



Law and strategy, in the field of water management, recognize the importance of flood prevention, which has not been sufficiently reflected in practice because the competent institutions have not taken all the necessary activities

Floods are an increasing occurrence in the Republic of Serbia, especially torrential floods. In the last three and a half years, the RS Government has declared flooding a natural disaster on six occasions. Some local government units were hit almost every time. Flood damage is measured in millions of euros. In May 2014 alone, in the 24 most affected municipalities, floods caused damage of about 1.5 billion euros. In addition, for every dinar invested in flood prevention, damage can be reduced by the amount of three to nine dinars.



Flood, Lučani, May 2014, photo by RAS Serbia



Flood, Lučani, March 2016, photo by Gerzic

The implementation of the European Union directive in the field of flood risk management has not been fully implemented in practice, as the competent institutions are late in adopting key planning documents. The 2011 Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment has not been updated, threat maps and flood risk maps have not been drawn up for 99 significant floodplains, while no risk management plans have been adopted for the territory of the Republic of Serbia and for water areas.

The existing method of flood risk management and the water protection financing model are not in line with the requirements of the Water Management Strategy. The shared management of flood risks between public water management companies in the Danube and Sava river basins, in the absence of a clearly defined method of cooperation, carries the risk that the river basin districts are not managed in a uniform, complete and comprehensive manner. Existing financing model, in 2017–2018 however, it did not provide the necessary funding, thus jeopardizing the fulfillment of the strategy's objectives in the field of water protection. The level of resources provided for the maintenance of protective water facilities is below 60% of the required funds.

Prerequisites for effective dam management are not fulfilled. Public water utilities have not established reliable and complete records of dams, as they have not entered two thirds of dams in the register of water facilities. Some dams have not been transferred to the management of public water utilities, in accordance with the Law on Waters. This carries the risk that such dams are not adequately managed and some of them are not included in the flood protection system, although this is one of their primary purposes.

Key recommendations

For Republican Water Directorate to:

- ↓ review and update the 2011 preliminary risk assessment.
- ↓ specify the content of flood risk management plans
- ↓ prepare a flood risk management plan for the territory of the Republic of Serbia
- ↓ regulate the cooperation between public water utilities in the Danube and Sava river basin areas

For PWMC Srbijavode and PWMC Vode Vojvodine, for the territory in which they have jurisdiction, to:

- ↓ draw up and verify threat maps and flood risk maps for significant floodplains
- ↓ prepare flood risk management plans for river basin districts
- ↓ enter dam data in the register of water facilities
- ↓ launch an initiative to refine the procedure for the transfer of dams to the management of public water management companies, so that it can be fully implemented