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Serbia is a country that is endangered by flooding of the largest European river, the Danube and its largest tributaries, as well as by countless torrents. During the 19th and 20th centuries, an imposing scope of protection structures was constructed. The existence of the protection system created the conviction that flood protection was achieved and that it should only be complemented on a great number of unregulated torrents.

Such an opinion and practice are possible only in the countries with powerful economies. However, for almost two decades, Serbia has been going through the conditions of economic crisis.

The floods which occurred in Serbia during that period pointed to the problem of maintenance of the existing protection system and to the impossibility of building the new projects.

Floodplain mapping, although prescribed by the Law, was postponed because of the high price of the classical geodetic surveying. The postponing of this activity, in the conditions of a stable and good economic situation, was explained by the achieved flood protection on large rivers and by low probability that the system could fail. On the other hand, small torrents were partly regulated in the zones of roads and towns, so in this case also it was thought that the protection was accomplished. It was overlooked that the majority of torrents in Serbia was not regulated by any protection system. Urbanisation was progressing unrestrainedly. The State could not afford the construction of the necessary protection system, so numerous settlements remained at risk, without any protection. Floods did not forgive and forget any mistakes and the awareness of the necessity of collecting the data on floodplains and protection against floods became an indispensable task, but in the conditions of economic crisis, difficult to realise.

For this reason, a rational method of floodplain mapping was searched, as well as the method of reducing the damage caused by floods, but not requiring high investments.

This paper will present the realised results of low-budget mapping of flood zones of torrents and other waterways and the realised preventive techniques of torrential flood control, which were successfully implemented during the great flood of the Danube in 2006. On that occasion, numerous torrential floods endangered the defence system of the river Danube.

Key words: Floodplain, flood, torrent, flood defence.