

8th Regional Steering Committee Meeting

30th June 2020 (*via Webex*)

Agreed Minutes and Conclusions (in bold)

- 8th Regional Steering Committee Meeting was held via WebEx and all Regional Partners were involved as well as several EU Member States (DE, IT, SI, RO, SK, MT, EL, BG, HR).
- Welcoming remarks by the Chair of the RSC and TCT Secretariat Director (Interim), were followed by official information of Mr. Harvey Rouse, HoU DG MOVE A2, that he will co-chair the meeting instead of Ms. Maja Bakran Marcich who could not join the meeting.
- **Agenda adopted without comments**
- Mr. Alain Baron, Director (Interim) reported on the current state of play, he confirmed complete implementation of the HQ Agreement and thanked to the Republic of Serbia for support. Mr. Baron recalled achievements made during 2019 and until June 2020. Since its setting up, the TCT Secretariat has become a recognized actor in the region and facilitator between MS and WB6. Mr. Baron presented achievements in the transport policy, strengthened sectorial cooperation (administrative arrangements with ERA, soon with S2R).
- The Director (interim) presented short term priorities of the TCT Secretariat such as “green lane” initiative, monitoring traffic and internal and external WB borders/boundaries, ensuring implementation of the action plans, developing a timeline for the implementation of the key EU acquis, ensuring better connectivity with EU MS, complying with objectives of the EU Green Agenda.
- TCT officials reported on border crossing/common crossing points monitoring – in WB6 internal borders/boundaries, for 2nd Quarter 2020 – after COVID crisis, in June borders started to open, overall situation stable, traffic now about 50-60% of the level last year. As for EU/WB6 borders- June update: good performing BCPs performed better while the problematic ones performed worse, summer peak might lead to additional challenges, besides the COVID crisis. Gradiska problem - in April and May (HR-BiH), now improved, Batrovci/Bajakovo – between the Republic of Serbia and Republic of Croatia, Horgos/Roszke – between the Republic of Serbia and Hungary and Gradina/Kalotina – between the Republic of Serbia and Bulgaria remained by far the most problematic BCPs overall.
- The TCT Secretariat reported on situation in the rail sector: international rail traffic still suspended in the region, at the national level it is re-established since the beginning of May but not in full capacity, freight volume around 25% less than the same time last year. After COVID crisis, rail can become important alternative to other modes of transport in the region with appropriate investments.

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- The TCT Secretariat debriefed on the state of play of its proposals during the COVID crisis, with aim to shift from a response to the emergency situation to the focus on a longer term plan through addressing long lasting issues affecting border crossing/CCP operations in the post-COVID phase.
- Galileo Green Lane mobile application was presented by TCT Secretariat, as a technological solution to support the EU Green lane border crossings/CCP implementation monitoring, with objective to offload borders/boundaries and manage more efficiently the transit of goods.
- The RSC acknowledged the work carried out by all Technical Committees (Transport Facilitation, Rail, Road Safety and Road). Debriefing on latest Technical Committee meetings, results achieved, problems to be solved/weaknesses, next steps.
- Technical Committee on Transport Facilitation – pending issues: little/no progress in concluding joint rail agreements/protocols, no progress in negotiating joint one stop controls in road BCPs –KOS/MKD and MNE/ SRB, little progress by ALB/ MKD and ALB/ MNE. Need to obtain clarification by EC on the possibility to establish joint BCPs between WB6 and EUMS is highlighted.
- Rail Technical Committee – achievements: established cooperation with ERA, draft Cooperation Agreement between TCT Secretariat and Shift 2 Rail, monitoring of the situation in rail freight transport in the region. Pending issues: translations of national rail legislation are needed to be provided more quickly. Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, Hungary – participation of MS having common borders with WB6 is needed and welcome.
- Technical Committee on Road – maintenance plans: RPs are urged to use CONNECTAS deliverables, need to establish a working group under the umbrella of Road TC to focus on ITS deployment and e-tolling interoperability (legal and technical issues). As regards case studies, members emphasized the need for experience sharing from EU MS on e-tolling interoperability and presentations on case studies.
- Technical Committee on Road Safety – importance of Traffic Safety Agency is recognized. TA for establishing of an executive body for road safety currently is ongoing in North Macedonia financed under EUIF instrument. CONNECTA update. First assessment of the Action Plan in foreseen in the next meeting –September/October 2020.
- ***The RSC would welcome a stronger participation and engagement of EU MS in all Technical Committees.***
- Contribution of TC Secretariat daily monitoring was duly acknowledged by DG MOVE.
- Adoption of the Financial and Administrative Rules - the document was previously distributed to RSC members, comments received from North Macedonia only and Secretariat replied and shared the replies to all delegations prior to RSC meeting. The North Macedonian representative opened the discussion, emphasizing the need to consider, at least, one of their comments relating to the travel rules (reimbursement of second class ticket instead of 1st class) presenting the travel arrangements of the Macedonian's ministers.
- North Macedonia insisted on this change to the travel rules, RSC Chair, after the consultation of the other parties, proposed that this changed is included.

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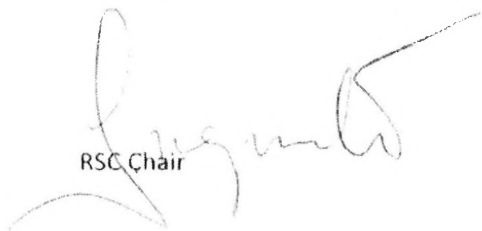
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- **The package (financial and administrative rules) was adopted as follows :**
 - **Financial Rules adopted.**
 - **Travel rules adopted, with a minor change regarding the reimbursement of travel expenditures (No business class). RSC may consider further changes in the future if deemed necessary.**
 - The TCT Financial Officer presented update on financing and contribution since last RSC meeting held in May was presented. He recalled that 2019 Kosovo* contribution is still pending. He emphasized ongoing procurement procedures expected to be finalized by mid-July and presented calls for tenders to be launched shortly (external audit for 2019, Video Conferencing, Office equipment and printing services, accounting and HR software, Corporate Travel services). Financial Officer also presented financial report shortly as well as situation with 2020 Contribution.
 - The proposed TC Director, Mr. Matej Zakonjsek was invited to join the meeting prior to discussion on HR. He highlighted that very good work has been done by the Secretariat until now and presented his view of the future Secretariat work and activities saying that work on new practices needs to become systematic. Upcoming tasks: Social Forum needs to be convened, Ministerial council is planned to be held in early autumn, regional governments undergo political changes currently in the region. As the most urgent he stressed administrative issues still pending to be implemented.
 - The Director (Interim) may invite him to attend operational/administrative meetings in July, in order to ensure a smooth transition, on the basis of a transition plan. Step-by-step transition plan prepared by Interim Director shall be developed and distributed to RSC.
 - Mr. Zakonjsek expressed the awareness of the different views regarding his start date (DG MOVE – request to appoint director as soon as possible, from 1 July, WB6 Regional Partners – 1 September) and his proposal would be 01st of August 2020. After his brief, Mr. Zakonjsek left the Meeting.
 - **Appointment of the new management, the RSC agreed at unanimity that:**
 - **The Director will start on 01st of August 2020**
 - **The Deputy Director will start on 01st of September 2020**
- Furthermore, the chair asked the possibility that Mr. Baron and/or DG MOVE continue to support the new management until the end of September when the transitional period should be over.
- It was agreed that during the period the new Director takes up his new role, Mr. Baron, would be on hand, if available and if and when needed, to answer pertinent questions related to the functioning of the TCT and its Secretariat. DGs MOVE and NEAR will continue to closely support the TCT Secretariat, including its management, in its future activities.**
- **Steps to be taken in signing the appointment acts**
 - **RSC Decision to be signed**
 - **Appointment acts to be prepared.**

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSC 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

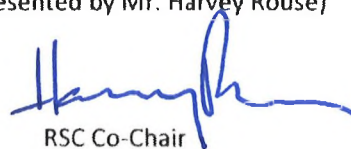
- *Steps to be taken for administrative and operational transitions*
 - Most of the work will be done via teleworking until the end of summer.
 - **Transport Community governing bodies should be presented in the TCT website (taking into consideration EU data protection Regulation) – Ministerial Council, RSC Members (with clear information on voting and deputy members) as well as representatives in each Technical Committee.**
 - **EC should provide the appointment decision regarding RSC Members (official representative and alternate).**
- The RSC HR Officer presented updates on recruitment process (ongoing and completed) in TC Secretariat.

Zoran Andric



RSC Chair

Mrs Maja Bakran Marcich (excused)
(represented by Mr. Harvey Rouse)



RSC Co-Chair