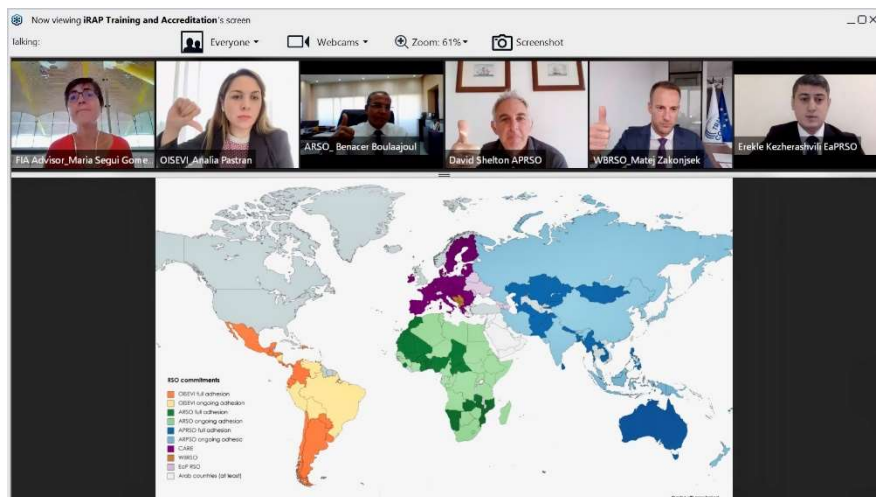


The 13th Regional Steering Committee meeting of the Transport Community was held on 21 October. Regional Steering Committee members provided valuable guidance to the work of the Transport Community. Discussions focused on TCT's work plan for 2022 and the progress achieved since the adoption of TCT Action Plans. A day later, Ministers from the Western Balkans in charge of transport met to discuss how to advance implementation of policy reforms in the field of transport. The high-level conference was organised in Budva, Montenegro by the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat and the Ministry of



Capital Investments, on the occasion of the Montenegrin presidency of the Central European Initiative. Ministers reviewed one-year progress since the adoption of Transport Community's Action Plans on Road, Rail, Transport Facilitation and Road Safety. (A full report on one year progress: <https://www.transport-community.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/One-year-progress-report-on-implementation-of-TCT-Action-Plans-14-10-2021-14-50.pdf>). Transport Community Action Plans and Green Lanes were welcomed by leaders at the EU-WB Summit in Slovenia on 6 October and featured prominently in the Brdo Declaration (<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/52280/brdo-declaration-6-october-2021-en.pdf>). When fully implemented, these strategic documents will direct the region towards safer and modern roads, reduced waiting times at borders and reliable rail connected to river and seaports.

Using reliable data to improve road safety in the Western Balkans was the reason behind creation of the Western Balkans Road Safety Observatory (WBRSO). Director Zakonjšek presented work of the WBRSO at the International Road Assessment Programme 2021 workshop on 7 October. Road safety was in focus again at the online meeting on 20 October with the stakeholders from Bosnia and Herzegovina. On this occasion, TCT highlighted importance of roadside checks and technical inspections to remove faulty drivers and vehicles from the traffic and make our streets safer.



TCT delegation met with the representatives of railway regulators in Bosnia and Herzegovina on 12-13 October to stress significance of effective maintenance of rail networks and rail investments. On this occasion, TCT presented the upcoming awareness raising campaign to increase safety of level crossings in the region. A concrete step forward in the process of extension of Green Lanes came when a rail crossing point Presevo – Tabanovce was added to the Green Lanes network. Thanks to coordinating work of our colleagues at CEFTA, the rail border crossing point between North Macedonia and Serbia can now benefit from faster processing and more targeted checks, as a result of data exchange among regional partners.



Gradiška bridge, a symbol of connectivity between Western Balkans and the EU, was joined together on 19 October, two years after the start of construction. The bridge, which is a vital transport link between Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and the wider European network, will boost economic growth and bring people closer together. Joining of the bridge happened less than a month after the opening of bridge and border crossing Svilaj, an essential link on Corridor Vc.

Another positive development for connectivity with the EU, was the signing of memorandum on plans to complete the missing rail links that will connect Adriatic and Black Seas. On 19 October, Ministers in charge of transport from Albania, Bulgaria and North Macedonia signed the memorandum on sustainable development of Rail Corridor VIII reaffirming commitment for coordinated planning which is essential for this rail link to start serving citizens.

During a meeting in Sofia with the Bulgarian Minister of Transport Hristo Aleksiev and at the Bulgarian Customs Agency on 28 October, Director Zakonjšek reiterated the importance of Rail Corridor VIII. Reducing waiting times at Bulgaria's borders with Western Balkans, will improve links between WB and the EU. Participants agreed on the constructive role TCT and CEFTA Secretariats in the process of extending Green Lanes from the Western Balkans to Bulgaria. TCT's essential role in guiding the region towards the EU standards in transport was acknowledged on 19 October when the European Commission published its yearly Western Balkans Enlargement Package. Reports on all regional partners include recommendations in line with the TCT Action Plans.







In October, five TCT technical committees were held. Technical committee on railway was organised on 5 October in hybrid form in Belgrade and online. The meeting was an opportunity to evaluate numerous initiatives organised during the EU Year of Rail, watch a presentation about the automation of rail transport and learn about the case-study on Belgrade-Budapest high speed line. Technical committee on road safety met a day later to review progress on implementation of



Road Safety Action Plan and highlight the importance of reliable data and the role of the Western Balkans Road Safety Observatory. Reducing waiting times at borders and taking stock of recent accomplishments (joint rail and road crossings in the region) were main topics of the technical committee on transport facilitation whose members met on 7 October. A day later, members of the technical committee on roads began preparations for the 2022 TCT Year of Roads, which will be dedicated to green, safe and reliable roads of the future. Finally, technical committee on transport of dangerous goods (TDG) met on 27 October to welcome TCT Guidelines on TDG and commend the regional partners on coordination and capacity building efforts in this important area which requires additional attention in the Western Balkans.



TCT Delegation's end-of-month visit to Brussels was an opportunity to discuss our work and coordinate future actions with the representatives of the European Commission's DG NEAR and the Western Balkans Ambassadors to the EU. During a meeting with European Commission representatives, TCT delegation noted that smart, sustainable, and green elements should become part of investments on all modes of transport.