



In October, the EU continued delivering on its promise to bring sustainable development to the region. On 27 October, inauguration of works on Tirana-Durres rail took place and the Transport Community delegation joined the European Commission President Ursula von Der Leyen, Prime Minister Edi Rama and Minister of Infrastructure and Energy Belinda Balluku at the event. During October, progress was also made on section from Kumanovo to Kriva Palanka to Bulgarian border. **Rehabilitation works on these essential Corridor VIII sections** will lead to frequent passenger service and efficient freight transport linking Albania, North Macedonia & Bulgaria. On 28 October, a new tunnel was completed on **road Corridor 5c in Bosnia and Herzegovina**.

On 4 October, the Transport Community delegation participated in a **meeting of regional organisations in Brussels** hosted by the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA). Coordination meetings like this, offer an opportunity to discuss how to join forces in supporting the regional initiatives and EU integration processes of the Western Balkans. On the same day, TC Secretariat representatives **met with Western Balkans ambassadors to the EU** to review progress of implementation of the Transport Community Treaty and preparations for the upcoming Ministerial Council in Brussels.



E-tolling, as prerequisite of efficient, digital and fit for the future transport, was in focus of **conference that was organised by the International Road Federation** and supported by the Transport Community Secretariat on 5 October. Using the same, modern technology in the entire region is a steppingstone to achieving interoperability of the transport system, noted director Zakonjšek in his opening remarks, highlighting how a common legal, technical and operational framework will make it possible in the near future to drive across Western Balkans using one, interoperable transport system.



A **workshop on project preparation** for six regional partners of the Transport Community took place on 12 October at the Transport Community headquarters in Belgrade. The two-day event allowed the representatives of institutions from the Western Balkans to learn about EU and WBIF requirements when it comes to applying for financing of projects in transport sector. Proper preparation was highlighted as key for securing EU financing for projects aimed at implementing the Trans-European Transport

Network policy in the Western Balkans. The training was conducted by experts from JASPERS, the advisory programme run by the European Investment Bank (EIB) and funded by the EIB and the European Commission.

On 13 October in Niš, Serbia, Transport Community delegation participated in the **scientific-expert conference titled Railcon**. The conference, which has been delivering top-notch expertise on rail in the Western Balkans for the past twenty years, gathered scientists and experts from the region, to observe the ongoing changes and suggest directions for development of rail in Serbia and the region. Transport Community delegation highlighted the strong arguments in favor of making the rail sector a priority, by positioning it at the level that can compete with road transport in the region.

Transport Community delegation **met in Budapest** on 18 October with **representatives of the ministries of Innovation and Technology and Foreign Affairs** to discuss priorities - strengthening inland waterways transport on River Danube, progress on rail Corridor X (Budapest – Belgrade line), as well as process of TEN-T revision in the Western Balkans.

On 18 October in Sarajevo, Transport Community took part at the **TAIEX Workshop dedicated to tunnel safety**. Western Balkans partners received valuable training in transposition and implementation of the EU Directive on minimum safety requirements for tunnels, while EU MS experts shared their experience in risk analysis and acquis implementation.

Staff of border crossings Dobrakovo-Gostun, Kula-Kulla and Ilino Brdo-Klobuk benefited from a **workshop dedicated to raising awareness on joint border controls and digital solutions** in the Western Balkans. The training was organised as part of Transport Community efforts to support coordination among regional partners.

In October, Transport Community Permanent Secretariat organised three technical committees. **9th session of Road Technical Committee** on 5 October took stock of implementation of Road Action Plan and highlighted the need for better maintenance. Slovenia's experience in road maintenance was presented as a good example for the region. Participants noted the **progress achieved in the areas of e-tolling and interoperability**. A day later, a **joint meeting**



of the Road Safety Technical Committee and the Western Balkans Road Safety Observatory was held at TC headquarters. Road safety remains high on the political agenda and the capacity building initiatives organised by the Transport Community have had a positive effect on implementation efforts in the region. **Technical Committee on Transport of Dangerous Goods** met on 26 October. On this occasion, EUROSTAT representatives presented statistical data on transport of dangerous goods and highlighted to Western Balkans partners the importance of proper data collection. **Transport Community Budget Committee**, chaired by the European Commission met on 20 October. Western Balkans regional partners discussed the proposal for the Budget 2023 backed up with Annual work program of the Transport Community for 2023. During a **meeting** in Pristina **with Minister of Infrastructure and Environment Liburn Aliu**, participants discussed transport infrastructure progress and implementation of EU legislation, as well as establishment of joint border controls on Hani i Elezit KO/ Blace MK.