



8th Transport Facilitation Technical Committee meeting
Videoconference meeting, 10.05.2021.

Summary

Introduction

- The 8th TCTF videoconference meeting was held in aim to reiterate the activities since the last Technical Committee on Transport Facilitation meeting that took place in January 2021, especially the progress in implementation of Transport Facilitation Action Plan and progress in drafting and implementing bilateral agreements on joint border crossing points in WB6. It emphasized the importance of further cooperation in order to extend Green Lane initiative, as well as to further support the national authorities in their respective areas before the upcoming Berlin Summit and Ministerial Council in July.
- TC Secretariat welcomed the participation of the European Commission, EU member state representatives (Croatia, Greece, Romania, Bulgaria), CEFTA, European Commission, World Bank, WB6 Chamber of Investment Forum and Galileo Satellite Agency.
- The Director of the TC Secretariat highlighted the importance of bilateral and trilateral meetings in the region, and announced further on-site visits of TC Permanent Secretariat to regional partners and respective institutions, in order to enhance further cooperation with relate to easing operations on border-crossings.

Information on ongoing regional activities for transport and trade facilitation - TC Permanent Secretariat, CEFTA Secretariat, WB6 Chamber of Investment Forum

- TC Secretariat presented activities on transport and trade facilitation that took place since January 2021. In general, little progress in implementation of the TF Action Plan was made. However, some progress was made on Road BCPs: bilateral agreement drafted between ALB and MKD, and joint BCP Vracenovici became functional between BiH and MNE. Regarding Rail BCPs, no new arrangements were initiated in the period January-May. TC Secretariat made 2 visits: on BCP between MKD and KOS (Hani Elezit-Blace), and ALB-MNE (Sukobin/Muriqan and Bozaj/ Hani i Hotit), in order to facilitate conclusion of agreements on these BCPs. TC Secretariat also facilitated discussions with all EU MS, namely with Croatia regarding Rulebook on mandatory routes for trucks, status of the new BCPs Gradiska Svilaj as well as bottlenecks created on the border with Greece. TC Secretariat is trying to prioritize CONNECTA assistance for preparation of technical documentation for BCP infrastructure improvement. New technical assistance for capacity building is also foreseen under the TCT budget. Regarding BCP monitoring activities, TCT



Secretariat underlined that activities for border-crossing monitoring and reporting are continuing on a weekly basis, and urged RPs to put emphasis on further accuracy and timely delivery of data

- With regard to Green Lanes, TC Secretariat welcomed the extending of the concept to all intra-WB6 BCPs, and reported on the agreed, ongoing and pending activities for extension to the EUMS, emphasizing the mutual benefits of exchanging advanced information on priority goods.

CEFTA Secretariat

- Green lanes –600 000 trucks used Green Lanes last year, hope to extend the initiative to BCPs with all EU MS, in order to try to finalize and make it operational before Berlin Summit
- Committee of trade facilitation ‘ mutual recognition of the programme of authorised economic operators for North Macedonia, Serbia and Moldova- this will help economic operators of region to reduce controls and waiting times.
- Initiative of harmonisation of working times- a proposal is underway for aligning the working hours of border agencies and inspections

WB6 Chamber of Investment Forum

- CIF appointed new general secretary, continued activities started earlier, in line with common regional market action plan, in order to prepare first deliverables of Berlin Summit in July.
- Phase I (mapping) -market access and market intelligence database project in pilot phase, it will provide information to companies which intend to work with the region.
- Letter of support for extension of the Green Lanes had been sent to the Prime ministers of WB6 neighbouring EU countries, expressing appeal to further implement the joint initiative by the Transport Community Secretariat and CEFTA Secretariat
- Study for movement of workers without work permits was published on CIF website

Information on the EU Green Lanes and Galileo application – EC and European GNSS Agency

EC reported that no significant restrictions for transport workers are reported at the EU borders, and hence the traffic is fluid across EU. With regards to the bottlenecks created at the BCP Evzoni between Greece and North Macedonia, the situation had improved. Greece will issue new rules on 14 May, and this is in the remit of the Ministry of Health, not Ministry of Transport.

EC thanked the TCT Secretariat for monitoring the situation at all WB6-EU BCPs, for the information sharing and alerting accordingly when needed; the EC is working on Green Digital Certificate – its content is still under discussion between the EU legislators. Also, recommendation on travel from third countries is under preparation, will contain guidance on how to ease travelling of vaccinated people from countries belonging to “low risk area”, but the document won’t be legally binding.



European GNSS Agency presented the state of play regarding enhanced Galileo Green Lane platform, and the status of new procurement for Design and Implementation. Some examples of real time monitoring and daily reports were shown. Phases of the project for the new system include technical solutions for monitoring freight traffic, pilot testing with potential users, operational maintenance of solution and system handover. The new monitoring solution will provide information on the waiting time on road, rail, and maritime border crossings within EU, but also on the external EU borders with WB6. Another novelty is that additional points of interest will be included: logistics hubs, airports, resting/service areas, fuel stations, parkings, etc.

MKD welcomed the new developments and reiterated its interest to participate in the Galileo app pilot.

State of play with regards to the bilateral BCP agreements and situation at the borders– SEE parties, EU MS

SRB: - no significant progress since January. Letter to Bulgaria with another proposal was not sent yet, due to parliamentary elections in Bulgaria; delay in scheduling the meeting with Croatia due to pandemics; in accordance with the proposal from Hungarian side, draft agreement on cross border rail traffic and draft amendments to the agreement on border control with Hungary are being prepared, its final revisions are done now; Romanian answer on the Serbian initiative and draft bilateral agreement is expected; draft agreement with BIH is almost done, in the next 2 weeks official letter with proposal will be sent.

Planned infrastructural projects: extension of Horgos (with HU), preliminary design is adopted, procurement for project on construction permit is ongoing, and works are expected to begin in second half of 2021; for modernization of BCP Kotroman (with BIH) the works are ongoing and planned to be completed by October 2021; for BCP Vatin (with RO), technical documentation should be ready in 2021; and for BCP Presevo (with MKD) , setting of traffic signalization is also planned for 2021.

- SRB to initiate the discussions with BIH on road and rail bilateral agreements
- SRB and RO to confirm the status of the initiative for rail border agreement
- SRB to proceed the discussions with HR on the joint rail agreement

MNE: technical meeting with Albania on BCPs Sukobin- Muricani, Bozaj -Hani i Hotit, internal procedure of appointing the new members of MNE group is ongoing; Minister of Capital Investment visited BIH Transport Minister, strongly supported continued cooperation on joint BCPs and highlighted reconstruction of main road Sarajevo-Podgorica; in January 2021 initiative was sent to BIH to check for conditions for Klobuk- Ilino brdo in order to implement simplify procedures; Ministry of interior prepared plan of measures to simplify border procedures for summer 2021, temporary re-categorisation of certain border points for international passenger traffic; repeated initiative was sent to Serbia in the beginning of



April to implement signed agreement for BCP – mixed commission for monitoring agreements should meet; Draft protocol on joint border control with Croatia is prepared

- MNE to proceed and complete the internal procedure for appointment of members to the joint committee with ALB
- MNE and SRB to start discussions within the mixed joint committee for road BCP agreements
- MNE and BIH to start discussions on introducing joint controls on remaining road BCPs

MKD: signature for the remaining Customs protocol with KOS is agreed, deadline is set; progress in agreeing the text for one-stop-shop agreement with Albania.

- MKD to proceed with the agreed conclusions from the last mission on Hani i Elezit

KOS: Green Lanes are working perfectly; implementation of conclusions from previous meeting will follow (Hani Elezit- Blace); KOS thanked TC Permanent Secretariat for organizing meeting with MKD.

- KOS to proceed with the agreed conclusions from the last mission on Hani i Elezit

ALB: establish intra-institutional working group to organise meeting with MNE is a priority. Framework agreement with MKD– procedure is not finalized due to elections, as soon as framework agreement is approved, the date to sign the agreement with MKD will be set.

- ALB to finalize the procedure for signing the bilateral agreement with MKD

BIH: (based on written information)- the situation with the traffic at all border points is stable; there is no activity with regards the rail BCP with Serbia ; Transport and Security Ministry will create joint group to work on drafting new proposal for the rail BCP agreement with Croatia

- BIH to start preparing the new draft for a joint rail bilateral agreement with HR

HR: regarding Green Lanes and general border-crossing facilitation, it was suggested the issues to be addressed first within the EU bodies; HR informed that the works on Svilaj bridge will be completed on time; the Rulebook for mandatory transit routes is adopted and the comments received from the transport operators were addressed

EL: the draft rail agreement between Greece and North Macedonia has been finalized and will be sent through diplomatic post



RO: Romanian Ministry will check the status on the draft rail border agreement with Serbia and will follow-up accordingly.

IFI 's support and investments in transport and trade facilitation – World Bank Group

WB representative presented the implementation of the trade and transport facilitation project, particularly the ongoing projects for BCPs modernization. National Single Window Blueprint for ALB, MKD and SRB - the work is continuing and shall be done by the end of June.

Next TCTF meeting will take place in September 2021, live or via videoconference, depending on the epidemiological situation.

