

The 12th meeting of the Regional Steering Committee (RSC) was held on 20 May. The Transport Community Permanent Secretariat presented its Draft **Strategy for Sustainable and Smart Mobility in the Western Balkans**, a document focused on decarbonisation and digitalisation of Western Balkans' transport sector. The RSC also endorsed the **Action Plan for Waterborne Transport and Multimodality**, which identifies benefits of waterborne and multimodal transport to increase efficiency of transport operations and to achieve lower environmental impact.



Elements of the Waterborne and Multimodality Action Plan, which will supplement the four existing Action Plans of the Transport Community, were presented also at the meeting with the **European Sea Ports Organisation (ESPO)** Secretary General Isabelle Rykbost on 6 May. Partnership with ESPO is essential to ensure participation of regional ports in EU initiatives and to improve maritime-based logistics chains in Western Balkans. The Port of Durrës, which was recently granted observer status in ESPO, and the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy launched on 27 May the Centre of Excellence for Maritime Affairs, an initiative supporting careers, research, innovation and regional cooperation in the maritime industry.

Visit to Durrës was part of Director Zakonjsek's **visit to Albania**, which also included a meeting with Minister Belinda Balluku, with the CEO of the private rail operator Albrail and with RSC members. The visit in Albania was an opportunity for exchange of views with representatives of regional organisations - the Regional Cooperation Council and the Energy Community.



The **6th UN GLOBAL ROAD SAFETY WEEK** webinar hosted by the Transport Community took place on 18 May. The Transport Community joined the Road Safety Week, which aimed at bringing together NGOs, public and private organisations from around the world to raise awareness about road safety that will impact the reduction of fatalities. The webinar's two panel sessions were an opportunity to bring together stakeholders (the World Bank, WHO, the Global Alliance of NGOs for Road Safety, regional road safety agencies, EU Delegations) to take initiative towards speed management in urban areas. Lively discussion, which included mayors and deputy mayors of Belgrade, Skopje, Tirana and Niksic, focused on the challenges that authorities are facing and how we can together improve the situation in the region.

During the road safety week 17-23 May, the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat also joined the social media campaign demanding safer streets for all, with focus on 30km/h speed limit. A visit to **Bijeljina municipality** in Bosnia and Herzegovina took place on 21 May. Director Zakonjsek met with Ministers Vojin Mitrovic and Nedeljko Coric to reiterate that low-speed streets save lives and are the heart of any community.

The route of **Connecting Europe Express Train** was unveiled on 9 May, as part of marking the **Europe Day**. The train's stops in Belgrade and Skopje will symbolise



European unity and will raise much-needed awareness about the benefits of rail travel in the region. The **9th technical committee on railways** was organised on 6 May. It was an opportunity to take stock of implementation of TCT's Rail Action Plan, progress on TEN-T railway network, the project to improve security of level crossings in the region, as well as events to mark the European Year of Rail. Productive technical committee meetings focused on transport facilitation (10 May) and road safety (18 May) were also organised.

On 26 May, Director Zakonjsek took part in a panel "Infrastructure and Connectivity Agenda" in the framework of Kopaonik Business Forum, together with Ministers Tomislav Momirovic and Mladen Brajovic. Zakonjsek noted that infrastructure projects can bring long-lasting benefits to the region only if they are coupled with effective policies. The Transport Community Permanent Secretariat will continue to focus on flagship projects mentioned in the European Commission's Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans and facilitate cooperation among the six regional partners.

A week earlier, another **high-level ministerial event** took place online under the auspices of the Austrian Ministry of Climate Action. On this occasion, Director Zakonjsek highlighted Transport Community's work in the Western Balkans to reduce greenhouse emissions. Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy for the Western Balkans will contribute to making the region more climate neutral.

