

Ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues,

It is a great honour and pleasure to welcome you on behalf of the Sava Commission as the host organization of the 2nd Meeting on the Follow-up of the *Joint Statement on Inland Navigation and Environmental Sustainability in the Danube River Basin*, which is a result of the joint initiative of the ICPDR, Danube Commission and the Sava Commission.

The Sava Commission hosts this Meeting with a great enthusiasm, as an organization responsible for the whole of water management, including both environmental protection and navigation, and being aware that this process can provide an added value to implementation of the *Framework Agreement on the Sava River Basin*.

At this moment, as an introduction to the Meeting, let me express my satisfaction by the concrete steps that have been made since the previous meeting, held in Budapest in January 2009, toward a successful implementation of the *Joint Statement*, including the development of:

- *Manual on Integrated Planning of Inland Waterway Transport Projects*, within the EU PLATINA Project, and
- *Template for exchange of information on Inland Waterway Transport projects*, as a basis for the future database of these projects.

As for the developments in the Sava River Basin during the last year, there are four main activities that should be mentioned at this Meeting:

1. The project of rehabilitation and development of the Sava River waterway has entered a new phase – the phase of design development and elaboration of concrete solutions to be implemented in the field, in which the principles of the *Joint Statement* are to be applied to the maximum possible extent.
2. The *Protocol on Prevention of Water Pollution caused by Navigation to the Framework Agreement on the Sava River Basin* was signed in 2009, on the 2nd Meeting of the Parties to the FASRB, and is undergoing ratification by the Parties.
3. The project “*Detailed Design and Prototype Installation for the River Information Services on the Sava River*” is under development, and by improving the overall navigation safety, it will also contribute to the environmental protection.
4. Progress has been made in the development of the first *Sava River Basin Management Plan*, where efforts are being made to incorporate the issue of navigation development into the mosaic of river basin management:

- The *Sava River Basin Analysis*, which includes a comprehensive annex on navigation issues, was successfully finalized in 2009.
- The *River Basin Management Plan* is undergoing further development, supported by a recently launched project, financed by the European Commission. The fact that the consultants are attending this Meeting additionally proves that link with the navigation project is an objective, as well.

Keeping in mind the above mentioned activities, as well as the importance of the Sava River as a part of the Danube transport system and its ecosystem, it is obvious that, from the perspective of the Sava Commission, further progress in the *Joint Statement* implementation is needed, through:

- Further development of tools for its efficient implementation;
- Regular exchange of information, and
- Public involvement in the planning process, as much as possible.

Finally, ladies and gentlemen, I wish you an enjoyable stay in Zagreb, fruitful discussions and an efficient work at the Meeting, and thank you very much for your attention!