

3rd SOCIAL FORUM

ADDRESSING SOCIAL ISSUES IN ROAD TRANSPORT

1. PREAMBULA

Article 5¹ of the Transport Community Treaty clearly calls: “The South East European Parties shall implement the relevant social *acquis* with regard to transport as set out in Annex I. The Transport Community shall reinforce and promote the social dialogue and the social dimension through the reference to the *acquis* in social matters, the workers’ fundamental rights and the involvement of the European Economic and Social Committee and the national and European social partners acting in the transport sector, at the appropriate level.” **For that purpose in 2020 the Social Forum**² of the Transport Community has been established. It is a platform for a social dialogue between key transport social stakeholders of the European Union and South East European Parties.

On the **11th May 2022, the 3rd Social Forum focused on social issues in road transport was held**. The keynote address was delivered by Mr Vojin Mitrović, Minister of Communications and Transport of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

It is undeniable that transport fosters economic growth and development, and in the Western Balkans, this is particularly true for the road sector. At the same time, road sector is also one of the largest sources of Green House Gas (GHG) emissions in the region. Ministers in charge of Transport of South East European Parties of Transport Community have recognised the opportunities and challenges of the road sector and consequently welcomed the **Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy for the Western Balkans** at the Ministerial Council on 5 July 2021. The strategy provides a roadmap for decarbonisation and digitalisation of the transport sector, aiming at reaching common objectives and a harmonised approach in making transport greener, sustainable, safer and socially just for citizens and businesses of Western Balkans. **Flagship 9 in the Strategy is addressing the key social issues opportunities and challenges:** transport workers rights, working conditions, healthy and safe working environment, passenger rights and equal opportunities to **make mobility fair and just for all**.

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A22017A1027%2801%29>

² <https://www.transport-community.org/social-forum/>

To follow up on the implementation of Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy and Annex I.3 of Transport Treaty on road related issues, the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat **has devoted 2022 to the year of roads**. In the course of the year, we are organizing three key events, starting with Social Forum followed up in June by Road Summit and Capacity building Summer School.

The activities related to the **social aspects in road transport** will be focused on the exchange of best practices that will improve the working conditions and make the sector more attractive. Besides the Social Forum, the importance of social issues in road will be addressed at the Western Balkans Road Summit with a roundtable on how to make the transport sector more inclusive in the region and at the Road Capacity Building Summer School.

The transport sector represents **around 5% of the Western Balkans workforce in 2018** (ILO, 2018). Employees in the road sector need **job security, good social standards, attractive and fair employment conditions**. This means improving working conditions (staff safety and healthy working environment), attracting new staff, managing the ageing work force, and recruiting young people.

2. AGREED CONCLUSIONS

THE SOCIAL FORUM OF THE TRANSPORT COMMUNITY

Welcomes the keynote address of Mr Vojin Mitrović, Minister of Communications and Transport of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Observes that the South East European parties need to further improve its social policy so that transport becomes seamless, safe and secure, fair, inclusive, easily accessible and more attractive for youth and women.

Recognises that not enough progress has been done regarding the implementation of EU road social acquis. **In that respect, we call all relevant authorities** to make further efforts to improve the current conditions/situation to transpose and implement fully road social acquis listed in the Annex I.3 of the Transport Community Treaty.

Invites all Regional Participants to intensify with the implementation of the EU road social policy legislation, which is the key pillar of a fair, inclusive, and thriving transport sector. Moreover, to fully transpose and implement the EU social Acquis on driving time and rest periods (Regulation (EC) No 561/2006), tachograph (Regulation No 165/2014, Regulation No 2016/68, Regulation No 2016/799,

Regulation 2018/502, Regulation No 3831/85, and Regulation No 2020/1054) and working time (Regulation No 2002/15).

Recognises that more needs to be done regarding road passenger rights. **In that respect, we call all relevant authorities** to start improving the current conditions/situation to transpose and implement fully the Regulation (EC) No 181/2011 on rights of passengers in bus and coach transport. **More efforts are** needed to make the transport sector in the region inclusive and accessible to everyone (people with reduce mobility and elderly).

Recognises the need to enhance the professional drivers' working conditions in the region through development of safe and secure parking areas alongside the indicative extensions of the TEN-T network and filling-in the regulatory gap so that to ensure full compliance with the relevant EU Acquis (Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013 and Regulation (EC) No 561/2006).

Commits to reinforce and encourage social dialogue in the transport sector. The first workshop on social dialogue focused on road transport and it should serve as a guideline for the regional partners to engage further with all stakeholders in all modes of transport.

Recognises the importance of involvement of trade unions and civil society in the process of shaping the road legislation related to the social dimension.

Stresses the importance of focusing on the areas that will furteh improve road transport social agenda, such as: workers' fundamental rights;health and safety at work; improving and promoting equal employment gender opportunities in the road sector and inclusivenes for persons with disabilities.

Highlighting the need to undertake activities related to accessibility and universal design standars in awareness raising at tall institutionlas levels.

Furthermore, acknowledges that digitalisation and modernisation is bringing challenges to the road sector (like automated driving, deployment of mobility as service), a credible path is needed for the fair transition for transport workers. **Therefore, it calls the Regional Partners** to tackle the challenges in the road sector:

- ageing workforce and lack of attractiveness of the road sector for youth;
- working conditions of road transport employees;
- shortage of skilled workers in the sector.

Calls the Regional Partners to support education training in line with the main common objective on achieving a sustainable, smart and greener transport system, by making the best use of opportunities offered by technological innovation that could help identifying ways to attract young people and women to the transport sector.

Calls all Regional Participants to enhance regional cooperation by the regular exchange of information regarding experiences in social issues in road transport.

Call the Regional Participants and their immediate neighboring EU Member States for prompt implementation of the concept of EU-WB6 Green Lanes, in order to improve the exchange of information between the border agencies and decrease the waiting times at the EU-WB6 borders.

Calls the Ministers in charge of transport of the Western Balkan region to confirm and commit at the next Ministerial Council in November 2022 to the importance of implementation of the 3rd Social Forum Conclusions.

Acknowledges the interventions of the delegations attending the 3rd Social Forum concerning the state of play of social policy in road transport.

Agrees that the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat will jointly with the members of the different Technical Committees and the Social Forum propose an Action Plan to improve the transposition of social acquis and passenger rights acquis as per the provisions of Transport Treaty Annex I. The action plan will be presented first at the next Social Forum and later at the Regional Steering Committee.

Agrees to meet again next year to discuss the progress focusing on social issues related to international freight transport.