What is claimed is:

1. Crosslinkable, modified water-soluble polymer compositions, comprising at least one modified water-soluble polymer obtained by free-radically initiated polymerization of:

a) one or more ethylenically unsaturated monomers bearing one or more epoxy, amine, carboxylic acid, carboxylic anhydride and/or silane groups; and

b) 5 to 65 wt. %, based on the overall weight of the crosslinkable, modified water-soluble polymer, of one or more ethylenically unsaturated monomers other than monomers a); in the presence of 25 to 80 wt % of one or more water-soluble polymers, based on the overall weight of the modified water-soluble polymers.

2. The crosslinkable modified water-soluble polymer composition of **1**, wherein one or more monomers a) are selected from the group consisting of glycidyl acrylate, glycidyl methacrylate, allyl glycidyl ether; 2-dimethylaminoethyl methacrylate, 2-tert-butylaminoethyl methacrylate, allyl N-(2-aminoethyl)carbamate hydrochloride, allyl N-(6-aminohexyl)carbamate hydrochloride, allyl N-(3-aminopropyl) hydrochloride, allylamine or vinylpyridine; acrylic acid, methacrylic acid, fumaric acid, maleic acid; monoesters of fumaric acid, monoesters of maleic acid, and maleic anhydride.

3. The crosslinkable modified water-soluble polymer composition of claim **1**, wherein one or more monomers a) are selected from the group consisting of ethylenically unsaturated silicon compounds of the formula $R^1SiR^2_{0-2}(OR^3)_{1-3}$, where R^1 is $CH_2{=}CR^4{-}(CH_2)_{0-1}$ and $CH_2{=}CR^4CO_2(CH_2)_{1-3}$, R^2 is C_1-C_3 alkyl, C_1-C_3 alkoxy or halogen, R^3 is branched or unbranched, optionally substituted alkyl of 1 to 12 carbon atoms or acyl of 2 to 12 carbon atoms, wherein R^3 is optionally interrupted by an ether group, and wherein R^4 is H or CH_3; and silane group-containing (meth)acrylamides of the formula $CH_2{=}CR^5{-}CO{-}NR^6{-}R^7{-}SiR^8_n{-}(R^9)_{3-m}$, where m=0 to 2, n=0 to 2, and m+n=3, R^5 is either H or methyl, R^6 is H or alkyl of 1 to 5 carbon atoms; R^7 is alkylene of 1 to 5 carbon atoms or a bivalent organic group in which the carbon chain is interrupted by an oxygen or nitrogen atom, R^8 is alkyl of 1 to 5 carbon atoms, R^9 is alkoxy of 1 to 40 carbon atoms which are each optionally substituted with further heterocycles.

4. The crosslinkable modified water-soluble polymer composition of claim **1**, wherein the monomers a) are employed in an amount of 0.5 to 60 wt %, based on the overall weight of the modified water-soluble polymers.

5. The crosslinkable modified water-soluble polymer composition of claim **1**, wherein one or more monomers b) are selected from the group consisting of vinyl esters, (meth)acrylic esters, vinylaromatics, olefins, 1,3-dienes and vinyl halides.

6. The crosslinkable modified water-soluble polymer composition of claim **2**, wherein one or more monomers b) are selected from the group consisting of vinyl esters, (meth)acrylic esters, vinylaromatics, olefins, 1,3-dienes and vinyl halides.

7. The crosslinkable modified water-soluble polymer composition of claim **3**, wherein one or more monomers b) are selected from the group consisting of vinyl esters, (meth)acrylic esters, vinylaromatics, olefins, 1,3-dienes and vinyl halides.

8. The crosslinkable modified water-soluble polymer composition of claim **1**, wherein one or more water-soluble polymers are selected from the group consisting of proteins, ligninsulfonates, formaldehydesulfonates, polysaccharides in water-soluble form, polymers containing one or more units selected from the group consisting of vinyl alcohol units, vinylpyrrolidone units, vinyl acetal units, vinylsulfonic acid units, acrylamide units, units of ethylenically unsaturated carboxylic acids, ethylenically unsaturated amines, and ammonium compounds.

9. The crosslinkable modified water-soluble polymer composition of claim **1**, wherein one or more water-soluble polymers are selected from the group consisting of polyvinyl alcohols; polyvinyl acetals; polyvinylpyrrolidones; polysaccharides in water-soluble form, celluloses and their carboxymethyl, methyl, hydroxyethyl and hydroxypropyl derivatives, dextrins, cyclodextrins, proteins; ligninsulfonates, and synthetic polymers.

10. The crosslinkable modified water-soluble polymer composition of claim **1**, wherein one or more water-soluble polymers are selected from the group consisting of amylose and amylopectin, casein or caseinate, soyprotein, gelatin; poly(meth)acrylic acid, copolymers of (meth)acrylates with carboxyl-functional comonomer units, poly(meth)acrylamide, polyvinylsulfonic acids and their water-soluble copolymers; melamineformaldehydesulfonates, naphthaleneformaldehydesulfonates, cresolformalde-hydesulfonates, styrene-maleic acid copolymers, and vinyl ether-maleic acid copolymers.

11. The crosslinkable modified water-soluble polymer composition of claim **1**, wherein the polymerization is initiated with one or more initiators and ≥20 wt % of initiators, based on the overall weight of all the initiator(s) used in the polymerization, is initially charged before initiation of the polymerization and a remaining portion of the initiator(s) is metered in during the polymerization.

12. The crosslinkable modified water-soluble polymer composition of claim **1**, wherein at least 50 wt % of the water-soluble polymer(s) is initially charged before initiation of the polymerization, based on the total amount of water-soluble polymer(s) employed.

13. The crosslinkable modified water-soluble polymer composition of claim **1**, wherein from 0 to 20 wt % of said monomers a) and b), based on the overall amount of a total amounts of monomers a) and b), is initially charged before initiation of the polymerization and the remainder of monomers a) and b) is metered in during the polymerization.

14. The crosslinkable modified water-soluble polymer composition of claim **1**, wherein one or more modified water-soluble polymers are present as a constituent of a crosslinking agent composition additionally containing one or more components from the group consisting of base polymers, epoxy components, hardeners and additives.

15. The crosslinkable modified water-soluble polymer composition of claim **1**, which is employed in chemical products used in civil engineering, and in coatings or adhesives.

16. The crosslinkable modified water-soluble polymer composition of claim **1**, which is employed in chemical products as coatings or adhesives for woven or nonwoven textiles, paper or fibers.

17. A process for preparation of a crosslinked article or portion thereof, comprising supplying a crosslinkable modified water-soluble polymer composition of claim **1**, and crosslinking.

18. The process of claim **17**, wherein the crosslinkable modified water-soluble polymer composition further comprises at least one of base polymers, epoxy components, hardeners and additives.

19. The process of claim **17**, wherein crosslinking is effected by heating to a temperature 30° C. or above.

20. The crosslinkable, water-soluble polymer composition of claim **1**, wherein the one or more ethylenically unsaturated monomers a) are selected from the group consisting of ethylenically unsaturated monomers bearing on or more epoxy groups, silane groups, or mixtures thereof.

21. A crosslinkable, modified water-soluble polymer composition consisting of:

one or more modified water-soluble polymers, and

optionally one or more components selected from the group consisting of base polymers, epoxy components, hardeners and additives, wherein said modified water-soluble polymers are obtained by free-radically initiated polymerization of monomers consisting of:

a) one or more ethylenically unsaturated monomers bearing one or more epoxy and/or silane groups, and

b) one or more ethylenically unsaturated monomers other than monomers a), selected from the group consisting of vinyl esters, (meth)acrylic esters, vinylaromatics, ethylene, propylene and vinyl halides, and

c) optionally one or more ethylenically unsaturated monomers other than said monomers a) and b) selected from the group consisting of ethylenically unsaturated carboxamides, carbonitriles, diesters of fumaric acid and maleic acid, ethylenically unsaturated sulfonic acids and/or salts thereof, diallyl phthalate, divinyl adipate, diallyl maleate, allyl methacrylate or triallyl cyanurate, acrylamidoglycolic acid, methylacrylamidoglycolic methyl ester, N-methylolacrylamide, N-methylol-methacrylamide, N-methylolallyl carbamate, isobutoxy ether or esters of N-methylolacrylamide, of N-methylolmethacrylamide and of N-methylolallyl carbamate, hydroxyalkyl esters of methacrylic acid and of acrylic acid, diacetoneacrylamide, acetylacetoxyethyl acrylate and methacrylate,

in the presence of 25 to 80 wt % based on the overall weight of the modified water-soluble polymer of one or more water-soluble polymers;

wherein the base polymers are selected from the group consisting of vinyl acetate homopolymers, copolymers of vinyl acetate with ethylene, copolymers of vinyl acetate with ethylene and one or more further vinyl esters, copolymers of vinyl acetate with ethylene and acrylic esters, copolymers of vinyl acetate with ethylene and vinyl chloride and styrene-acrylic ester copolymers, and mixtures thereof;

wherein the base polymers is stabilized by at least one emulsifier or protective colloid or by a mixture thereof;

wherein the epoxy components are polyethers having two or more epoxy groups;

wherein the hardeners are selected from the group consisting of amines and silanes; and

optionally, one or more additives selected from the group consisting of fillers, pigments, plasticizers, foam stabilizers, flame retardants, hydrophobicizing agents, oils, polyurethanes and polysiloxanes.