



Sava River protection to be more public

(January 20, 2006: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovenia) A new project was launched today in the four countries of the Sava River Basin to boost public involvement in water protection.

One NGO from each of the four Sava countries will together take actions to ensure that NGOs, and the people and issues they represent, take part in the development of a 'Sava River Basin Management Plan'. The plan is now being developed by the governments of each of the four countries under the coordination of the newly created Sava River Basin Commission. The countries agreed to make the plan to fulfil EU laws requiring European countries to improve water quality by 2015.

"There are serious water quality and environmental issues that need to be addressed in the Sava Basin such as pollution and navigation," says Mirjana Bartula. "NGOs and the public should contribute information, expertise and support to ensure that the plan reaches its goals in the future, so that everyone benefits, including nature."

The project will establish an 'International Sava River NGO Committee' to represent NGOs during development of the Sava Plan. It will establish cooperation between this new committee and the Sava Commission. Public awareness and understanding of EU water protection law, especially the Water Framework Directive, will be increased. And governmental institutions will be encouraged to include public participation into their water protection planning in the Sava.

All project partners are part of the Danube Environment Forum (DEF), the largest network of environmental NGOs in the Danube River Basin. They include the Center for Environmentally Sustainable Development (CESD) from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Society of Bird Research and Nature Protection (DPPVN) from Slovenia, DEF Serbia and Montenegro, and Green Action, Croatia. The one-year project is funded through a grant by the UNDP-GEF Danube Regional Project.

"We invite people to learn more about our project from our websites and to actively participate in planning water protection for your country," says Irma Popovic. "We hope that the outcomes from the project continue after one year so that public involvement in Sava water protection is ensured long-term."

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