SIXTH MEETING OF THE PARTIES
TO THE FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT
ON THE SAVA RIVER BASIN
Belgrade (Republic of Serbia), June 1, 2016

DECLARATION

SIXTH MEETING OF THE PARTIES
TO THE FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT ON THE SAVA RIVER BASIN
Belgrade (Republic of Serbia), June 1, 2016

DECLARATION

WE, THE PARTIES TO THE FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT ON THE SAVA RIVER BASIN, gathered at Belgrade on June 1, 2016, for our Sixth Meeting,

Conscious of the great importance of the Sava River, its environment and natural resources for the economic and social prosperity, as well as the crucial importance of regional cooperation and coordination of the Parties to the "Framework Agreement on the Sava River Basin" (hereinafter: "FASRB"), aiming at sustainable development of the Sava River Basin,

Recognizing the deliverables that the Parties can benefit from, and harms that can be avoided or mitigated as a result of the activities of the Parties through existing bilateral agreements and within the International Sava River Basin Commission (hereinafter: ISRBC), through the implementation of the "FASRB" and its protocols,

Reaffirming our political commitment to making all efforts needed for the implementation of the EU directives relevant for the implementation of the „FASRB" and its protocols, especially the "EU Water Framework Directive", the „Flood Directive" and the "TEN-T Directive",

Emphasizing the importance of the first "Sava River Basin Management Plan", approved by the Parties at their Fifth meeting, convened in Zagreb, on December 2, 2014, as a milestone for the cooperation of the Parties in the implementation of the "FASRB",

Being aware of the necessity of joint actions in the field of flood management in accordance with the "Protocol on Flood Protection to the FASRB" as an effective international legal framework for the successful regional cooperation in this field,

Emphasizing the importance of rehabilitation and development of the Sava River waterway for further economic and social development of the region,

Having considered the Fifth Country Reports on implementation of the "FASRB" and the analysis made by the ISRBC, and *recognizing* the importance of reporting by the Parties for the overall implementation of the "FASRB",

Bearing in mind the commitment of the Parties expressed in the "Declaration from the Fifth Meeting of the Parties", as well as conclusions from the Ministerial meeting on regional water cooperation in the Sava River Basin, held in Brčko on July 6, 2015,

I. Coordination of Water Cooperation in the Sava River Basin

1. *Welcome* all relevant documents, prepared by the ISRBC and its expert groups, and *accept* the "Report on Implementation of the Framework Agreement on the Sava River Basin and Work of the ISRBC for the Period from August 1, 2014, to March 31, 2016",

2. *Appreciate* the significant progress towards the achievement of jointly agreed objectives, that has been made since the signing of the "FASRB", which established the ISRBC and

provided an efficient international legal framework for cooperation of the Parties on the integrated water resources management,

3. *Acknowledge* the efforts and work of the ISRBC on the implementation of the "FASRB" and its protocols, and *confirm* the role of the ISRBC Secretariat in performing the activities on the implementation of the "FASRB" and its protocols, as well as in realizing the conclusions and decisions of the ISRBC,

4. *Express* our appreciation and support for the ongoing cooperation of the ISRBC with all relevant partners, particularly with:
- European Commission
- UNECE
- UNESCO
- Government of the United States of America
- ICPDR and Danube Commission,

II. Sustainable Water Management in the Sava River Basin

5. *Commit ourselves* to making our best efforts to implement the Programme of Measures that is an integral part of the first "Sava River Basin Management Plan", in order to contribute to meeting the common goal – achieving a good water status in the Sava River Basin,

6. Although the planned measures are the responsibility of the Parties, we *request* the ISRBC to continue with providing assistance to the Parties in communication with relevant international institutions, in order to find out more opportunities and mechanisms for supporting and funding priority projects of the Parties related to the implementation of the Programme of Measures,

7. *Reconfirm* our commitment to making additional efforts to ensure resources for the implementation of the activities coordinated by the ISRBC within the 2nd cycle of the river basin management planning in accordance with the "EU Water Framework Directive", in particular for upgrading of the "Sava River Basin Management Plan",

8. *Encourage* the ISRBC to continue the dialogue with relevant stakeholders from the navigation, hydropower, agriculture, nature conservation and flood management sectors, for integration of the economic, social and environmental aspects into the planning and implementation of infrastructure projects, while respecting the principle of sustainable development in the basin,

9. Taking into account the entry into force of the "Protocol on Flood Protection to the FASRB", we *commit ourselves* to undertaking all necessary actions related to the preparation of the "Flood Risk Management Plan", the establishment of a flood forecasting and warning system, the exchange of information relevant for sustainable flood protection, as well as undertaking any other agreed activities that can contribute to the improvement of the flood protection in the basin,

10. *Recognize* great efforts and work of the ISRBC and the Parties, invested so far in the cooperation in the field of flood management, and *support* the ongoing activities on preparation of closely related projects of mutual interest, such as the establishment of the flood forecasting and warning system for the Sava River Basin, as well as the upgrade of hydrological and hydraulic models in the basin,

11. *Encourage* the Parties, which have not yet done that, to make an additional effort to ensure a continuous operation (24/7) of the Principal International Alert Centers in the case of accidents that can cause water pollution,

12. *Reconfirm* the importance of implementing the project aimed at preparation of the water contingency management plan for the Sava River Basin, and *encourage* the ISRBC to continue related fund-raising efforts,

13. *Recognize* the need for development of the effective sediment monitoring system and the exchange of information on sediment, and *encourage* the Parties to get actively involved in all related activities coordinated by the ISRBC,

14. *Urge* the Parties, which have not yet done that, to ratify the "Protocol on Prevention of the Water Pollution caused by Navigation to the FASRB" and the "Protocol on Sediment Management to the FASRB" as soon as possible, and *encourage* final harmonization of the "Protocol on Emergency Situations to the FASRB", taking into account a significant importance of these protocols for the implementation of the "FASRB",

III. Navigation in the Sava River Basin

15. *Reconfirm* our commitment to rehabilitation and development of navigation on the Sava River with the intention to urgently resume activities on the demining of parts of the Sava River banks and the preparation of the necessary design documentation, as well as to timely ensure funding for the execution of works on the rehabilitation and development of the Sava River waterway, in order for the works in all Parties to be performed in a coordinated way,

16. Recognizing the need for urgent and immediate actions on the fairway maintenance and taking into account the "Declaration on Effective Waterway Infrastructure Maintenance on the Danube and its Navigable Tributaries", signed in Luxemburg on 7 June 2012, we *commit ourselves* to taking necessary measures on the national level for proper maintenance of the fairway of the Sava River, especially on the most critical sectors in order to avoid the stoppage of navigation in the low water periods,

17. *Encourage* the Parties to actively follow and control the implementation of decisions of the ISRBC in the field of navigation on their respective territories,

18. *Welcome* the establishment of the River Information Services on the Sava River waterway from Belgrade up to Sisak and strongly *support* all activities on their further development,

19. *Appreciate* great efforts and work of the ISRBC and the Parties on the finalization and publishing of the "Manual for the Navigation on the Sava River" and the second edition of the "Indicator of River Kilometers for the Sava River and its Navigable Tributaries",

20. *Welcome* the development of the web application for support of the waterway safety inspections and *encourage* the Parties to use the full potential of the application in order to improve the navigation safety in the Sava River Basin,

IV. Cross-cutting Issues in the Implementation of the "FASRB"

21. *Welcome* the significant progress made in regard with the information exchange in the basin through the establishment of the geographic information system for the Sava River

Basin (Sava GIS), as well as the hydrological information system (Sava HIS), and *commit ourselves* to ensuring the effective information and data exchange by using these systems, and to undertaking all activities necessary to ensure the proper functioning and maintenance of the systems,

22. Recognizing the likely consequences of climate change on the water regime in the Sava River Basin and the need for effective adaptation measures, as well as the importance of the „Paris Agreement“ agreed on December 12, 2015 under the UN „Framework Convention on Climate Change“, we *appreciate* great efforts and work of the ISRBC and the Parties related to the assessment of climate change impacts and elaboration of potential adaptation measures in the basin, and *encourage* the ISRBC to undertake further activities toward a strategy and an action plan for the climate change adaptation in the basin,

23. *Acknowledge* the great potential for synergies between the processes of implementation of the „FASRB“ and the EU strategies for the Danube and Adriatic-Ionian regions, and *recognize* potential benefits of using the best practices of the „FASRB“ implementation for the implementation of the EU strategies,

24. *Encourage* further implementation of the „FASRB“ in an integrated way, as a prerequisite for sustainable resource use and further development of the region based on “green” and “blue” development solutions in the Sava River Basin,

25. Recognizing the importance of sustainable river tourism as a significant tool in the promotion of economic benefits, which among others, provides job opportunities, improves the quality of life and promotes networking and widens perspectives among the Parties, we *commit ourselves* to taking necessary measures on the national level to support the ISRBC efforts in further development of river tourism in the Sava River Basin,

26. *Welcome* the development of a set of effective tools for public participation and stakeholder involvement at the basin wide level, including the establishment of the Sava Water Council as an advisory platform of the ISRBC, as well as the Youth Parliament of the Sava River Basin,

V. Closing remarks

27. *Appreciate* a significant contribution of international organizations and institutions provided so far in realization of the projects of importance for the “FASRB” implementation and *call upon* these organizations and institutions to support, by allocating appropriate financial resources, the implementation of the future priority projects of the ISRBC as well,

28. Recognizing the added value of the participation of Montenegro in activities of the ISRBC, we *encourage* Montenegro to consider further steps toward the full memership in the ISRBC,

29. *Express* our gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Serbia for having hosted the Sixth Meeting of the Parties and *announce* the next meeting of the Parties to be held in the Republic of Slovenia in 2018.