examinations for the preparation of project documentation, and that possible delays in demining activities can have a negative impact on already started waterway rehabilitation activities. In that regard, *we welcome* the commencement of activities on administrative procedures that will be followed with the implementation of the demining project,
- *Welcome* the progress in the fairway rehabilitation on critical sectors in the Republic of Serbia, including the preparation of the feasibility study for the rehabilitation of the sector Drina Confluence,
- *Welcome* the completion of the development of necessary documentation for the rehabilitation of the fairway sector Jaruge - Novi Grad, and accordingly *express satisfaction* with the establishment and work of the Stakeholders Forum in the framework of this activity, as a significant step forward in the implementation of the Joint Statement,
- *Welcome* the activities on drafting the Rules for waterway maintenance on the common section of the Sava River waterway, for the purpose of full implementation of the Bilateral Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Croatia and the Council of ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina on navigation and marking and maintenance of the Sava River waterway,
- *Appreciate* the work on projects related to the implementation of the Protocol on the prevention of pollution caused by navigation,
- Although the planned measures on the rehabilitation and development of navigation on the Sava River are the responsibility of the Parties, *request* the Sava Commission to continue providing assistance to the Parties in communication with relevant international institutions, in order to find out more opportunities and mechanisms for supporting and funding of activities related to the rehabilitation and development of navigation on the Sava River and in monitoring and coordination of their implementation,
- *Acknowledge* activities on the production of publications in the field of inland navigation and their application in the riparian countries.

***Being aware of the importance of the cross-cutting issues in the Sava River Basin, We***

- *Bearing in mind* that the Joint Plan of Actions for the Sava River Basin (JPA), prepared by the Sava Commission in 2017 with the support of the World Bank, outlines the path towards sustainable development and growth in the region and aims to serve as a catalyst for further enhancement of the cooperation, we *acknowledge* the exceptional work invested in the successful preparation of the related regional component of the Sava and Drina River Corridors Integrated Development Program (SDIP), and *commit ourselves* to provide all necessary resources and support to the Sava Commission in implementation of the activities planned by the SDIP- Phase I,
- *Encourage* the Sava Commission to continue and further enhance the dialogue with relevant stakeholders from the navigation, hydropower, agriculture, nature conservation and flood management sectors, for integration of the environmental, social, and economic aspects into the planning and implementation of infrastructure projects, while respecting the principle of sustainable development in the basin,
- *Having in mind* the likely consequences of climate change on the water regime in the Sava River Basin and the need for effective adaptation measures, we *encourage* the Sava Commission and the Parties to undertake further activities leading toward climate change adaptation in the basin,
- *Understanding* the relevance of transboundary data and information exchange as a basis for decision-making and planning in the Sava River Basin, we *acknowledge* the Sava Commission and the Parties' efforts made in establishing and maintaining the Sava GIS platform, and we *express* our commitment in providing the necessary means for further development and enhancement of Sava GIS and Sava HIS toolsets in regard to integrated water management and navigation-related applications.

***In closing remarks, We***

- *Thank* the stakeholders for their participation in the activities at the basin-wide level and *welcome* their further involvement in future relevant processes,
- *Welcome* messages from the 10<sup>th</sup> Youth Parliament of the Sava River Basin delivered at this Meeting and *encourage* the young generation to further cooperate in the scope of the Sava Commission,
- *Express* appreciation to donors, relevant partner organizations and all other contributors for supporting the work of the Sava Commission and *hope* for their support and cooperation in the future activities of the Sava Commission,
- *Express* gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Croatia for having hosted the 9<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Parties and *announce* the next meeting of the Parties to be held in the Republic of Serbia in 2024.