



EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE CONVENTION
LANDSCAPE AWARD OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

5th Session – 2016-2017

APPLICATION FORM

Presentation

The European Landscape Convention aims to promote the protection, management and planning of landscapes and to bring together European co-operation in this field. It is the first international treaty exclusively devoted to all dimensions of European landscape. Taking into account the landscape, natural and cultural values of the territory, it contributes to promoting the quality of life and well-being of Europeans.

The Resolution on the Rules governing the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe, adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 20 February 2008 at the 1018th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies, draws attention to the fact that Article 11 of the Convention institutes the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe and that it is in keeping with the work carried out by the Council of Europe concerning human rights, democracy and sustainable development. It effectively promotes the territorial dimension of human rights and democracy by acknowledging the importance of measures taken to improve the landscape for people's living conditions.

Opened to the Parties to the Convention, the Award is intended to raise civil society's awareness of the value of landscapes, of their role and of changes to them. Its objective is to reward exemplary practical initiatives aimed at successful landscape quality objectives on the territories of the Parties to the Convention. The Award is conferred every two years and the files presenting applications must reach the Secretariat General of the Council of Europe.

At its meeting held in Strasbourg on 28-29 April 2008, the Steering Committee for Cultural Heritage and Landscape (CDPATEP) decided that applications should be submitted to the Council of Europe Secretariat through the Permanent Representations of the Parties to the Convention.

*I would be very grateful if you could send no later than **30 January 2017** the following elements of the candidature file (10 pages maximum) established for your country on the basis of the proposals forwarded to you by the Ministries:*

- 1) by E-mail, the Application form completed to: maguelonne.dejeant-pons@coe.int ;*
- 2) by post, a copy of the Application form completed together with a CD-Rom or DVD containing the all the additional material to: Maguelonne Déjeant-Pons, Executive Secretary of the European Landscape Convention, Council of Europe, Agora (A3-32C), F- 67075 STRASBOURG Cedex.*

** * **

- Participation to the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe is only open to local and regional authorities and their groupings and non-governmental organisations, as stated in the Resolution CM/Res (2008)3, Appendix, Article 2.*
- The application form must be completed in all its parts, in one of the two official languages of the Council of Europe (English or French).*
- The materials submitted must be copyright-free, for use by the Council of Europe in communications aimed at promoting the award or any other publications or activities relating to the Convention. The Council of Europe undertakes to cite the author's names.*
- Files that are incomplete or fail to comply with the rules will not be taken into consideration.*

For further information please visit the Landscape Award section of the Council of Europe website: <http://www.coe.int/EuropeanLandscapeConvention>

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I. STATE CONCERNED AND APPLICANT

1. State

Republic of Serbia

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2. Applicant

*Name of the local,
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II. PRESENTATION OF THE PROJECT

3. Name of the Project

Protection and Management of Zasavica Special Nature Reserve, as a tool for sustainable development

4. Location of the Project

Special Nature Reserve Zasavica - territory of the Sremska Mitrovica and Bogatić municipalities, Serbia

5. Summary of the Project (10 lines)

Supporting Serbia's attempts to adopt the EU Habitats Directive and the protection of 2 endangered cattle species, the project facilitated the development of a management and development plan, detailing protection methods and new opportunities for the Reserve. Nature conservation in Serbia was predominantly based on the traditional approach of isolating protected areas from human activity in and around these areas. Nature conservation organisations lacked the capacities to work with modern approaches like those promoted by the EU Habitats Directive.

In view of the approximation of Serbia to the EU there was a need to introduce these modern approaches to nature conservation including participatory management planning, the identification, designation and management of protected areas based on the European Habitats Directive and including linking nature conservation with the wider perspective of rural development.

6. Photo representing the Project



Zasavica, author: Sinisa Graovac
(Dominant landscape feature is Zasavica river)

III. CONTENT OF THE PROJECT

7. **Start of the Project** month year
The project must have been completed three years previously

8. **Partners**
- | |
|---|
| Nature Conservation Movement of Sremska Mitrovica
Wageningen International
Orbicon
Alterra
Institute for Nature Conservation, APV |
|---|
9. **Financing bodies**
- | |
|---|
| Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality
The BBI Matra Project N0 2008-039 |
|---|

10. Central aims of the Project

The central aim of the Project was to integrate the protection and management of the biodiversity of the Zasavica Special Reserve with sustainable rural development and particularly with the development of sustainable agriculture and tourism.

Another main objective of the project, coordinated by Centre for Development Innovation (CDI), Wageningen UR was to increase the capacities of the State Nature Conservation Institute of Serbia and the Nature Conservation Movement from Sremska Mitrovica in the application of the EU Habitats Directive.

Additional objectives of the project include support of the survival of two endangered native cattle breeds that used to graze on the floodplains of the Sava. These are the mangulitza swallow bellied pigs and the podolsko bull, which are both on the FAO list of native cattle breeds threatened with extinction.

Project started with implementation in 2009 and finished in 2011, but activities have continued to be implemented after the project was officially finished thanks to the clear ownership of the project results created during the project.

11. Outcome

1. Improved management planning of Zasavica Nature Reserve in line with methodologies of the EU Habitats Directive and other relevant international conventions including development strategies for sustainable agriculture (*Art II/5 a,b,c,d, II/6 C 1,2, Art III/7, III/8*).
2. Increased capacities of organisations and individuals involved in management of protected areas including stakeholder involved management planning, biodiversity management, monitoring, awareness raising, information dissemination and communication (*Art II/6 A, B, Art III/8*).
3. Improved facilities and opportunities for eco-tourism through targeted investments (*Art II/6 E*).
4. Reintroduction of two endangered native cattle breeds in the farm households in the surroundings of the reserve and the use of these animals to maintain the floodplain meadows through grazing (*Art II/6 B, E*).
5. Improved local socio economic development by involving local people in nature friendly farming and ecotourism. (*Art II/6 B, E*).

IV. RESPECT OF THE CRITERIA OF THE ATTRIBUTION OF THE AWARD

12. Sustainable territorial development

Is the project part of a sustainable development policy?

Does it contribute to the enhancement of environmental, social, economic, cultural or aesthetic values of the landscape? How?

Has it successfully countered or posed a remedy to any pre-existing environmental damage or urban blight? How?

The project is fully in line with national and EU sustainable development policies supporting local socio economic development while protecting natural values of the whole landscape.

By the reintroduction of the two endangered native cattle breeds (mangulista pig and podolian cow) in the farm households in the surroundings of the reserve local people were actively involved in maintaining natural values of wet meadows while generating income at the same. Marketing plan for selling products processed in traditional way (sausages, ham, and cheese) secured stable income for local people which motivated them to continue with nature friendly farming within and around the Nature reserve.

Close cooperation between local people and manager of the reserve in tourism related activities (guided tour, preparing local food for visitors, making souvenirs from reeds) resulted in additional nature friendly local economic assets.

Social and cultural value was improved by developing educative and promotional materials both for local people in particular schoolchildren from surrounding schools and visitors to the Reserve. Hiking trails was marked with info tables with all necessary information related to the ecosystems, Nature 2000 habitat types as well as rare and protected species.

In order to counter or remedy any damage to Zasavica landscape structures, the project underlined the need for restoration of the hydrological conditions of the Reserve. The intention was to allow species (birds, plants, amphibians and fish) and habitats typical for the area to survive in a favourable conservation status. The Manager is persistent in attempts to to increase the water levels especially during the summer period without negatively impacting the water quality. Several management measures have been taken in cooperation with the Jaroslav Czerni Hydro Institute on the bases of a catchment wide approach and modelling, without hampering future enlargement of the reserve.

13. Exemplary value

Can the project be considered of exemplary value? Why?

Which are the good practices that it implemented?

The outcomes have served as an example for improving the institutional and organisational setting of management of protected areas across Serbia.

The elaboration of the 'management and development plan' has set a standard for management planning of PAs in Serbia. Innovative features in the elaboration process included the involvement of hydrologists, agricultural experts, tourism experts and biologists. Regular meetings with stakeholders were organised to ensure that the management proposals meet the needs and wishes of the local population and to ensure that management of the protected area contributes to the development of the local economy.

The reintroduction of the two endangered native cattle breeds in the farm households in the surroundings of the reserve and the use of these animals to maintain the floodplain meadows through grazing has been promoted by supporting the marketing and sales of their products. Proposals for the introduction of a certification scheme for these breeds were presented to allow for higher market prices.

Proposals for improving the attractiveness of the Reserve through the introduction of hiking trails, improvement of biking opportunities and improved information for visitors were included in the plan and have gradually been implemented.

A small investment fund has allowed for improving the visitor and reception centre. The "Visitors centre" gate with souvenirs and tickets shop, new lecture facilities and a hiking trail with information boards and signs are fully operational and contribute to eco tourism in SNR Zasavica.

14. Public participation

Does the project actively encourage the public's participation in the decision-making process? How?

Is the project in line with the wider policies implemented by national, regional or local authorities?

The project actively encouraged the public's participation in the decision-making process.

Management and Development Plan for the Special Nature Reserve Zasavica were drafted multidisciplinary in anticipatory way actively involving representatives of local people. They were involved in the process from concept development and planning through implementation, which empowered them to manage resources for long-term social, economic, and ecological benefits.

Vision of management plan, priorities and measures were developed with active participation of local people which afterwards secured local support and smooth implementation of the planned activities. By making whole process transparent (Web site, promotion in all local media – radio, TV, newspaper, organising public hearings) all interested public was informed about the planning process and had equal opportunity to participate.

In all, interested public were informed through mass media, consulted during public hearings, and actively involved in development of the Management Plan by being equal part of the public participation working group.

Post-project phase

According to the guidelines of the project, the public's participation structures have gradually established over the years and live today.

A Stakeholder Board was established as a platform with which the Manager discusses management issues. The stakeholder board includes representatives of all stakeholder groups - representatives of the communities lying around the Reserve, representatives of interest and sector groups like farmers associations, tourist entrepreneurs and NGOs. It is not restrictive and allows participation of each individual and organisation that is interested in management of the area. In practice, the number of meetings is limited to once or twice a year, but the Annual Plan for the Reserve is being regularly discussed. Currently, members of the board include: representatives of municipalities Sremska Mitrovica and Bogatić, mayors of 7 settlements as well as representatives of local forest public utility company "Šumsko gazdinstvo Srem" which owns 138 ha of land within the Reserve and Voda Vojvodine in charge of water management and the pumping station.

There is also a Supervisory Board that supervises and endorses management decisions and which includes also Institute for Nature Conservation and other expert groups like the water management, spatial planners and the tourism experts from Sremska Mitrovica municipality.

Coherence with wider policies

The Spatial Plan for the Special-Purpose Area of the Zasavica Special Nature Reserve ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia", No. 66/2011) was being developed at the same time as the project (2009 - 2011). The spatial plan is the legal bases for issuing permits for the construction of buildings and other infrastructural elements. In this way, all the provisions of the existing "Zasavica SNR Management Plan 2012-2022" (born from the project and adopted pursuant to the Nature Conservation Act) are in full compliance with national landscape policies. Since the spatial plan is based on the information provided by the Institute for Nature Conservation of Vojvodina Province in this management plan there is no conflict with regional policies/authorities.

The project is also consistent with policies and plans at the following levels:

- National Sustainable Development Strategy
- Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Sustainable Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia 2009 – 2017
- The Local Sustainable Development Strategy (LSDS), 2005 adopted by the General Assembly of the Standing Conference of Cities and Municipalities in December 2005
- National Environmental Strategy (NES), 2006
- National strategy and the action plan for biodiversity protection and landscape diversity
- Conservation program for Zasavica SNR, Institute for Nature Conservation of Vojvodina Province;
- Spatial plans of the surrounding municipalities

15. Awareness-raising

Is the project effectively increasing the public's awareness of the importance of landscape in terms of human development, consolidation of European identity, or individual and collective well-being? How?

Wetland landscapes provide important goods and services which help sustain human life, conserve biological diversity, and even combat the impacts of climate change. One of the goals of the project was to motivate people to appreciate the values of wetlands so that they become advocates for wetland conservation and wise use and may act to become involved in relevant policy formulation, planning and management.

Human development - In order to promote natural values of SNR Zasavica and at the same time to contribute to achieving the objectives of the Ramsar Convention on communication, education and public awareness (CEPA) the following activities were planned by the Project, undertaken and have regularly been realized from 2010 to today:

- Educational program for schoolchildren

An educational program for schoolchildren was set up with the purpose of increasing the awareness and knowledge on value and importance of protecting the wetland in general and Zasavica wetland in particular. The program has been implemented in the form of lectures in the classroom within the Visitor Center as well as in the field or on the "Umbra" boat.

- Educational work camp

Every year in the period of July-August, the International working camp takes place in the SNR Zasavica. The camp is organized by Young Researchers of Serbia and participants from all over the world not only have the opportunity to work on ecosystem revitalization related activities and learn about wetland value but also to learn about culture and the history of the region.

- Research camp

Every summer in the period July and August a research camp is being organized with the purpose of exploring biodiversity of the Reserve. Main organizer of the camp is Scientific research Society of Biology students "Josif Pančić".

- Bird-watching fair

The first bird-watching fair „BirdwatchSerbia“ was organized in May 2010 and is going to be organized every year. Purpose of the fair is not only promotion of the bird-watching but also promotion of landscape value and its protection among wide public.

Individual and collective well-being – The project has played an important role in educating schoolchildren about biology and nature protection and in raising awareness of the public at large about nature protection. And last but not least protected areas are important for relaxation and recreation and serve the well-being of the population.

The development of tourism was considered to be one of the pillars of future management of the Reserve as it was needed to generate income for the management, help to create work and income for the livelihoods in the vicinity of the Reserve, help to raise awareness about the need to protect landscape and contribute to the wellbeing of the population as a source for recreation and relaxation.

The project achieved it by direct financing of building and maintenance of certain facilities that allowed people to visit the area to learn, enjoy and relax without doing harm to the nature. These important roles of protected areas were previously largely undervalued and were insufficiently supported by the government through the budget made available to the management organisation NCM Sremska Mitrovica.

Consolidation of European identity - In the process of implementing the Natura 2000 in Serbia, the SNR Zasavica will be a candidate site due to the presence of Natura 2000 habitat types and species in the area. Such position during the course of the project was reinforced and promoted by the presence of European experts and implementation of European guidelines and policies. On the basis of them the Management Plan 2012-2022 was created.

Increasing the public's awareness of the importance of the cultural landscape is the regular practice in the promotion of Zasavica tourism. Together with the city of Sremska Mitrovica with its Roman history, „Life along the Sava River“ is one of European identities. It is based on the „The Military Frontier“ which was a province, created in the 16th century, straddling the southern borderland of the Habsburg Monarchy and later the Austrian and Austro-Hungarian Empire. Just because of its wetlands, this belt along the Sava river acted as the *cordon sanitaire* against incursions from the Ottoman Empire. Traditional spiritual values of 'Frontiersmen' and 'soldier-settler' communities have preserved military and economic size of Europe. These days, societies torn by conflict 25 years ago are now working together through the transfrontier cooperation (*Article III/9*) with help of EU, to preserve the Sava River and its intact floodplains, on which they all depend.

V. ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

1. Presentation of the candidate (text)

NATURE CONSERVATION MOVEMENT OF SREMSKA MITROVICA

The main competences of the ENGO Nature Conservation Movement of Sremska Mitrovica (NCMSM) are the NGO management of the Zasavica Special Nature Reserve (Zasavica SNR) and ecotourism on its own model.

Major thematic competences of the NCMSM are: protected areas management, ecotourism development, biodiversity and habitat preservation, environmental education and training, volunteering, as well as environmental research. Zasavica SNR is demonstrating the potential for local business development. Zasavica SNR's Visitor Centre and Camping offer the perfect conditions for the organization of project meetings, workshops, etc, for group size 20-30 persons.

Zasavica thematic competence for the project can be: sustainable ecotourism product, ecotourism in regions, visitor management measures, social inclusion (handicapped people, Roma community and people with low income), volunteering, exhibition on wetlands, etc).

Zasavica SNR is the member of:

Nationally: National Network of RAMSAR protected areas, NATURA 2000 Resource Center Serbia, EMERALD Network Serbia, Ecological Info Network „EkoNEC – Ekolist – Eko vest“, Association of National Parks and protected areas (chair), Tourism Cluster Srem Fund – Ruma, Ecological network Pannonica

Internationally: IBA, IPA, Ramsar, Europarc Federation, SAVE Foundation, Slow Food Association, the Sava Parks Network and Dinaric Arc Parks Association.

ZASAVICA SPECIAL NATURE RESERVE

“Zasavica” – an Intact Gem of Nature

Only 80 km away from Belgrade, situated in the fertile plain of Macva, on the territory of the municipalities of Sremska Mitrovica and Bogatic, Zasavica Special Nature Reserve blossoms, sings and enchants with its beauty. The 33.1-kilometre long Zasavica River, created by the flooding and the change of river courses of the Sava and Drina rivers, enveloped in the flooded forests, reed and rare swamp flowers, invites you to visit its magic world.

More than 700 species of plants make up the flora of this marshland, and in some places the impassable vegetation conceals true wealth of the animal world: 58 species of day butterflies, 37 species of dragonfly, 23 species of fish, 27 species of amphibians and reptiles, 182 species of birds, 45 species of mammals, colonies of freshwater sponges and a few freshwater jellyfish. And if you are lucky, you might even see the pink “spoon-beaked” herons, which got their peculiar colour owing to the crabs which they fed on in the Mediterranean.

Many of the recorded species of plants and animals are very rare, endangered and protected

species, such as the endemic plants “Swamp Nettle”, the white and the yellow water lily. Our Zasavica is also the only place in Europe where you can find the Aldrovanda plant and the Mrguda fish.

What is more, Zasavica is one of the two locations in Serbia where the European beaver has returned, and there are about 60 specimens of this species in the reserve right now. These little tireless builders have created a real attraction: an over 50-metre long dam erected at the confluence of the Batar and the Zasavica, which has resulted in the creation of a 1.3-metre deep little lake.

If you wish to go sightseeing in the reserve, you can walk along pathways or ride in boats, while larger groups have at their disposal the tourist boat “Umbra” which sails around the most beautiful part of the Zasavica River.

Membership at the European National Park Federation and the Grand Prize “White Angel” for an original concept of sustained development in tourism at a protected natural good, awarded by the Ministry of Tourism, confirm that the way the NGO “Nature Conservation Movement Sremska Mitrovica” takes care of this national treasure is correct.

This treasure is becoming more valuable by the day and is waiting for you to discover it too

ADDITIONAL FEATURES OF THE ZASAVICA SNR MANAGEMENT

1. Involvement of local communities in the development of the reserve, financing part of the project, and recognizing the importance of the reserve for the local community.
2. Holding the old races and products made from them as the basis of catering services
3. Sustainability in funding through the independent earnings from tourism and genetic resources by 50% annually.
4. Employing the local population on permanent and temporary jobs, cooperation in growing old races, and the inclusion of the Roma community.
5. Collaboration with other scientific and non-governmental organizations.
6. Raising the level of the water regime resulting in diversity conservation.
7. Research of rare species with the inclusion of volunteer and research camps with local and foreign participants.
8. The development of the first visitor center in Serbia as a basis for visitor management.
9. Education of the local population that has contributed to the recognition of values and involvement in co-operation with the reserve.
10. Development of the campsite as a new activity in tourism.
11. Exploiting local tourism value, primarily ancient Sirmium (see the film).
12. Receiving all recognitions in the field of sustainable tourism and biodiversity research.
13. Development of a therapeutic garden, and the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the labor and educational activities.
14. Donkey farm having 140 balkan donkeys.
15. Development of unique products from donkey milk.

ZASAVICA SITE DESCRIPTION

The Special Nature Reserve Zasavica (hereinafter referred to as SNR Zasavica) is situated in Southeast Europe, in the Republic of Serbia, on the territory of South Voivodina and North Macva, east of the Drina River and south of the Sava River. It comprises territories of Sremska Mitrovica and Bogatiü municipalities. The Greenwich coordinates are 44° 52' 56" and 44° 58' 04" N and 19° 24' 07" and 19° 36' 31" E.

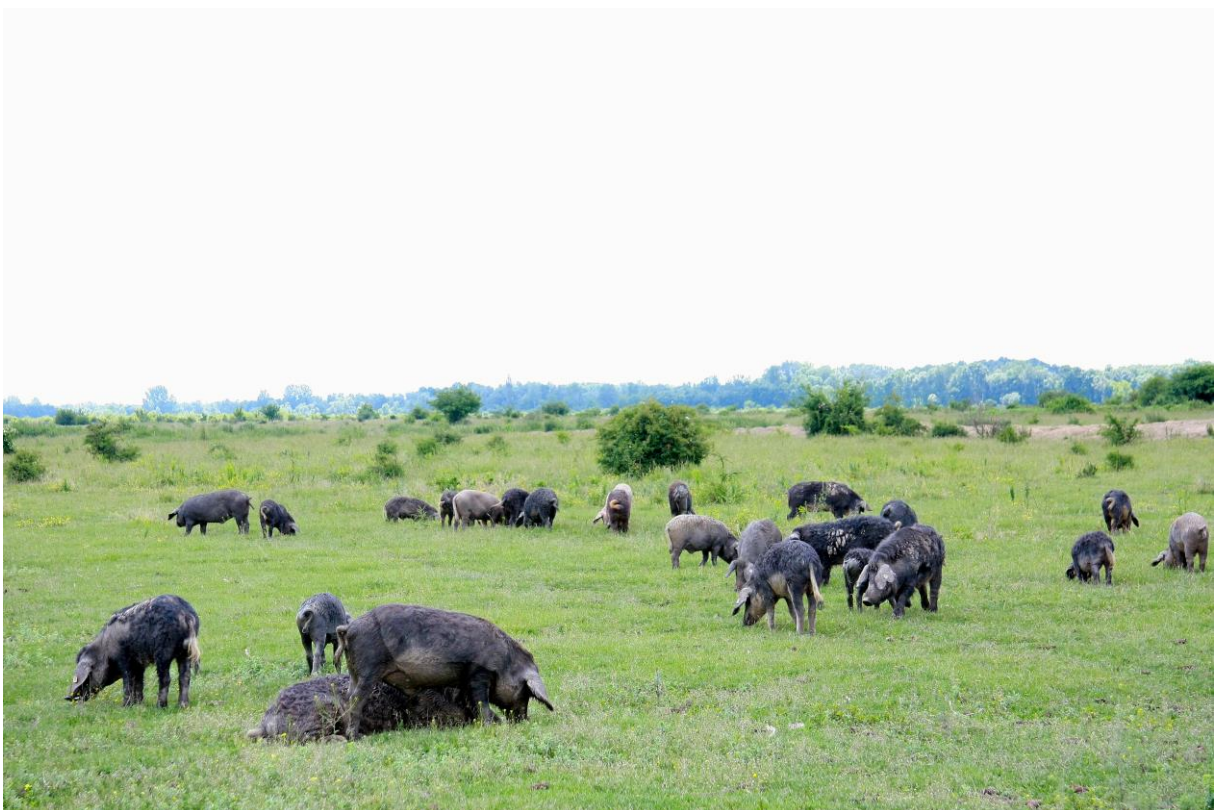
The area is dominated by riverine wetlands along the Zasavica River, covering a length of 33.1 km. It is a mosaic of aquatic and wetland ecosystems with fragments of flooded forests. The protected area covers 1825 ha, with 675 ha in the first degree protection regime according to Serbian classification. The backbone of the Reserve is made up of the Jovaca and Prekopac canals, the Batar creek, and the Zasavica River, which is connected to the Sava River directly through the Bogaz canal. The Zasavica River is also supplied by ground water from the Drina River.

The whole system belongs to the Black Sea catchment area and it represents one of few authentic and preserved wetlands of the region. This calm flatland river system provides conditions for the survival of numerous and diverse wildlife species. (Stankoviü 2006). Regarding the international protection status, the SNR Zasavica is designated as a Ramsar Site (No.1783), Important Plant Area, Important Bird Area (RS008), and Prime Butterfly Area (40) (Sekuliü and Šinžar 2010). According to the IUCN management categories, it is a Habitat and Species Management Area, category IV.

2. Photos (next page)













3. Poster (page above)

4. Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xDY-A3Z4Ri0>

Scenes from Sremska Mitrovica were filmed in the park across from the Archives of Srem, the site of Sirmium and in the lapidarium of the Museum of Srem.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SjJ71NuPUBU>

There are more than 30 videos about Zasavica on YouTube

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