Session 3:
Sharing Basins, Sharing Destinies: International River Commissions

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How protocols benefit the Framework Agreement on the Sava River Basin: the example of the sediment protocol

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Sava River Basin – one of the „crown jewels” of European nature

- 176 sites important for biodiversity conservation
- Central Posavina region „mixed” heritage – nature and culture
- Largest complex of alluvial forests in Europe

The Sava River Basin is severely known for its high environmental and social value, comprising not only from a natural, but also from an economic and cultural perspective. It is an area of significant biodiversity, protected landscapes, and is a key area for the development of sustainable economic and social development.

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The Sava River basin covers an area of approximately 1.9 million km² and is one of the most significant sub-basins of the Danube River basin, comprising 17% of the basin. The basin area is shared among several countries: Slovenia, Croatia, Austria, Italy, Hungary, Serbia, Montenegro, and Albania. The Sava River has a length of 1,400 km, with its source in the Danube in Bratislava, Slovakia. Together with its tributaries, the Sava River basin is one of the largest and most complex river basins in Europe, with a population of over 20 million people. The river is characterized by its rich biodiversity, including a diverse range of fish and bird species.

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The Sava River Basin is home to a rich diversity of plant and animal species, including unique and endangered species found nowhere else in the world. The basin is also home to a number of important cultural and historical sites, including ancient settlements, historic monuments, and traditional villages.

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The Sava River Basin is an area of significant economic importance, with a diverse range of industries, including agriculture, forestry, and tourism. The river is also an important source of water for drinking, irrigation, and industrial uses. The basin is under threat from pollution, climate change, and human activities, which are increasing pressure on the ecosystem and its resources.
Framework Agreement on the Sava River Basin (FASRB, 2004)

➢ **Key objective:** Transboundary cooperation for sustainable development of the region

➢ **Specific goals:**
  • To establish international regime of navigation
  • To establish sustainable water management
  • Undertaking of measures to prevent/limit hazards (floods, droughts, ice and accidents) and reduce/eliminate their negative consequences

➢ **Implementing body:** Sava Commission

➢ **Protocols:** In implementing the FASRB, the Parties may conclude protocols for regulating specific issues of interest
Protocols to the FASRB

➢ **Navigation Regime (2004)**
  • institutional arrangements (rules of navigation, technical rules for vessels, marking of the waterways, etc.)

➢ **Flood Protection (2015)**
  • regulates the issues of sustainable flood protection in the Sava River Basin with aim to prevent or limit flood hazard, to reduce flood risk and to reduce or mitigate detrimental consequences of floods

➢ **Prevention of Water Pollution caused by Navigation (2017)**
  • prescribes measures to effectively prevent, control and reduce pollution from vessels and executing necessary measures for adequate pollution response, monitoring of water quality and enforcement

  • **Sediment Management (2017)**
Protocol on Sediment Management to the FASRB

➢ **Scope:** to regulate the procedures of cooperation related to sustainable sediment management to protect the integrity of the water and sediment regime in the Sava River Basin, comprising quality and quantity issues

➢ **Sava River Basin Sediment Management Plan:**
  - sediment balance throughout the river system;
  - sediment monitoring;
  - evaluation of sediment quality and quantity;
  - measures to:
    ✓ prevent impacts and pollution of water or sediment resulting from dredging;
    ✓ control erosion, torrents and other sediment processes;
    ✓ ensure and maintain integrity of water regime;
    ✓ provide, ensure and maintain conditions for safe navigation;
    ✓ protect wetlands areas and retention spaces;
    ✓ control reservoir sedimentation;
  - designate areas for capital dredging;
  - guidance for the sediment disposal, treatment and use.
Towards Practical Guidance for Sustainable Sediment Management using the Sava River Basin as a Showcase

- **Objective:** To develop and validate practical guidance to achieve SSM plan on the river basin scale

- **Partners:** UNESCO Venice Office, UNESCO ISI, SedNet and ISRBC

- **Outcomes:**
  - Practical SSM course;
  - Practical guidance (document) on how to achieve SSM plan;
  - Draft implementing program for development of Sava SSM plan;
  - Draft project fiches for different modules of Sava SSM plan;
  - Overview of monitoring and sampling gaps and data uncertainties;
  - Estimation of a sediment balance for the Sava RB;
  - Proposal for the establishment of an effective sediment monitoring system.
Current status in implementing Protocol on Sediment Management and next steps

- **Information on planned & executed dredging on yearly basis** submitted regularly by the countries to ISRBC

- **Program for Development of the Sediment Management Plan**, comprising main elements relevant for development of the plan, adopted by ISRBC

- **Outline of the Sava Sediment Management Plan**, aiming to provide a detailed analysis of existing sediment management practices in the Sava River Basin and to define further steps for development of full-fledged Sediment Management Plan, *in preparation (supported by UNESCO Venice Office)*