



European Union

Water and Beyond

EU transformative approaches
for international partnerships



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS



European
Commission



UNECE



The International Sava River Basin Commission as a regional instrument of sustainable development and stability

Dr. Aleš Bizjak

EU Coordination and International Affairs Service

Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning of the Republic of Slovenia

Brussels, VC, 18 – 21 January 2021

Water and Beyond



THE ISRBC AS A REGIONAL INSTRUMENT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND STABILITY

- Geographical setup and historical context
- From the Paris Peace Conference to the establishment of the International Sava River Basin Commission
- Main achievements and contributions of the ISRBC to regional sustainable development and stability

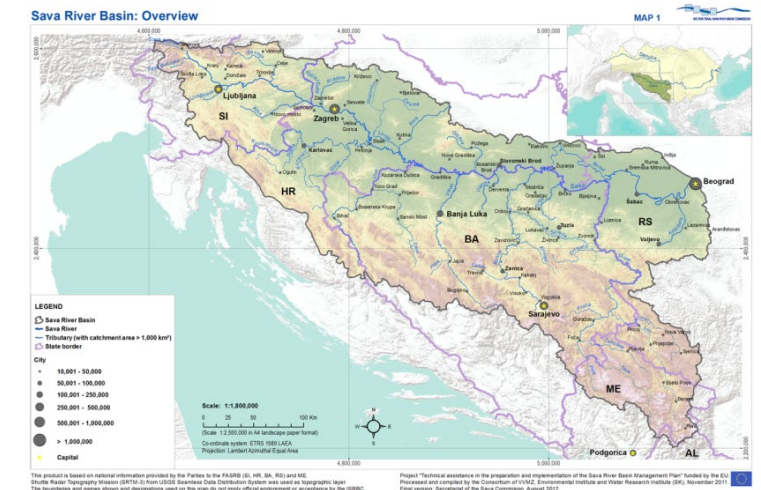
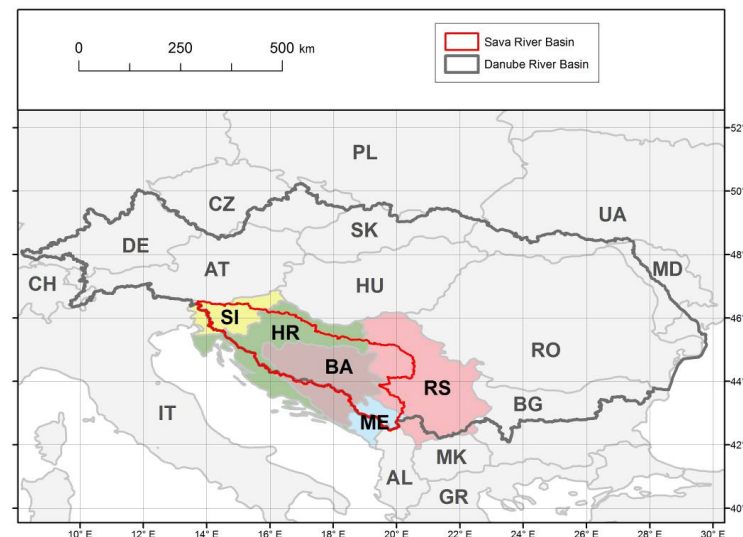
Water and Beyond



INTERNATIONAL SAVA RIVER BASIN: GEOGRAPHICAL SETUP

- river length: 945 km (the longest river in the sub-region)
- catchment area: app. 97.700 km² (the second largest Danube sub-basin; share: 12%)
- average flow at the mouth: app. 1.700 m³/s (the largest Danube tributary, share: 25%)
- basin population: app. 8,2 million
- social diversity: GDP's: 35.566 int \$ / 25.806 int \$ / 13.442 int \$ / 15.941 int \$
- religious diversity: Roman-Catholic, Orthodox, Muslim

country	share
Slovenia	12 %
Croatia	26 %
Bosnia-Herzegovina	39 %
Serbia	15 %
Montenegro	7 %
Albania	0,2 %



Water and Beyond



INTERNATIONAL SAVA RIVER BASIN: HISTORICAL CONTEXT

DAYTON AGREEMENT (Dayton, USA, 1 November 1995)

PARIS PEACE CONFERENCE (Paris, France, 14 December 1995)



POST-WAR PERIOD: CHALLENGES TO THE SAVA RIVER BASIN IWRM

- once the largest national river turned into one, running through four countries,
 - abandoned and partly ruined water way infrastructure,
- no appropriate institutional framework for transboundary IWRM,
 - no bilateral agreements, no basin organisation,
 - no stable sustainable development financing,
 - lost trust,
- new transboundary IWRM governance and management framework was required.

Water and Beyond

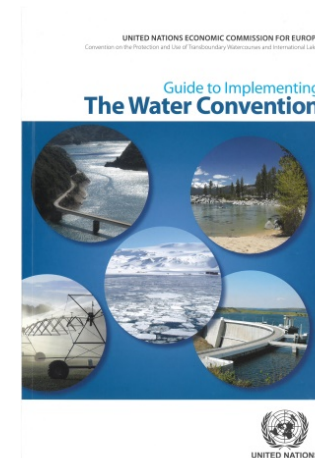
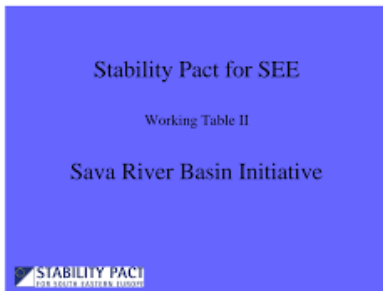
TRIGGERING THE PROCESS: STABILITY PACT FOR SEE (1999) AND THE SAVA RIVER BASIN INITIATIVE (2001)



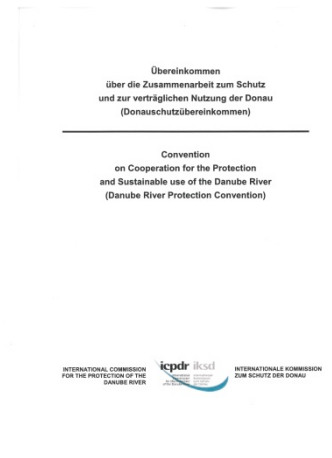
STABILITY PACT FOR SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE (1999): a security community-building institution aimed at **strengthening peace, democracy, human rights and economy** in the countries of South Eastern Europe, based on social, economic and environmental issues.



SAVA RIVER BASIN INITIATIVE (2001): process of cooperation among the four riparian countries of the Sava River Basin – Bosnia and Herzegovina, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Republic of Croatia and Republic of Slovenia.



(1992 / 1996)



(1994 / 1998)

Water and Beyond

(Source: ISRBC)

FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT FOR THE SAVA RIVER BASIN – FASRB (2002)

- signed in Kranjska Gora, Slovenia, in December 2002,
- parties: Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia
- **the first post-war development-oriented multilateral agreement in the region signed after the Agreement on Succession**

Key objective:

- transboundary cooperation for sustainable development of the region

Particular objectives:

- establishment of international regime of navigation,
- ensuring sustainable water management, and
- prevention or limitation of hazards (floods, droughts, accidents, etc.).

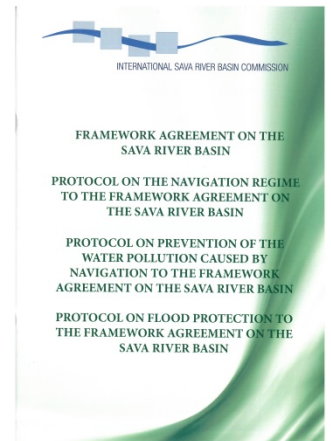


Water and Beyond



PROTOCOLS TO THE FASRB

- Protocol on the navigation regime to the FASRB (2002/2004)
- Protocol on the prevention of the water pollution caused by navigation to the FASRB (2009/2017)
- Protocol on flood protection to the FASRB (2010/2015)
- Protocol on sediment management to the FASRB (2015/2017)

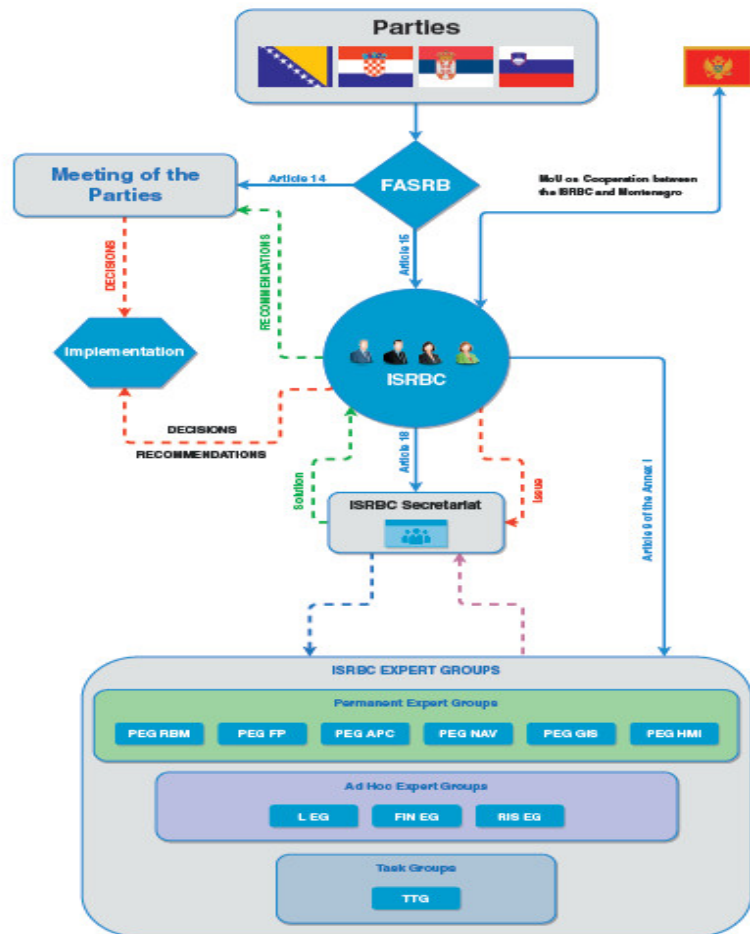


(Source: ISRBC)

Water and Beyond



INTERNATIONAL SAVA RIVER BASIN COMMISSION – ISRBC (2005)



Structure and functioning of the ISRBC (Source: ISRBC)

ISRBC mission

- implementation of the FASRB

ISRBC Secretariat

- Zagreb, Croatia

ISRBC working groups

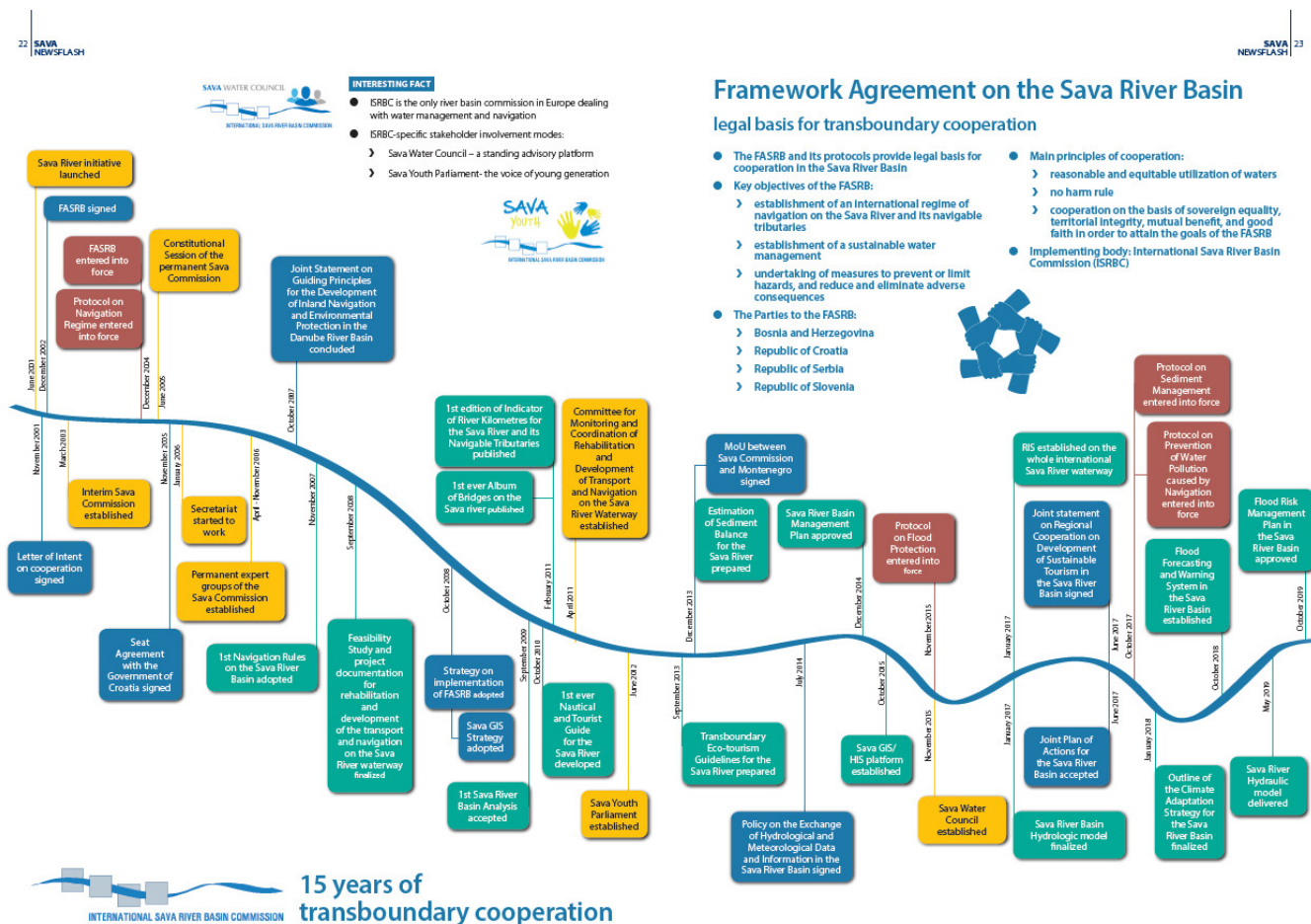
- Permanent Expert Groups
- Ad Hoc Expert Groups
 - Task Groups

involved sectors

- governmental sector
 - NGO sector
- academic sector
- business sector

Water and Beyond

MAIN ISRBC ACHIEVEMENTS



15 Years of the ISRBC (2005-2020)

(Source: Sava Newsflash)

MAIN ISRBC ACHIEVEMENTS

- 1st Sava River Basin Management Plan, 2nd Sava River Basin Management Plan (in process)
- 1st Sava River Flood Risk Management Plan
- Rehabilitation and development of sustainable Sava river navigation
- Data and information exchange (HIS, hydrological model, hydraulic models, SFFWS)
- Outline of the climate change adaptation strategy
- Water-food-energy-ecosystem nexus analysis (Sava river, Drina river)
- Sava River Basin Joint Action Plan
- establishment and functioning of the Sava Water Council and the Sava Youth Parliament
- development of broad international partnership

Water and Beyond



ISRBC INTERNATIONAL PARTERSHIP

- European Commission
- International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River
- Danube Commission
- UNECE Water Convention
- UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe
- UN World Meteorological Organisation
- US Government
- UNDP, OSCE, RCC, REC, DPPI, etc.
- World Bank
- NGOs (WWF, Euronatur, GWP, etc.)
- river basin commissions (Rhine, Elbe, Odra, etc.)
- INBO
- etc.



CONCLUSIONS

- after the war periods, rivers can become drivers of economic development, regional integration, cooperation and peace,
- transboundary river basin management requires trust, political support, robust basin organisation, strong and coherent governance structure, contemporary management techniques, approaches and tools,
- participatory platforms, stakeholder involvement, broad partnership and networking are necessary for successful implementation of transboundary IWRM,
- sustainable investments in transboundary river basin development are key factor for the success of the international commissions and their missions,
- the 1992 UNECE Water Convention and the 1997 UN Water Courses Convention form the legal framework for transboundary river basin management,
- ISRBC enables transboundary IWRM and facilitates effective cooperation, sharing multiple economic, social and environmental benefits and thus contributes to regional sustainable development and stability.

Thank you very much!

