



On 12 April, the Secretariat hosted a trilateral meeting with Ministers from Bosnia and Herzegovina (Vojin Mitrović), Montenegro (Mladen Bojanić) and Serbia (Tomislav Momirović) to discuss how to improve connectivity and reduce waiting times at borders. Minister Bojanić was the first minister of a regional partner to visit the Secretariat's new premises a day earlier for discussions on how to develop the regional transport network and improve Montenegro's links with neighbors. The visit was an opportunity to discuss the establishment of one stop controls on the main crossing between Serbia and Montenegro located on the TEN-T Core Network. Delegation led by Minister of Communications and Transport Vojin Mitrović met on 13 April with the Transport Community team to assess infrastructure projects on Corridor Vc in Bosnia and Herzegovina – Svilaj border crossing, Gradiška bridge - as well as investments in railways. One-stop /integrated border crossings were noted for their potential to strengthen regional cooperation and bring benefits to citizens. Demining of the area around Save River - another flagship project from the European Commission's investment plan – was emphasised

due to its capacity to make waterborne transport of goods a viable option for business.

During a visit to Kosovo\* on 19 April, Director Zakonjšek met with the Minister of Infrastructure Liburn Aliu and Interior Minister Xhelal Sveçla for discussions on road safety, infrastructure projects and the establishment of a regional rail market. Given the small size of the rail market, opening at the regional level would create incentives for cooperation and make the region's railway undertakings better prepared to compete on the EU market in the future. Preparations for the First Western Balkans Rail Summit co-organised with the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), which will take place on 13 September, continued. In addition to coordinating plans for the arrival of Connecting Europe Express train with the European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER), Director Zakonjšek met with Serbia's Minister of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure Tomislav Momirović on 9 April to review progress on rail summit, one of the major events of the European Year of Rail. Negotiating and signing of bilateral agreements on one-stop controls between Serbia and its neighbors was highlighted by both interlocutors as one of the concrete steps that will further strengthen regional cooperation and bring benefits to citizens.



Border crossings Hani i Elezit (Kosovo\* and North Macedonia) will become a joint rail crossing once the remaining protocol is finalised. Albania and Montenegro are looking for ways to define the future model of joint controls at Muriqan/Sukobin and Hani i Hotit/Bozaj. During visits on 23 and 27 April, Transport Community delegation met with the authorities for a productive meetings to evaluate the next steps and facilitate dialogue among regional partners.

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\*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.

Expanding of the established **Green Lanes** from Western Balkans to neighbouring EU Member States will require coordination and dialogue. Regional partners' support will be instrumental to achieve this goal. In April, Transport Community held a series of meetings with neighbouring EU Member States to make progress on this important task. Following the request of the Transport Community and the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA) to the Greek authorities to alleviate long waiting lines, working hours were extended at border crossing Evozni/Bogorodica. The measure was a welcome step in the right direction that will prevent shortage of essential goods in the region. In addition to coordinating working hours of border agencies, Transport Community is dedicated to facilitating agreements between regional partners and their EU neighbours on the list of border crossings, list of priority PPE goods and medicine, as well as electronic exchange of data.



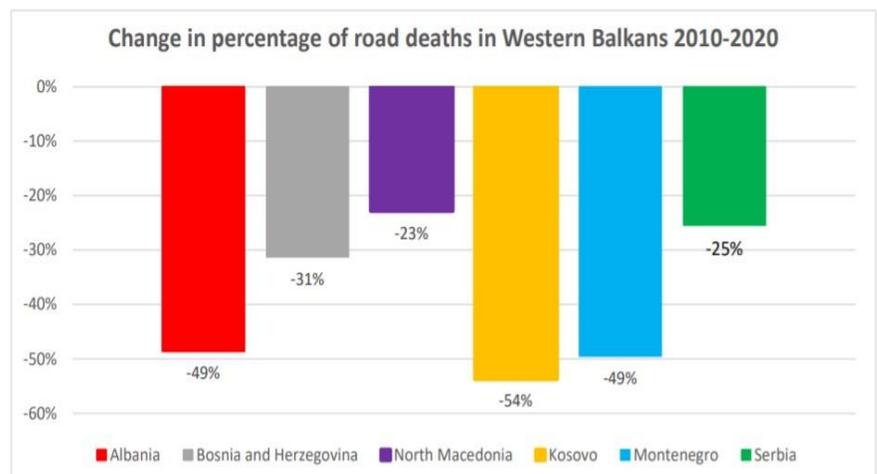
Zero deaths or seriously injured because of road accidents on railway crossings is one of Transport Community's primary goals. To reduce safety risks, increase capacity and performance across the rail network and reduce operational risks for the railways, the Secretariat initiated a **project "Safety Improvement on the Level Crossings in Western Balkans"** together with the six regional partners. The project's "soft" measure will include mapping of the most critical level crossings in the region, public awareness and educational campaigns, as well as new legislation. The project's "hard" measures will involve procurement and installation of safety equipment on targeted level crossings. The project will be executed in 2021 with the support of JASPERS – Joint Assistance to Support Projects in European Regions.



Transport Community's work on reducing the number of dead and injured in the region was presented at the UN Road Safety Collaboration meeting on 22 April and during a meeting with Serbian Traffic Agency Director. To coincide with the EU's Road Safety Results Conference, the Secretariat published data on road safety in the region: <https://www.transport-community.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Annual-Statistics-2020.pdf> While positive trends were recorded in all six regional partners, it was clear – Vision Zero is still a target we should all aspire to achieve.

Providing opportunities for youth in Western Balkans was the main topic of the meeting with Director General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture Themis Christophidou. Capacity Building Summer School focused on rail will be the highlight of our youth engagement in 2021.

**Figure 3:** Change in percentage of road deaths in Western Balkans 2010 – 2020



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