

On 1 December 2021, meeting was held between Minister Belinda Balluku and Director Zakonjšek to review progress on the European Commission’s Economic and investment plan and the **connectivity flagship project of rehabilitation of Tirana - Durrës rail**, with a new rail line connection to Tirana airport. This project is part of Corridor VIII, which is linking Adriatic and Black Seas. Follow up meeting with Tirana Mayor Erion Veliaj



was a good opportunity to discuss **road safety in urban areas with specific focus on safe cycling and walking**. Transport Community will support Tirana as the European Youth Capital and the efforts to connect the city and its youth with European values.

On 2 December, Transport Community delegation participated in the official ceremony for the start of **construction of the first section of Peace Highway** (section Niš-Pločnik). The project,

which is part of the European Commission’s Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans, will improve connectivity, bring people closer and bolster regional cooperation. The highway is part of the TEN-T network and it has great importance for freight and passenger transport in the Western Balkans as it is the region's shortest route to the Port of Durrës on the Adriatic.

The **conference “Role of the Traffic Safety Agency and Importance of Reliable Data in Policy Making”**, jointly organised by the Transport Community, Macedonian Ministry of Transport and Communications and the World Bank, took place in Skopje on 6-7 December. Participants highlighted the importance of a holistic approach to **road safety** and called for improvements in the design of roads and vehicles, better laws and law enforcement and provision of timely, life-saving emergency care for injured. Transport Community’s partners – the World Health Organisation and the UN regional commissions – developed a Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021-2030, which will be a guide for devising concrete actions that will improve road safety in the region.



The conference coincided with the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the **Western Balkans Road Safety Observatory**, operating within the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat, which focuses on **improving the reliability of road safety statistics in the region**.

More than 100 participants from all six regional partners of the Transport Community took part in the **TAIEX Regional Workshop on transport of dangerous goods**. The aim of the workshop was to provide expertise and guidance on legislation regarding transport of dangerous goods and its implementation. Experts from Germany and Poland shared their best practice and experience on the requirements of the Directive 2008/68/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 September 2008 on the inland transport of dangerous goods.

On 9 December, together with the Polish Road Transport Inspection and the Embassy of Poland, the Transport Community organised **roadside check** at the tolling station Vrčin, close to Belgrade. The check was set up as part of the three-day training in road transport-related topics for road transport professionals from the regional participants of the Transport Community – Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia. Participants from the ministries in charge of transport, interior, road transport inspections, police, road authorities and road transport departments learned about the European Union transport policies and regulations. Inspections such as this allow identification and removing from traffic of the vehicles that are malfunctioning, and penalise drivers and operators, who do not possess the appropriate qualifications and documents. As such, they are an essential element of road safety. In addition to practical demonstration, the Polish inspection team provided invaluable **training on EU legislation** to workshop participants.



Speaking at a panel hosted by the Ministry of Economy of North Macedonia and held under the auspices of CEFTA on 15 December in Skopje, Director Zakonjšek highlighted the importance of **efficiency of border-crossing points for connectivity in the Western Balkans**. Transport Community values the shift of paradigm which strives for more efficient transport and logistics, rather than focusing solely on transport infrastructure. This approach is in line with the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy for the Western Balkans, Economic and Investment Plan, Common Regional Market Plan, and the TCT Transport facilitation Action Plan.

The **14th Regional Steering Committee (RSC) meeting** of the Transport Community was held on 16 December 2021 in Belgrade. Regional Steering Committee members endorsed the work plan and adopted the 2022 budget of the Secretariat. It was announced at the meeting that the **next Ministerial Council** will take place in Pristina on 10 March 2022. Participants also received information on Transport Community Permanent Secretariat's Guidelines for transportation of dangerous goods.