

5th Transport Facilitation Technical Committee meeting

Videoconference meeting, 10.06.2020

Summary

Introduction

- The 5th TCTF videoconference is held in aim to better understand the latest developments between the two meetings, as well as to point out on problems and challenges with regard to BCP transport of goods, and to inform about the state of play with reopening of the borders and the implementation of green lanes initiative and its challenges.
- In that sense, TCT will present steps to be undertaken in sense of better cooperation and coordination among RPs.

Post-Covid 19 transport recovery -measures for facilitation of freight and passenger transport

- TC Secretariat presented the results of daily monitoring of BCPs on green corridors for the last 3 months in order to define peculiarities at some BCPs, observe trends and establish patterns and possible solutions.
- Regarding WB6 internal borders, situation is overall stable, whereas in May 2020, the good performing BCPs performed better, while performances of ones where the highest waiting times were registered in April have worsened.
- At WB6-EU borders, situation is similar, whereas capacity problem remains at Gradiska BCP, so reopening secondary BCPs shall cause positive trend for Gradiska.

Extending the Green corridor initiative

- TCT presented its work of extending the Green corridor initiative in the context of preparation for exiting the sanitary emergency. However, it is pointed out that BC management remains issue affecting the overall connectivity in the region.
- Aims of the abovementioned are to further avoid the un-coordinated actions in the region that can affect the entire logistics system, to continue making more efficient border crossing operations with EU member states, to focus on a long term plan aiming at granting better intra WB connectivity.
- Mutual commitment among RPs is required, so it is necessary to pass the message that with integrated approach, the goals set out in proposal of TCT secretariat can be achieved
- The measures for facilitating transport (primarily of goods) in post-Covid period, are clustered to: infrastructure improvements, digital technologies and equipment, and improved border management. They are all in line with the Transport Facilitation Action Plan and the idea is to prepare concrete project proposal and obtain financial assistance at the upcoming EU- Western Balkans summit in autumn 2020
- Short term post-Covid measures for facilitating passengers transport based on the principle of non-discrimination were presented.

Current state of play in the region

- **SRB:** Serbian Government officially adopted decision on green lanes in May, although its implementation started earlier in April. Reopening of borders- no longer special permit nor PCR test to enter the country is required, regular regime at the borders (BCPs for passengers). Air passenger traffic is gradually restoring.
 - Regarding joint controls/ one-stop-shops, discussions with Montenegro on Gostun-Dobrakovo have not taken place yet.
 - No feedback from Romania regarding rail joint BCP agreement – TC Secretariat to check with Romanian authorities
- **MNE:** Implementation of green lanes started on 16th April, so far no problem in the implementation, from 1st of June all road BCPs reopened, flow of passengers and goods is lower.
- **MKD:** Agreement with Greece on joint BCPs– no reply from Greek authorities; regarding rail BCP with Kosovo, Customs protocol –there is some movement, the text has been exchanged with the KOS authorities. Regarding road one-stop-shop- no movement with KOS, with Albania advancement is noted for Qafe Thane/Kjafasan
- KOS: customs functions with full capacity. Problems related to integrated border management agreement with Serbia and no progress in moving the SRB authorities to the joint facilities at the CCP Merdare
- **BIH:** BCPs BIH- Croatia function normally for transport of goods at all borders. Freight transport the same as pre Covid period. Passenger traffic with Serbia and Montenegro is re-established, mutually harmonized procedures. Open issues flagged-Croatia does not allow passenger traffic transiting from BiH to EU through HR, while passenger transport by cars functions normally. Effort from TC Secretariat is required to avoid prolonged additional restrictions- (the TC Secretariat immediately followed up the issue and checked the state of play; at the time of drafting the summary, the situations has been resolved)
- **ALB:** freight- at all BCPs stable situation. Passenger transport- entrance and exit allowed at all BCPs, no problem with MNE and KOS, no passenger traffic still with MKD and Greece. Meeting with MNE authorities for 2 joint BCPs is planned for June. World Bank TTF Project -PIU prepared ToR for all project components, including for improvement of the BCP Qafe Thana /joint BCP with MKD (review of the existing physical condition and equipment and projected needs). Finalisation of the Governmental Agreement between two countries is expected
- **TCT Secretariat** pointed out that EC stands ready to support agreements on joint BCPs but progress in bilateral talks is needed.
- TCT Secretariat to check the status of the state of play with regards to the draft rail BCP agreements between SRB-HR and BiH-HR.
- **WB6 parties** expressed the need to have the participation of the neighbouring EUMS in the work of the TCTF and the ongoing projects/initiatives.

Regular activities

- European GNSS agency representative presented Galileo green lane mobile app. Its objective is to offload borders and manage more efficiently the transit of goods (presentation attached)

The app is currently being piloted across internal EU BCPs and the pilots can also include the BCPs between EU and WB6. The WB 6 parties are encouraged to consider the benefits and get involved in the initiative (ALB had earlier expressed an interest to join the pilots on its two BCPs with Greece). GNSS Agency is also looking at the possibilities to extend the app to internal WB6 borders, which is likely to happen in the next months.

- CEFTA Secretariat informed about the activities related to the green lanes within its remit and other ongoing activities for trade facilitation. The system for electronic exchange of data (SEED) could technically be extended to neighbouring EU MS provided there is an interest from the parties
- Trade Facilitation Support Programme, which complements the transport facilitation activities, was presented by IFC/World Bank representative (presentation attached). Regular update is foreseen at the TCTF meetings and the IFC team is available for information sharing regarding all aspects of the work which is carried and which includes, but is not limited to: simplification of procedures, risk analysis, time release studies etc.
- CONNECTA eQMS project on Corridor X- state of play: so far, the consultancy team had an initial meeting with the respective Serbian authorities, whereas no meeting took place with Macedonian authorities even though there has been intensive communication on the subject TC Secretariat clearly expressed the need to speed up the scheduling of the initial meeting and the activities to follow. Contacts with Hungary and Greece are established, still no answer from Croatia. SRB reiterated the need to have HR on board with this project.
- Next TCTF meeting is expected to be held mid September.