

The year 2021 started with the Action Plan Roadshow in Kosovo* on 11 January. Following the opening of the workshop, a visit of the EU-funded modernisation project of rail Route 10 was organised, together with Prime Minister Avdullah Hoti and Minister of Infrastructure Arban Abrashi. Officials of the highest level expressed political support for the work of the Transport Community, including our efforts to improve road safety in the region.

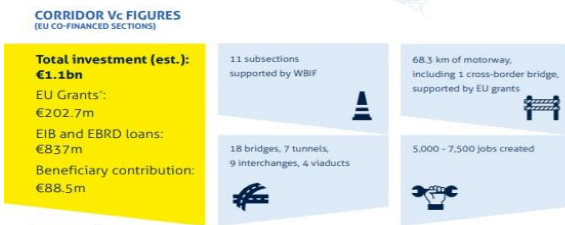


A day later in Belgrade (12.01), Director Zakonjsek met with the Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic and Minister of Transport Tomislav Momirovic to discuss the developments of the regional transport network and transport connections of the Western Balkans with the EU. Director Zakonjsek presented the priorities of the Transport Community, while President Vucic expressed full support for the extension of Green Lanes to the borders between Western Balkans and the EU, emphasising that it was essential for Serbia to implement this initiative on its busiest borders with Croatia and Hungary.



Visit to Montenegro took place on 15 January for the first official meeting with the newly appointed Minister of Capital Investments, Mladen Bojanic. The meeting was an opportunity to highlight support for flagship projects in Montenegro, including Belgrade-Podgorica-Bar railway, Sarajevo-Podgorica motorway, railway to Tirana and the Blue Highway along the Adriatic coast. Minister Bojanic agreed to open the Action Plan Roadshow in Podgorica on 19 February.

During the visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina on 21 January, the ongoing activities on Corridor Vc – one of the most important transport links in the Western Balkans – were reviewed. Once operational, the Svilaj



Bridge, connecting BiH to its EU neighbour Croatia, will be an important segment on Corridor Vc, the first major motorway and the largest ever infrastructure project in the country's history. The Director Zakonjsek also met with the President of the Council of Ministers Zoran Tegeltija to highlight the importance of high-level dialogue with Croatia, which will be essential as two countries work together to minimise waiting times at their borders.

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

Our work on extending Green Lanes to the EU continued. During a productive meeting on 18 January, the following was agreed: list of border crossings between WB and the EU, list of priority PPE goods and medicine, continuation of syncing of working hours of border agencies, as well as electronic exchange of data. The next meeting is scheduled for 5 February 2021.

In January 2021, the Transport Community also organised successful Technical Committee meetings on Transport of Dangerous Goods (20 January), Railway (21 January), Road Safety (22 January), Transport Facilitation (25 January) and Road (27 January):

- The first Technical Committee on Transport of Dangerous Goods concluded that, in order to ensure safe and secure transport of dangerous goods in Western Balkans, formal guidelines (in line with the EU standards) are needed;
- Eighth Technical Committee on Railway analysed implementation of the Transport Community Rail Action Plan, impact of Covid19 on rail and the possibility of establishing night train connections in the Western Balkans;
- Sixth Technical Committee on Road Safety reiterated our dedication to Vision Zero by 2050, the need for national Road Safety Strategies, standardised data collection methods and implementation of awareness raising campaigns;
- Extension of Green Lanes to the EU was the focus of the Technical Committee on Transport Facilitation. Galileo app, EU-funded System of Electronic Exchange of Data (SEED) and Transport Community's monitoring of waiting times were highlighted as useful tools that will facilitate this process;
- Concrete regional initiatives (road weather stations in Serbia and road asset management in North Macedonia) were presented at the fourth Technical Committee on Road. Participants were also acquainted with the EU Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy and its application in the region.

On 25 January, Transport Community's work was presented at the European Parliament's Committee on Transport and Tourism. Road safety, moving cargo from roads to rail, integrating green and smart elements on roads, as well as Green Lanes expansion to the EU were the main topics of the session.

EUSAIR's Belgrade Forum and panel "The Impact of Covid-19 on Transport and Mobility in the Adriatic-Ionian Region" was an occasion to present how the health pandemic affected transport and mobility and what perspectives can be envisaged for the future. Green Lanes again featured prominently as a great example of regional cooperation that can be improved and utilised even after the pandemic is over.

We continued our cooperation with the civil society. During an online event organised by the Global Alliance of Road Safety NGOs, we presented Transport Community's road safety initiatives in the Western Balkans and initiated plans to mark the UN Global Road Safety Week (17-23 May).

February Highlights: 12 February – Regional Steering Committee, 19 February – Podgorica Roadshow, 25 February - Social Forum (Social Issues in Rail)

