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Stakeholders Take Next Steps Toward Environmentally Friendly Navigation

ZAGREB, March 10 - High-level officials of the International Commission on the Sava River Basin (ISRBC), International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR), Danube Commission (DC), European Commission, state bodies and public institutions, dealing with navigation, environmental protection and sustainable development issues, from the Danube River Basin, as well as representatives of non-governmental organizations have gathered at the 2nd Meeting on Follow-up of the "Joint Statement on Guiding Principles for the Development of Inland Navigation and Environmental Protection in the Danube River Basin" (Joint Statement) hosted by the ISRBC in Zagreb on March 9-10, 2010.

The Meeting presents the continuation of joint work on realization of the Joint Statement, which is the result of interdisciplinary process run by the Zagreb-based ISRBC, Vienna-based ICPDR and Budapest-based DC. Hereof, the platform has been provided for consideration of on-going projects in the field of development of inland navigation on Danube and Sava rivers, final draft of the Manual on integrated planning of projects in inland waterway transport (IWT), future perspectives of IWT in Europe and, respectively, the subsequent benefits for the Joint Statement. The gathered stakeholders are strengthening the cross-sectoral communication and transboundary cooperation, exchanging the information on bottlenecks at national and regional level, as well as on good practices and experiences in the field of inland navigation and environmental protection.

"The Joint Statement additionally supports the commitments of the Parties to the Framework Agreement on the Sava River Basin in realization of the integrated approach in water management by reconciling the development of navigation and protection of waters and aquatic eco-system in the Sava River Basin," alleges Mr Dejan Komatina, the ISRBC Secretary.

Intention is to keep gathering the representatives of different stakeholders from the Danube River Basin in order to foster the interdisciplinary approach in environmentally sustainable development of inland navigation on the basin-wide level. This includes the maintenance and improvement of the existing and planning of the new IWT infrastructure by respecting the environmental protection requirements.

"The ICPDR is pleased to take active participation in opening the new chapter in cooperation between different sectors dealing with navigation, environmental protection and regional development in the Danube River Basin countries with aim to reach the concrete and comprehensive solutions for a better quality of life of all communities in the basin," says Mr Mitja Bricelj, the ICPDR President. "The active sub-regional collaboration enabled through the work of the International Sava River Basin Commission is a key ingredient to better and more efficient regional cooperation."

"Development of the Danube navigable waterway demands elaboration of serious engineering projects, requiring significant investments and pool of resources provided by the states of the Danube Basin. In these projects, an essential part is allocated to the environment protection issues, particularly related to the cross-border character of the river," says Mr Pjotr Suvorov, on behalf of the President of the Danube Commission.

Such activities will surely continue gaining the support of the respective bodies in the Danube River Basin, and raise commitments of the basin countries in terms of sustainable

development of inland navigation on the Danube and Sava rivers.

Photos of the meeting are available at www.savacommission.org

Notes to Editors:

“Joint Statement on Guiding Principles for the Development of Inland Navigation and Environmental Protection in the Danube River Basin” was launched on March 11th 2008 by the ISRBC, ICPDR and DC, as a result of a year-long process that involved representatives of over fifty different stakeholders from the Danube River Basin. The Joint Statement provides guiding principles and criteria for the planning and implementation of inland waterway projects that reconcile the interests of navigation and the environment. The countries of the Danube basin have committed to utilize these principles in future project planning thus creating a new basis for the sustainable development of inland navigation.

The Joint Statement can be downloaded at www.savacommission.org/basic_docs

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For further information please contact:

International Commission on the Sava River Basin (ISRBC)

Ljiljana Pandžić, ISRBC Secretariat

Tel. + 385 1 488 6969; Mobile + 385 99 5900 831

E-mail: ljpanzic@savacommission.org

Website: <http://www.savacommission.org>

International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR)

Jasmine Bachmann, ICPDR Secretariat

Mobile +43 676 845 200 220

E-mail: jasmine.bachmann@unvienna.org

Website: <http://www.icpdr.org>

Danube Commission

Horst Schindler, Danube Commission Secretariat

Tel. + 36 1 461 80 10; Fax 36 1 352 18 39

E-mail: horst.schindler@danubecom-intern.org

Website: <http://www.danubecommission.org>