

# ANNUAL OPERATIONAL REPORT 2022

Permanent Secretariat of the Transport Community

December 2022

## FOREWORD

In accordance with the Conclusions of the Regional Steering Committee meeting held on 16 December 2021, and in line with reporting requirements applicable to the Transport Community, the TCT Secretariat prepared the Annual Work Programme 2022. The operational report outlines the work carried out by the TCT Secretariat and the results achieved, giving an overview of the progress towards the objectives set in the Annual Work Programme of the TCT Secretariat and a financial report on the budget implementation.

This Annual Report on the activities of the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat outlines key actions and achievements in the period from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022. During the first four months of 2022, limitations caused by the COVID-19 pandemic continued to affect the operations of the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat. Despite the challenges, concrete and visible results in the field of transport and connectivity have been achieved. With the easing of COVID-19 restrictions, TCT Secretariat's plans for the remainder of the year remained fully on track, as we delivered concrete results in the process of integration of transport markets of the Western Balkans into the EU. The 6th Ministerial Council held on 15 November 2022 endorsed a Joint Statement calling for the more systematic involvement of Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia as observing participants in the relevant Transport Community bodies, including, but not limited to the Regional Steering Committee, the technical committees, the Social Forum, and the Budget Committee.



The focus of the TCT Secretariat's activities in 2022 was on green, digital, and sustainable roads of the future. The three major events of 2022 - Road Summit, Summer School and Social Forum – were all primarily focused on roads. Following the endorsement of the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy for Western Balkans in July 2021, and since the roads are the main transport emitters, there is a need to actively work on greening and digitalisation of roads in the Western Balkans. With the Action Plans for all modes of transport covered by the Treaty (road, rail, road safety, transport facilitation and waterborne transport & multimodality) accompanied by the TCT Secretariat's staff working document on the

overarching Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy for the Western Balkans, we have established a solid base to deliver on the promise of integrating Western Balkans' transport markets into the EU, based on forward-looking, modern transport policy and supported by infrastructure projects on the indicative extension of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T Network). These actions will assist the Regional Partners in implementing the proposed flagship projects of the Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans.

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Director of the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>Annex I</b>	Annex I to the Transport Community Treaty
<b>BCPs</b>	Border Crossing Points
<b>CEFTA</b>	Central European Free Trade Agreement
<b>CONNECTA</b>	Technical Assistance to Connectivity in the Western Balkans
<b>DG MOVE</b>	Directorate General for Mobility and Transport, European Commission
<b>DG NEAR</b>	Directorate General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, European Commission
<b>EBRD</b>	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
<b>EC</b>	European Commission
<b>EETS</b>	European Electronic Toll Service
<b>EIB</b>	European Investment Bank
<b>ERA</b>	European Union Agency for Railways
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>EU DEL(s)</b>	European Union Delegation(s)
<b>EU Member State(s)</b>	European Union Member State(s)
<b>IPA</b>	the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
<b>ITS</b>	Intelligent Transport Systems
<b>JASPERS</b>	Joint Assistance to Support Projects in European Regions
<b>JBCPs</b>	Joint Border Crossing Points
<b>MoU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>RP(s)</b>	Regional Partner(s)
<b>RSC</b>	Regional Steering Committee
<b>SEE Parties</b>	Southeast European Parties: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia
<b>TA</b>	Technical Assistance
<b>TCT Secretariat</b>	Transport Community Permanent Secretariat
<b>WBRSO</b>	Western Balkans Road Safety Observatory
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization

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\*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

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## ACTIVITIES IN 2022

### 1. RAILWAY

All activities according to the Rail Action Plan were mainly focused on policy reforms and improvements of the rail system. While the development of the indicative extension of the TEN-T network, which was presented in 2021 and again in 2022, covers the ongoing projects, the Five-Year Rolling Work Plan for Development of the Indicative TEN-T Extension of the Comprehensive and Core Network in Western Balkans covers all mature and projects under-preparation and gives clear indication on how the rail transport infrastructure will look like in the future.

Regarding the transport policy aspects, the rail market opening is one of the most important measures of the Rail Action Plan and an integral part of the Transport Community Treaty. In this regard there was no improvement yet for 2022, but North Macedonia informed that in 2023 the obstacles for market opening will be solved. Therefore, the situation is that in four out of six Regional Partners the rail market is opened at the domestic level and there are ten private Railway Undertakings in three Regional Partners. The aim is full implementation of the EU legislation on interoperability, with further work needed on the implementation of the Technical Specifications for Interoperability (TSIs) and on a detailed plan for review and cleaning up of national technical and safety rules in line with the EU rail acquis, as well as improving the overall governance of the railways. Restructuring of rail companies is an ongoing activity among all Regional Partners. This process should be finalised before passing into the second transition period (as defined in Annex I of the Transport Community Treaty).

The establishing of an electronic register of vehicles, taking in account the European Electronic Vehicle Register (EEVR) and inclusion of all Regional Partners to the EEVR, is on a good track. In October, ERA granted free of charge access to the register for all RPs. The preparatory steps are ongoing and full inclusion to the EEVR should be in 2023.

Also, the mutual recognition of the main rail documents like operational licenses, safety certificates, driver's licenses and vehicle permits are a strong precondition for entering into the second transitional period. In this area the legislative changes are needed in all Regional Partners.

Regarding the Rules on Public Procurement in the rail passenger sector, all Regional Partners should accommodate the laws and predict non-discriminatory procedures for all interested parties (public and private railway undertakings).

Railway maintenance should be supported by the establishing of the Multi Annual contract between Infrastructure Managers and relevant authority. In Serbia and Montenegro this is done, while in other Regional Partners this issue is still pending. What is common in all Regional Partners is the lack of funds for railway maintenance, compared to the needs and the EU average.

TCT Secretariat participated in the first workshop related to the market opening at the regional level, railway legislation and the establishment of a network of regulatory and safety bodies at a regional level, organised by the Rail Regulatory Agencies of Serbia and Montenegro, where all relevant stakeholders from both sides were present. This workshop represents the first in a row of coordination workshops between the regional regulatory bodies, and a step forward to a regional market opening.

TCT Secretariat supported the Albanian TAIEX application for training on the 4<sup>th</sup> Railway Package with drafting and by contributing to the overall design of the programme. Albania as a lead applicant hosted

this event (hybrid) where 42 participants from the whole Region were present. The workshop was performed in November 2022 and topics were the direct support for further transposition of EU rail Acquis to the national legislation.

The Western Balkans Rail Innovation Workshop in Nis on 08 November 2022, was organised by the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat, Europe's Rail Joint Undertakings (JU), and the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering with the aim to promote innovative solutions, applicable for the railway system, and to make rail more attractive, user-friendly, and competitive. The workshop in Nis consisted of two parts. First was devoted to the Digital Automatic Coupling and the second was SMART2 – Automatic detection of the obstacles on the rail.

Digital Automatic Coupling (DAC) as an innovative component that is key to enabling the needed increase in efficiency of rail freight for automatically coupling and decoupling the rolling stock in a freight train, both physically as well as digitally.

SMART 2 Innovation Project presented the final outcome of the project, the results related to the advanced integrated obstacle detection system for smart automation of rail transport.

This event gathered more than 70 participants from Universities, Public Institutions, Rail companies and industry from the entire Western Balkans region, as well as from EU Member states, to discuss various issues which the rail sector is faced with. The participants agreed on common a conclusion: in parallel with construction of infrastructure, the Region should also focus on innovative solutions, leapfrogging from zero to the advance phase.



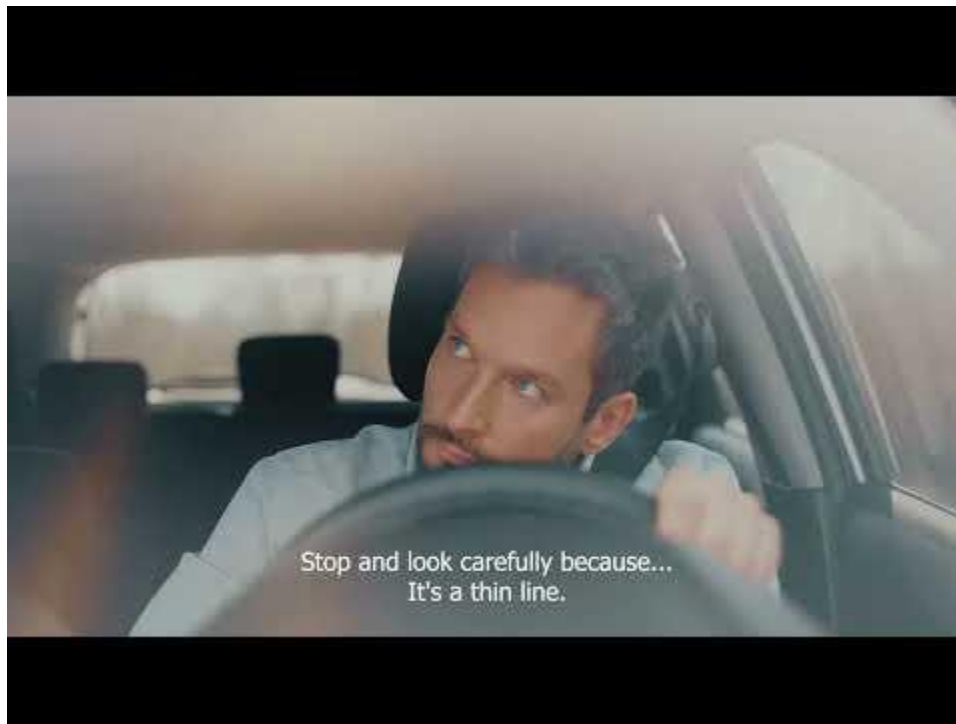
*Figure 1. Rail Innovation Workshop in Nis 2022*

The first Regional project on Level Crossings Safety Improvement supported by the Regional Infrastructure Managers and JASPERS was successfully finalised. These analyses were part of the Report acknowledged by the Regional Steering Committee in December 2022.

As a soft measure of the Level Crossings Safety Improvement project, TCT Secretariat started the Level Crossings Safety Improvement public awareness campaign. The campaign was launched in four out of six



Regional Partners separately during 2022, the remaining launches will be performed at the beginning of 2023.



*Figure 2. Level Crossing Safety Improvement Campaign Video*

The TCT Secretariat finalised the Regional Partner visits started in 2021 with the visit to Albania and Albanian relevant stakeholders, with a focus on current and future projects and transport policy improvements based on the newest rail legislation. It was evident that there is a significant need for strengthening the institutional and operational capacities related to rail transport. Moreover, based on a kind request from Albania, the TCT Secretariat assisted them in drafting a proposal for the description of the positions within the new Regulatory Body, National Safety Authority, as well as within the National Investigation Body.

In 2022, four Technical Committees on Rail were organised in Skopje, Podgorica, Tirana and Brussels. During those meetings, all current and past activities were presented and discussed, including the TAIEX workshop in Montenegro, TAIEX workshop in Albania, outcomes of the Five-Year Rolling Plan, Rail Action Plan Progress Report and TEN-T Development Report, updates on the Level Crossings Project and Public Awareness Campaign as well as the possibilities for re-establishing passenger traffic in the Region.

According to the Memorandum of Understanding for the creation of the Network of Infrastructure Managers signed during the first Western Balkans Rail Summit in Belgrade on 13 September 2021, the TCT Secretariat facilitated two meetings of the Network in Skopje and Ohrid. During those meetings, the Draft Rules and Procedures were confirmed and the Director of JP ZRSB Infrastructure, Mr Hari Lokvenec, was elected as the first Chair of the Network. Also, the Network took a position that Regional Rail Centre of Excellence shall be created.



*Figure 3. Second Meeting of the Rail Infrastructure Managers Network of the Western Balkan in Ohrid*

*Table 1. Railway Milestones for 2022*

RAILWAYS MILESTONES PLANNED	Deadline	RESULTS
Mutual recognition of the main rail documents: operational licenses, safety certificates, driver's licenses and vehicle permits.	Q1 2022	No progress. No one from the RP's moved forward on this topic.
Market opening of all Regional Partners at domestic level and at least two Regional Partners passing to the second phase of market opening at the regional level.	Q2 2022	Limited progress has been achieved. MKD informed that in 2023 the obstacles for market opening will be solved.
Publishing of the Network Statement on a regular basis as well as Network Statement for service facilities (terminals, sea and river ports).	Q1 2022	Mostly done or substantial progress has been achieved from all Regional Partners.
Modernisation of Rules on Public Procurement in the rail passenger sector, including through transposition and implementation of Regulation 1370/2007 concerning public transport services by rail.	Q1 2022	Limited progress has been achieved. Further efforts are needed.
Ensuring sustainability of Infrastructure Managers in the Region by creation of a contractual relationship between Infrastructure Managers and relevant government authorities for the maintenance and operation of the public railway infrastructure.	Q2 2022	Limited progress has been achieved. A lack of financing is still existing in all Regional Partners.
Transposition and implementation of EU Technical Specifications for Interoperability.	Q1 2022	Substantial progress has been achieved from all Regional Partners.
Establishing an electronic register of vehicles, taking into account the European Register of Vehicles.	Q4 2022	Substantial progress – ERA Approved accession of all RPS to the European Register. In 2023 TCT and ERA will organise workshops how the RP's to connect their data base with ERA register of vehicles.
Preparation of a detailed plan for cleaning up the national rail technical and safety rules in line with EU Rail Acquis and prerogatives of European Railways Agency (ERA).	Q4 2022	Ongoing - Primary preparation steps have been performed. Further serious work is expected.
Establishment of the Regional Network of Infrastructure Managers for regular consultation and coordination at regional level before adoption of maintenance plans for railway infrastructure and for the schedule of work.	Q4 2022	Achieved.

Identification of priority projects of regional interest for the upgrading/reconstruction/construction of specific rail sections.	Q4 2022	Achieved.
Level Crossings Safety Improvement project. Mapping of the most critical points along the Core, Comprehensive and entire rail Network in South East Europe.	Q4 2022	Achieved – The report was acknowledged by the Ministerial Council in December 2022.
Public Awareness Campaign for Level Crossings Safety Improvement.	Q4 2022	Campaign kicked off in 4 out of 6 RP's. In the remaining two the kick-off will happen at the beginning of 2023.
Assessment of the rail market in the Western Balkans in terms of capacities, policies, economic and technical level of development of freight and passenger transport segments.	N/A	TCT Contracted Consultant that need to perform the activities as per the Specification and they shall deliver results by Q3 2023.
<b>RAILWAYS MILESTONES NOT PLANNED BUT PERFORMED</b>	<b>Deadline</b>	<b>RESULTS</b>
TAIEX Workshop on 4 <sup>th</sup> Railway Package.	N/A	Albania as a lead applicant hosted this event where 42 participants from the whole Region where present.
Western Balkans Rail Innovation Workshop in Nis	N/A	This workshop was organised by the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat, Europe`s Rail Joint Undertakings (JU), and the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering.

## 2. ROAD

Implementation of the Road Action Plan is at the core of the activities of the Road Technical Committee. Four meetings of Road Technical Committee took place during 2022, with an average of 15 participants for the Regional Partners in each meeting. The last meeting took place in Brussels and focused mainly on EU acquis transposition. Technical Committees dates and location are provided below:



*Figure 4. Timeline of Road Technical Committees 2022*



*Figure 5. Road technical Committees*

Following the decision of Regional Steering Committee to dedicate 2022 to Roads of the future – safe, smart and sustainable roads, TCT Secretariat in close cooperation with Regional Partners and EU Commission organised the following activities:

- ❖ **Road Summit<sup>†</sup>.** The TCT Secretariat, the European Investment Bank (EIB), and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) organised the Western Balkan Road Summit dedicated to: **‘Shaping the Future: Safe, Smart, and Sustainable Roads’** in Tirana, on 7 June 2022, hosted by Albania. More than 200 participants attended the Road Summit: Western Balkans Ministers in charge of transport, representatives of the EU Member States, high representatives from the International Financial Institutions, Regional Partners from relevant ministries, road authorities, researchers, and road practitioners. The Road Summit contributed to strengthening further the Western Balkans’ commitment to safe, smart, and sustainable roads, culminating in the signing of the following documents:

<sup>†</sup><https://www.transport-community.org/annual-summit/annual-summit-2022/>

Road Summit video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OXORvZHCy58>



- ❖ **Declaration on Roads of the Future – Safe, Smart, and Sustainable**, signed by the Ministers in charge of transport from the Western Balkans.
- ❖ **Memorandum of Understanding between Road Authorities/Public Enterprises** on cooperation for the sustainable development of the road TEN-T network in the Western Balkans signed by Road General Directors.

**Summer School<sup>‡</sup>.** TCT Secretariat in partnership with the Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA) and the International Road Federation (IRF) with the support of the European Commission (DG MOVE and DG NEAR), organised a Capacity Building – Summer School 2022 in Sarajevo. There were 18 participants in person (7 female and 11 male) The Summer School was a successful capacity-building event that reached its goals of improving the understanding and knowledge of safe, smart, and sustainable roads. All the participants expressed the need for frequent and shorter trainings that are thematic oriented.



*Figure 6. Summer School 2022 – Sarajevo June 2022*

- ❖ **Regional Conference on Road Charging Strategies.** TCT Secretariat in cooperation with IRF organised in Belgrade, on 5-6 October 2002, the regional conference on 'Effective Road Charging Strategies in a Region on the Move', with more than 50 participants from Western Balkans and EU Members States. TCT Secretariat's study on e-tolling interoperability in the Region was presented and discussed with different stakeholders.
- ❖ **Traffic Control Centre training from planning to operation.** TCT Secretariat in partnership with University of Belgrade, Faculty of Transport and Traffic Sciences and Croatian Motorways organised in Zagreb on 30 November – 1 December training on Traffic Control Centres: from planning to operation. There were 22 participants from all Regional Partners. The training programme focused on Traffic Control Centre history, detailed description of EU legislation pertinent to ITS deployment, interoperability standards, procurement strategies, design and operation. The participants were actively engaged in hands-on exercise on all the phases and processed in planning and defining the functions of the Traffic Control Centre. Furthermore, on the second day, a study visit was organised

<sup>‡</sup> <https://www.transport-community.org/summer-school/road-summer-school-2022/>

in the premises of the Traffic Control Centre of the Croatian Motorways, where discussion was focused on day-to-day operation, training of operators and the progress of EU projects CROCODILE II and III.



*Figure 7. Traffic Control Centre training, Zagreb November 2022*

During 2022 there were ongoing several Technical Assistance financed by TCT Secretariat and CONNECTA.

TCT Secretariat funded *Technical Assistance on baseline assessment and financial implications to e-tolling interoperability across the Western Balkans*, which began on 24 January 2022. The Kick-off meeting marking the official start of the project was held on 28 January 2022. Contract was completed by September 2022. The main finding of the study is that e-tolling interoperability is an achievable goal, speaking legally, technically, and operationally, only if all Regional Partners work together in the same direction. Considering the current situation in the Western Balkans, the most efficient way forward would be to have a two-step approach.

- The **first step** would be to become interoperable among the Regional Partners, practically firstly the ones with an advanced e-tolling system, such as Bosnia & Herzegovina, North Macedonia and Serbia. This would allow a regional interoperability, built around the same technology. The rest of the Regional Partners will join once they have a system in place. However, the **regional interoperability** would require a **common legal, technical and operational framework** to be agreed upon between the Regional Partners. In practical terms, it would mean that users from any of the Regional Partners can use their onboard unit on any tolled road network in the region and be still invoiced by their provider / toll charger.
- **The second step** is interoperability with EU MS, which means market opening to EETS providers. The regional interoperability will still be used to be fully interoperable beyond the Western Balkans, as the principles will be the same, and the only change would be the arrival of EETS.

As for the choice between free flow and non-free flow for those Regional Partners that don't have tolling in place or decide to shift from one to another, each Regional Partner should decide which system they favour, but it would be advisable to choose the most advanced system. Any choice made would not impact the interoperability, as we still can have a hybrid interoperable system, as it already exists elsewhere in Europe.

In 2023, in order to offer more insight to Regional Partner's road authorities on the benefits and challenges of e-tolling interoperability we will organise a study visit based on the Consultant's recommendation of a best practice in European Member State.

Referring to the planned Technical Assistance on the preparation of a set of unified Guidelines on Assessment of the Climate Resilience, due to the developments during 2022, there was a need to expand the scope of work. Regional Partners were actively involved in the “Enhancing Environmental Performance and Climate Proofing of Infrastructure Investments in the Western Balkan Region from an EU integration perspective” (ClimaProof) financed by the [Austrian Development Cooperation \(ADC\)](#) and implemented and complemented by The [UN Environment Programme](#) during Q3 2022 that encompassed some of the tasks already envisaged in TCT Secretariat project.

In order to avoid overlapping, but rather be complimentary to other institutions’ work on the climate resilience area, as well to address the limited progress, basically no project tackling the issues of rail infrastructure resilience and to implement in the Western Balkans the European Commission new technical guidance on climate-proofing of infrastructure projects for the period 2021-2027, TCT Secretariat in consultation with the members of the Road and Rail Technical Committees launched in November 2022, the project with the scope to carry out the vulnerability and criticality assessment on the indicative extension of TEN-T Road and Rail networks.

The late start of CONNECTA for preparation of ITS Strategies and greening of road transport, called for a slight revision of the deadlines during the mid-term Report on the implementation of the Annual Work Programme 2022. Progress and the expected completion deadlines of the ongoing Technical Assistances are provided below.

*Table 2. Road sector deadlines and progress 2022*

ROAD MILESTONES	Deadline	Progress
Preparation of dedicated strategies for deployment of ITS in compliance with EU Directives and standards.	New deadline April 2023	Project started on 4 April 2022
Preparation of a roadmap and the financial assessment of ensuring e-tolling interoperability in the Region.	Q3 2022	Project completed September 2022
Preparation of the strategic framework on where and how to start deployment of e-charging along the main road corridors.	New deadline April 2023	Project started on 8 March 2022
Start the project on ‘Improving climate resilience and adaptation measures in the indicative extension of TEN-T road and rail networks in Western Balkans’	Q4 2022	Contract awarded in December 2022

Transport Community Permanent Secretariat worked closely with the Regional Partners in terms of acquis transposition applying a tailor-made approach by combining best practices from the region and EU MS through possible online trainings and knowledge sharing. Nevertheless, further efforts are still needed by the Regional Partners to implement the results of the Technical Assistances into the respective legislations and institutional procedures.

### 3. ROAD SAFETY

Road Safety measures of the Action Plan and the activities under the three-year work plan of the Western Balkans Road Safety Observatory (WBRSO) are the main deliverables of the TCT Secretariat for improving road safety in the Region.

Four meetings of the Technical Committee on Road Safety, one online and 3 in person, took place in 2022, with an average of 12-18 participants in each. In addition, two meetings of the Western Balkans Road Safety Observatory were held back-to-back with Technical Committees.

9 <sup>th</sup> Technical Committee	10 <sup>th</sup> Technical Committee	11 <sup>th</sup> Technical Committee & 3 <sup>rd</sup> WBRSO	12 <sup>th</sup> Technical Committee & 4 <sup>th</sup> WBRSO
17 March, Teleconference	6 June, Tirana	6 October, Belgrade	6 December, Brussels

The agendas of these meeting were dedicated to sharing knowledge and building capacity for accomplishing the measures of the Road Safety Action Plan. Presentation of the new Road Safety Strategy for 2021-2030 and the Action Plan of Croatia and Greece were presented as good examples from EU Member States. Previous examples were the case of Bulgaria and Czechia.

The TCT Secretariat invited VIAS Institute to present the results from the E-Survey of Road Users' Attitudes (ESRA 2) which announced the start of ESRA 3 in September 2022. At this stage, Road Traffic Safety of Serbia has already signed the agreement with VIAS Institute to join ESRA 3. Other remaining Regional Partners showed interest in joining ESRA project and together with the TCT Secretariat explored the opportunities for finding funding resources. Unfortunately, there was not enough interest from financial partners like World Bank, WHO, FIA Clubs in the region for this project. This will be complementary to the collection of the Key Performance Indicators, a measure in the Road Safety Action Plan, and will fulfil the planned activity on the Work Plan of the WBRSO.

In the Technical Committee meeting held in March 2022 the members were briefed about the Capacity Building for Roadside Checks that were organised in December 2021 in Belgrade in cooperation with the Polish Embassy, for nominated representatives from institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Serbia. The next Capacity Building event for the other three Regional Partners, Albania, Kosovo, and North Macedonia was held 29 June – 1 July 2022 in Skopje. This Capacity Building is directly connected with the Directive 2014/47/EU of the European Parliament on the technical roadside inspection of the roadworthiness of commercial vehicles. That said, the TCT Secretariat encouraged Regional Partners to send in written their needs and requirements for capacity building related to Annex I of the Treaty.

In view of supporting the progress of the measures on the Road Safety Action Plan, TCT Secretariat have met with the EU Office in Pristina and discuss the potential support for improving the road safety management: 1) improving the coordination mechanism and the steps for establishing a Leading Traffic Safety Agency 2) improving the road crash data system 4) adoption of Road Safety Inspections and Road Safety Audit Guidelines and capacity building needs for approximation of EU legislation under Annex I.3 – Rules Applicable to Road Transport. In the same spirit, TCT Secretariat will organise meetings with EU Delegation offices in the Region to discuss the potential support for accomplishing the Road Safety Action Plan measures.



Regional Partners have submitted the number of fatalities as part of road safety data for 2021, which shows an increase in comparison with 2020. The explanation behind the figures is that Pandemic situation brought resulted with less road deaths in 2020 year. The link to the one-page report is published on the EC website<sup>§</sup>. Further efforts and investments are needed in the region for the improvement of the road safety data and reducing the underreporting.

*Table 3. Number of fatalities per million inhabitants for the period 2019-2021*

Regional Partner	Fatalities per million 2019	Fatalities per million 2020	Fatalities per million 2021	% change 2019/2021	% change 2020/2021
Albania	80	63	69	-13%	8.8%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	74	69	74	-2%	5%
North Macedonia	63	60	56	-12%	-7%
Kosovo	60	43	59	-1.8%	37%
Montenegro	76	77	88	17%	15%
Serbia	77	71	75	-2.4%	5.9%
Western Balkans	73	66	70	-4%	7%

The Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021-2030, which was launched on 28 October 2021, was presented by WHO representative at the Ministerial Council of Transport Community, on 18 May in Pristina. The Global Plan shall serve as a guiding document to support the implementation of the Decade of Action 2021–2030 and its objectives. The recommendations shall be reflected in the new Road Safety Strategies and Action Plans for Road Safety of each Regional Partner. Development of the road safety strategy for 2021-2030 and the Action Plan is still one of the measures that has slowly progressed in most of the Regional Partners for which funding resources remain the main reason.



**The highlight of the year was the Road Summit held on 7 June 2022 in Tirana.** The TCT Secretariat, the European Investment Bank (EIB), and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) organised the Western Balkan Road Summit dedicated to: ***‘Shaping the Future: Safe, Smart, and Sustainable Roads’***. The Road Summit focused on some of the most pressing issues related to road transport and was organised around three themes: 1) *Safe roads with a focus on safe infrastructure for road users* 2) *Smart roads with a focus on making Intelligent Transport*

*Systems (ITS) a reality for the Region, and 3) Sustainable roads, focussing on climate proofing of road networks (TEN-T networks and urban) and deployment of emission-zero fuels and infrastructure.*

In terms of building capacity and in-depth knowledge in road safety area there were held to important events:

- The **Summer School**, held in 22-24 June in Sarajevo, gave a focus to safe, smart, and sustainable roads and had a range of speakers from the European Commission, experts in the areas of road safety, ITS deployment, climate proofing, etc. The Summer School was a successful capacity-building event that reached its goals of improving the understanding and knowledge of safe,

<sup>§</sup> [https://transport.ec.europa.eu/2021-road-safety-statistics-what-behind-figures\\_en](https://transport.ec.europa.eu/2021-road-safety-statistics-what-behind-figures_en)

smart, and sustainable roads. All the participants expressed the need for frequent and shorter trainings that are thematic oriented.

- **TAIEX Regional Workshop on Safety Requirements for Tunnels** took place on 18-19 October 2022 in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. The workshop was led by Italian, Dutch, and French Tunnel safety experts with a focus on the implementation of Directive 2004/54 on the minimum requirements for tunnel safety. Best practices about all tunnel construction phases, in particular, the phase of exploitation were the topics of the agenda. There were 40 participants from the Western Balkans Region, representatives from Ministries of Transports, road Authorities and the Institute of Transports, who attended the event in person. This workshop was a fruit of the good collaboration among Ministry of Communications and Transport of Bosnia and Herzegovina, EU DEL Bosnia and Herzegovina, Transport Community and European Commission.
- **Site visit to VIAS\*\* Research Institute** was organized in Brussels on 6 December 2022. There were 14 members in person in the site visit, members of Technical Committee and WBRSO, and five key speakers from VIAS Institute. The agenda started with an overview of the overall research work that VIAS Institute does in road safety and continued with presentations about the practical side like fitness to drive assessment for the general public (medical diagnoses); fitness to drive assessment of offenders (driving under influence of alcohol & drugs as well as alcohol ignition interlock program) and driver improvement courses with offenders. Participants were invited also to visit the helmet and alcohol laboratory. The visit gave an insight and better understanding of the improvement of the programmes for protecting vulnerable road users, a topic which is one of the measures of the Road Safety Action Plan.



*Figure 8. Visit to Vias Institute*

The milestones foreseen in the Working Programme 2022 have progressed as shown in the table below:

ROAD SAFETY MILESTONES	Deadline	Progress
United Nations Road Safety Week (UN has decided to postpone this event for 2023)	Q2 2022	TCT Secretariat decided to include safety in the Road Summit agenda, rather than organising a separate event.
Implementation Phase of the Western Balkans Road Safety Observatory database	Q4 2022	Finalised - The Technical Assistance ended on 4 December. The information system <sup>††</sup> is available online

<sup>\*\*</sup> <https://www.mobility.vias.be/en/>

<sup>††</sup> [https://autotrack1.develop.com/transport\\_community/](https://autotrack1.develop.com/transport_community/) - Once the TCT Secretariat will make available the servers in its premisses the WBRSO Information system will be transferred from DEVELOP to TCT Servers.

		and accessible from all users.
Regional Workshop on implementation of Directive 2004/54 on the minimum requirements for tunnel safety.	Q4 2022	Held in Sarajevo on 18-19 October 2022.
Optional: Capacity Building in support of the three-year work plan of the WBRSO	Q4 2022	Ongoing – Discussion with TAIEX were held however there are yet not resolved queries whether the road safety issues that belongs to health sector can be covered under this programme.

#### 4. TRANSPORT FACILITATION

Implementation of the Transport Facilitation Action Plan is at the core of the activities of the Technical Committee on Transport Facilitation. Three meetings of the Technical Committee took place during 2022, with an average of 25 participants in each. All of them were held back-to-back with other related events. Dates and venues are shown in the chart below:



*Figure 9. Timeline of Transport Facilitation Technical Committee meetings and related events in 2022*

The members of the Technical Committee on Transport Facilitation actively contributed to the monitoring and reporting activities and participated to the meetings of the committee and other related events. With few exceptions, (Transport Ministry of North Macedonia and Custom authority of Bosnia and Herzegovina), the Technical committee members representing all three institutions (Transport Ministry, Customs authorities and Border Police) originating from all other RPs were present in person on all occasions.

TCTF also regularly monitored the progress in implementation of the ongoing Technical assistance programmes, and the members got engaged in the respective project activities.



*Figure 10. 10<sup>th</sup> Technical Committee on transport facilitation meeting, Tirana 29 March*

Summary of the transport facilitation related events in 2022:

- On 8-9 March, a **Regional TAIEX workshop on joint rail BCPs** was held in Podgorica. It was a successful event that brought together railways, customs and border police experts as well as experienced experts from the EU Member States: Estonia, Romania and Poland who are members of the European Union's Central and East European Land Border Team (CELBET). The event offered solutions for improved rail BCP operations in line with the EU acquis, and it was used to concretely propose solutions for addressing some of the challenges experienced in the functioning of the JBCP Tuzi, between Montenegro and Albania. The cooperation that was established with CELBET will be of unparalleled significance to the border agencies in the Region.
- On 17-18 March, the TCT Secretariat and CEFTA organised a study visit for the Greek Customs officials to the BCP Tabanovce-Presevo, in order for them to get familiar with the IT system for Systematic Electronic Exchange of Data (SEED), as part of the extension of the EU-Western Balkans Green Lanes. Director General of Customs and Excise of Greece, Director of the Customs Administration of North Macedonia and Deputy Director General of the Customs Administration of Serbia jointly reviewed the potential of the SEED, and concrete steps on implementation of SEED were agreed.
- The Bulgarian CEI Presidency, in cooperation with the CEI-Executive Secretariat (CEI-ES) and the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat, organised an expert panel under the title "An Integrated Concept of Connectivity for the CEI Region" in Brussels on 8 December 2022. The aim of the event was to launch a discussion on enhancing connectivity from a broader perspective, particularly focusing on transport, including transit of goods, as an important factor for the overall economic development of the region, which can help unlock the potential of interlinked production networks and value chains.

Extension of the EU-WB6 Green Lanes. Green Lanes are fully operational in Western Balkans, enabling fast flows for priority goods. The first designated Green Lane track was opened at the BCP Tabanovce (North Macedonia) with Serbia.

The TCT Secretariat, in cooperation with CEFTA, contributed and welcomed the signing of the MoU for exchange of electronic data through the SEED system between the Custom authorities of:

- North Macedonia and Greece (signed during the Thessaloniki Connectivity forum in July 2022),
- Albania, Montenegro, and Italy (signed in Rome in September 2022)
- Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Croatia (signed during the CEFTA Week in December 2022)

This allows for effectively extending the Green Lanes to EU MS, by exchange of customs data in advance in direction from Western Balkans to EU, facilitating the customs processing and reducing the waiting time.



*Figure 11. Signing of MoU for electronic exchange of customs data between Greece and North Macedonia, July 2022, Thessaloniki*

#### Technical Assistance:

Under the *TCT Technical assistance on transport facilitation*, which was successfully closed on 13<sup>th</sup> of December, having met the ToR requirements, the entire legal framework for introducing one stop border controls was prepared per Regional Partner for pairs of BCPs. These legal documents serve to the national authorities of each pair of RPs to conclude the negotiations for establishing JBCP operations.

In addition, *one training* for the central administration, and *eight workshops* for the border agencies at 8 selected pairs of intra-WB6 BCPs were carried out in March, and in the period June-October 2022, respectively, dedicated to transport/trade facilitation instruments. All workshops were done jointly, together with two neighbouring authorities at the same time, thus improving communication, cooperation and mutual confidence. Each workshop was attended between 15-25 participants from the Border Police and Customs administrations from each of the partners. More than 100 participants benefited from the joint trainings/workshops.





*Figure 12. Joint workshop in Karakaj (BIH) for the border authorities of the BCP Karakaj-Mali Zvornik (BIH/SRB), October 2022*

CONNECTA Technical Assistance. Technical design and procurement documentation for physical improvements of two pairs of BCPs on the extended TEN-T Network in the Western Balkans (Hani i Hotit/Bozaj and Hani i Elezit/Blace) is supported by CONNECTA. Upon initial delays, the detailed ToR and conceptual design were finally approved in September and November respectively for each pair of BCP. The deadline for completion of the technical documentation is by end of April 2023.

The progress in the implementation of the transport facilitation milestones is as follows:

TRANSPORT FACILITATION MILESTONES	Deadline	Progress
Signed bilateral agreements for one-stop controls in road and rail sectors for most of the internal BCPs in the Western Balkans.	Q4 2022	Ongoing- No progress, political push needed for accelerating the negotiations.
Introduction of the EU Galileo platform for monitoring BCP waiting times on the EU-Western Balkans BCPs.	Q2 2022	Completed to certain extent. Galileo platform incorporates EU-WB6 BCPs, as well as intra-WB6 BCPs, albeit reliable data not entirely available within the platform.
EU-WB6 Green Lanes initiative implemented in its basic concept, on as many as possible EU-Western Balkans BCPs, and in parallel, upgrading the concept.	Q4 2022	Good progress. EU-Western Balkans Green Lanes agreed with Greece, Italy and Croatia.
Implementation of the Transport Community Treaty supported the Technical Assistance for Capacity Building on Management and Operations of the Border Crossing Points along the Indicative TEN-T Network in the Western Balkans.	Q4 2022	Completed successfully.
Implementation of the CONNECTA supported Technical Assistance for Capacity Improvements on Selected Road Border Crossing Points on the Extended TEN-T Network.	Q4 2022	Ongoing - TA started in January 2022 and is expected to be completed in April 2023.

## 5. WATERBORNE TRANSPORT AND MULTIMODALITY

Following the endorsement of the Action Plan for Waterborne Transport and Multimodality by the Regional Steering Committee and the Ministerial Council in May 2021, the TCT Secretariat started to work with Regional Partners on the monitoring of the implementation of the measures identified in the Action Plan for Waterborne Transport and Multimodality.

The progress in the implementation of the milestones as per the Action Plan is as follows:

WATERBORNE TRANSPORT AND MULTIMODALITY MILESTONES	Deadline	Progress
Transposition of legislation related to the regulatory area Port State Control as per Annex I.4. of the Treaty establishing the Transport Community.	Q2 2022	Transposition progress achieved by Albania and Montenegro, but efforts need to membership to Paris MoU.
Transposition of legislation related to the regulatory area Vessel Traffic Monitoring as per Annex I.4. of the Treaty establishing the Transport Community.	Q3 2022	Progress achieved by Montenegro; Albania needs to speed up the process of establishment of the system and transposition of legislation.
Transposition of legislation related to the regulatory area Passenger Ships as per Annex I.4. of the Treaty establishing the Transport Community.	Q3 2022	Some progress achieved by Albania. Montenegro is in process
Transposition of legislation related to the regulatory area Oil Tankers as per Annex I.4. of the Treaty establishing the Transport Community.	Q2 2022	No significant progress achieved.
Transposition of legislation related to the regulatory area Insurance as per Annex I.4. of the Treaty establishing the Transport Community.	Q2 2022	No significant progress achieved.
Transposition of legislation related to the regulatory area Training of Seafarers as per Annex I.4. of the Treaty establishing the Transport Community.	Q2 2022	Significant progress achieved by Albania and Montenegro. Albania needs to continue with the recognition of seafarers' certificates from EU.
Improvement of the interoperability of IT systems and solutions in ports including the development and/or improvement of Port Community System (PCS) as a continuation of the deliverables of finished INTERREG projects.	Q2 2022	Good progress achieved, especially by port of Bar.
Developing concepts of "green ports" to improve the environmental sustainability of the ports including availability of alternative fuels.	Q4 2022	Ongoing - Some progress achieved by Ports of Durres and Bar as a continuation

		of INTERREG projects in this domain.
Dredging and expansion of the capacity of ports for trans-shipment.	Q4 2022	Ongoing - In this context the relocation of Port of Durres to Porto Romano has to be taken into account.
Transposition of legislation related to the regulatory area Access to the Profession as per Annex I.5. of the Treaty establishing the Transport Community.	Q4 2022	Ongoing.
Transposition of legislation related to the regulatory area River Information Services as per Annex I.5. of the Treaty establishing the Transport Community.	Q4 2022	Ongoing - Serbia almost fully compliant, Bosnia and Herzegovina need to undertake significant actions, starting with Inland Waterway law on the State level.
Transposition of legislation related to the regulatory area Sea and Inland Waterways as per Annex I.5. of the Treaty establishing the Transport Community.	Q4 2022	Ongoing - No significant progress achieved.
Demining of the potential worksites at the right bank of the Sava River (WBIF grant).	Q4 2022	No progress - Works are expected to start as soon as financial institutions will make the funds available.
Addressing critical bottlenecks on the Danube River with appropriate measures (dredging) in line with the Flagship 1- CONNECTING EAST TO WEST of the Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans.	Q4 2022	Ongoing - Some progress achieved in the planning of the project.
Introduction of digital solutions to improve multimodality.	Q1 2022	Some project achieved in the port of Bar through EU financed projects.

In the areas where no significant progress has been achieved in terms of acquis transposition for some of the Regional Partners, TCT Secretariat will increase the efforts in order to kick off the progress in relevant areas through detailed custom-made approaches of using the best practices and examples of EU member states through possible online trainings and knowledge sharing.

Regarding measures from the Action Plan related to the IWW part (part 2.2.1. of the Action Plan) and measure 8. – 13, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia submitted their request for obtaining observer status in EC expert group for NAIADES, which is still pending approval of the European Commission.

As regards to the acquis harmonisation, it was agreed with the Regional Partners that the acquis monitoring per regulatory areas will be a continuous horizontal exercise which will be monitored on a quarterly basis to measure and report on achieved progress (per every Directive and Regulation as per revised Annex 1 of TCT Treaty). Specific tables to monitor the progress were developed and shared with Regional Partners. This monitoring approach was discussed at the most recent Technical Committee meeting, that took place on 20 April 2022.





*Figure 13. Project Generation Workshop - sharing experiences and best practices of EU Core Network IWW Ports in developing and implementing EU funded projects, Slavonski Brod*

Apart from the work through the meetings on the technical level, in line with the AWP 2022, TCT Secretariat organised small interactive workshops aimed at the possibility of developing projects in inland waterway transport titled Project Generation Workshop - sharing experiences and best practices of EU Core Network IWW Ports in developing and implementing EU funded projects. The workshop was held in Slavonski Brod on 31 March 2022. Representatives of Port of Brcko, Ministry of Communications and Transport of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ministry of Sea, Transport and Infrastructure of Croatia were present at the workshop. The workshop facilitated a deeper dialogue between the participants and enabled them to discuss and reflect on the lessons learned presented by the Port Authority of Slavonski Brod, while learning how these may be transferred to their own Ports.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Technical Committee was held on 20 April 2022 in the premises of the European Maritime Safety Agency in Lisbon. All Regional Partners presented current state of the Measures identified in the Action Plan per each Regional Partner and discussed challenges in implementation.



*Figure 14. 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Technical Committee for Waterborne Transport and Multimodality, 20 April 2022, Lisbon*

Maritime workshop in Port of Pireaus, Athens, Greece 20<sup>th</sup> May 2022.

On 20<sup>th</sup> of May 2022 in the Port of Pireaus, Athens, Greece was held a Maritime Workshop for Western Balkan Maritime Ports (Port of Bar and Port of Durres) on greening of ports including alternative fuel projects as per TENT- T Regulation 1315/2013. Pireaus Port Authority implemented numerous EU funded projects, from which Albania's Port of Durres and Montenegro's Port of Bar could largely benefit from exchange of knowledge on how to design, disseminate and develop successful sustainability projects as well as explaining the step-by-step procedures and lessons learned.

The aim of the Workshop was to be used as a platform to engage the participants in possible future project partner initiatives on Port sustainability projects, especially studies on alternative fuels. During the workshop participants were involved in several discussions and reflected on the lessons learned presented by the Pireaus Port Authority, while learning how these may be transferred to their own Ports.

The third Meeting of the Technical Committee on Waterborne Transport and Multimodality Monday, 4 July 2022, is organised in Port of Bar, Montenegro. The meeting was opened by Mr. Matej Zakonjsek, Director of the TCT Permanent Secretariat, who pointed out that waterborne transport and multimodality are linked since ports are the heart of multimodality as they need to relate to hinterland. Hence, modernization of ports and railway is necessary in order to have a fully developed transport network and not a patchwork. Transposition of EU acquis in waterborne transport should take place at a faster pace.

The Regional Partners presented an overview of their activities as per the Action Plan, i.e., projects and Acquis alignment. During the presentation was noted that more progress was achieved in this area compared to inland waterway transport. Implementation of the Action Plan is not easy, however, since the meeting in Lisbon, were transposed several EU directives.

Following the Roadmap for improving of the status of Albanian Fleet in regard to Paris MoU on Port State Control, due to drastic measure taken by Albania Administration, the flag status has improved from high to medium risk as the roadmap has been to some extent implemented. Assisted by EMSA, maritime administration is developing a quality management system.

In conclusion, it was appointed out that the Action Plan is complex and that members can propose new ideas and different methodologies for its implementation. Respective subcommittees on maritime and inland waterways may be established. New ways for better functioning may be found. Members should also designate/include representatives of their respective administrations who are better acquainted with Acquis and the process for future meetings.

The 4th Technical Committee Meeting on Waterborne Transport and Multimodality was organised jointly with the TDG Technical Committee and eFTi group in Antwerp on 14-16 December 2022. Experts in the three fields were invited to a common meeting in which different areas of EU Acquis were highlighted, such as the multimodal files of the Commission which have deadlines for implementation in the near future. DG ENV was also represented and invited all Regional Partners to have a closer look at the existing projects funded by the EU on environment and climate in order to be able to plan strategically the development of the transport sector. Cluster mentality is to be abandoned to be able to green transport.



*Figure 15. Joint Meeting of the Technical Committee for Waterborne Transport and Multimodality with Technical Committee for Dangerous Goods, 14-16 December 2022, Antwerp, Belgium*

During the meeting the maritime and inland waterways acquis was discussed in detail, in terms of state of play and implementation of the EMSA Technical Assistance for the Western Balkans, implementation of the Port Reception facilities requirements and green Agenda. Albania was assisted by EMSA within the context of the IPA II project financed by DG NEAR. EMSA representative presented the activities completed or going within the context of the EU financed (DG NEAR) project “Preparatory measures for the future participation of relevant IPA II countries in the EMSA”. The project has evolved, and it is now a powerful mean to support the beneficiaries with the transposition of the international and EU maritime legislation into the national legislative system as well as with support in other areas including trainings through the EMSA’s Academy, support to prepare and follow-up the IMSAS audit, preparing implementing procedures, studies on adequacy of port reception facilities and support to develop quality management systems according to ISO 9001. The project, ending on 30 June 2023, will be very likely continued with a new one financed under IPA III.



*Figure 16. 4th Meeting of the Technical Committee for Waterborne Transport and Multimodality, 14-16 December 2022, Antwerp, Belgium*

The representatives of DG MOVE explained the situation concerning the follow-up of technical and scientific progress in negotiation of the dangerous goods agreements and the cooperation authorities have in place with the economic operators. Exquisite lessons were provided by the representatives of Port of Antwerp who shared the latest projects related to the development of the Port of Antwerp-Bruges, the administrative changes, and challenges that the port authority was faced with in the context of their recent unification. and IMO representative explained that relevant procedure should be strictly followed in order to continue the cooperation with IMO through its Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme. It is necessary to be defined to state specifically what kind of technical assistance they would be seeking from IMO and the related IMO instrument.

An interesting visit to the Port of Antwerp was organized in cooperation with Antwerp/Flanders Port Training Center (APEC). The visit offered the possibility of participants to understand the structure of the port, and the functioning of the port in practice. The visit started with an explanation on the port map and a demonstration of rescue services concerning their daily activities. The development of Antwerp Port during its 200 years of service was highlighted and the cooperation of the port authorities with the other relevant authorities in the area at all levels, from the city of Antwerp to the EU. Areas where EU funding was used for development of environmental projects were also indicated.





*Figure 17. Visit in the Port of Antwerp, 14-16 December 2022, Antwerp, Belgium*

The presentation of the latest technologies for cranes and container loading on ships, development of different economic operators and extension of scope of activities to include transport of dangerous goods. Useful information was provided concerning the activities of dockworkers, their professional training and certification requirements. The training activities of the port were developed in time, and they are constantly updated with the insertion of new technologies for logistics and to reflect development of legislation based on technical and scientific progress.

Managers of two large port operators “Katoen Natie” and “Combinant”, presented their current activities, including the measures put in place for separation of containers depending on content in the port area, control of compliance with the norms of the containers and time of deposit within the terminal area.

## 6. TRANSPORT OF DANGEROUS GOODS

TCT Secretariat held several meetings with the Regional Partners view to follow-up of the Guidelines adoption. Several regional participants reported problems with financing of the activities related to TDG in their countries, in particular concerning financing of translations of the Annexes to Directive 2008/68/EC into national languages. Regional Partners are invited to identify in their budgets the necessary funding for translation of the Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR) and the Regulation concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Rail (RID) to be able to comply with the key performance indicators stipulated in the Guidelines. ADR and RID need to be translated by 2023. Progress is needed in all Regional Partners, except for Serbia that constantly publishes the updated consolidated version of the Annexes of ADR, RID and ADN every second year. Albania is currently in the process of translating the annexes to ADR and RID.

During bilateral meetings and within the TDG Committee meeting, Albania informed that it adopted two guidelines concerning training and testing of dangerous goods safety advisers (DGSAs) for RID and ADR, and ADR drivers. TCT Secretariat is currently trying to enhance exchanges of experience in definition of the curricula for RID dangerous goods safety advisers and wishes to express gratitude to the Governments of Spain and Romania for having shared the relevant information. However, considering that the translation of ADR and RID are ongoing, further capacity building is needed for the authorities in Albania in order to understand better how to supervise and stimulate knowledge acquisition by schools in charge of training of drivers faced with technical and scientific progress.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is lagging behind in terms of coordination and definition of the needs concerning development of the file. Absence of a clear hierarchical structure for coordination in Bosnia and Herzegovina is diminishing effectiveness of cooperation within this regional partner. Moreover, fragmented, and partial transposition based on outdated requirements does not reflect the new developments in science and technology.

With the support of TCT Secretariat Kosovo included the area of transport of dangerous goods in its updated of the transport strategy.

TCT Permanent Secretariat supported the Ministry of Interior in Montenegro in drafting the TAIEX application firefighters' capacity building to prepare their emergency response in case of accident in transport of dangerous goods, the application was approved by the DG NEAR (TAIEX unit) but is still pending due to difficulties in finding adequate human resources for exchanges of experience in the Member States. The event is to be organised in 2023.

TCT Secretariat is in the process of finalising a similar application with the Ministry of Interior in Albania. Cooperation with the Ministry of Interior highlighted a specific problem in the absence of adequate intervention equipment. Vehicles with water and foam for emergency response from the 1950s and 1960s are still in use, and further funding is needed to close this preparedness gap.

In terms of capacity building, further activities are currently being carried on to launch specialised training and capacity building opportunities for the inspectorates dealing with implementation of Directive 95/50/EC both in Albania and North Macedonia, inspection bodies dealing with the implementation of Directive 2010/35/EU in Albania and other relevant stakeholders in the Regional Partners.

The TCT Secretariat continued follow-up on the project of Serbia concerning tachographs and digitalisation of dangerous goods safety related functions examination did not receive funding under IPA 2018. TC PS is still trying to support Serbia in finding solutions for financing this project and discovered that request of different Regional Partners were rejected from IPA funding due to small amounts necessary for such funding. A more coordinated approach should be envisaged on this item in the future in the region.

In terms of cooperation with the United Nations, TCT Secretariat supported the representative of North Macedonia in his first intervention in the 111<sup>th</sup> session of the Working Party on Transport of Dangerous Goods (WP.15), presenting the new model of ADR card for drivers (INF.25). A system of cooperation was put in place with other contracting parties of ADR to prevent fines be given to drivers when cards were lawfully issued based on the new model.

Cooperation with EU institutions continued, in particular with the Commission and its specialised Expert Groups. TC PS Secretariat presented at the Expert Group on Transport of Dangerous Goods the progress made on the file, actively asking for cooperation from the representatives of the Member States.

Secondly, on a pragmatism basis, a system of mutual assistance was developed concerning tachographs where Regional Partners are not in a position to issue temporarily tachograph cards, at the initiative of the representative of Slovenia and courtesy of the Commission Road Transport Unit.

A specialised tachograph workshop was held in Skopje, North Macedonia, in June 2022 courtesy of the Road Transport Inspection in Poland and of the Polish Embassy. The workshop duplicated the content of the workshop held in Belgrade at the end of 2021, and offered inspectors from North Macedonia, Albania and Kosovo the opportunity to be trained by excellent Polish trainers about enforcement of road transport rules. The practical exercise of the roadside check highlighted the difficulties in enforcing road transport legislation by Macedonian inspectors and opened the way for further cooperation to support activities of the inspectorates in the region in general.

Another workshop was held in Bucharest Romania in September 2022 to show the activities put in place in this Member State view to implementation of Directives 2008/68/EC and 95/50/EC. This event also contained a practical part, a roadside check dedicated to transport of fuels and a demonstration of the preventive measures and checks put in place by the industry for safety reasons. As a follow-up, Regional Partners reported the need of further cooperation internally between the different institutions involved in checks on carriage of dangerous goods.

Follow-up of the workshops was ensured in the four meetings of the TCT Technical Committee. The focus of the year was Directive 2008/68/EC and Directive 95/50/EC jointly, particularly highlighting the need of further cooperation on enforcement. Moreover, at the October session of the Committee discussions were initiated with the Institutes of Statistics of the Regional Partners and the specialised services of the Commission for statistics, EUROSTAT. Cooperation on this item will be continued, as there are still good practices to be revealed from the region. To stimulate cross-sectoral cooperation between land transport authorities and waterborne transport authorities, a back-to-back meeting of the Waterborne and TDG Committee meeting was held in Antwerp, in December 2022. Further information concerning this meeting which allowed the representatives of the Regional Partners to network between them, to meet in person the Commission officials and to also learn more about the experience of Belgium in implementation of EU

Acquis dedicated to both TDG and Waterborne transport can be found in the section dedicated to waterborne transport.

Taking into consideration the necessary fragmentation of knowledge and competences in the different Regional Partners, for 2023, they are all kindly invited to enhance cross-sectoral cooperation. Ministries of Transport and Interior are kindly invited to reflect jointly on the ways of stimulating enforcement of transport of dangerous goods in connection with road and rail safety rules.

Once the language barrier will be broken due to translation of the annexes to Directive 2008/68/EC it is expected that industry will become more dynamic, and enforcement of the legal requirements will become more problematic. Specialisation and stability of human resources, as anticipated in the Guidelines on TDG, thus becomes key to successful implementation of the relevant legislation.

TCT Permanent Secretariat will continue discussions and will prioritise development of concerted enforcement activities, piloting also an IT app that would facilitate the work of the inspectorates in the region.

TRANSPORT OF DANGEROUS GOODS MILESTONES	Deadline	Progress
All Regional Partners will put in place the necessary legal framework to implement Directive 2008/68/EC.	Q4 2022	Ongoing - Progress achieved only in some Regional Partners.
All Regional Partners will be stimulated to continue definition of needs for capacity building via TAIEX, Twinning programs, IPA funding.	Q4 2022	Ongoing -3 out of 6 Regional Partners received or are currently receiving assistance to this end.
The TDG domestic implementation groups will report on their activities to the TDG Technical committee.	Q4 2022	Ongoing - Situation is still not clear in all Regional Partners, but Albania, Serbia and Montenegro started doing so.
All Regional Partners will clarify the administrative structures to be put in place for transposition and implementation of Directive 95/50/EC and will consider developing common cross-border harmonized roadside checks on TDG.	Q4 2022	Ongoing - Discussions ongoing, definition of capacity building programs underway.
All Regional Partners will apply for initial training programs dedicated to Directive 95/50/EC and will establish their domestic training plan for ADR enforcement.	Q4 2022	Ongoing. Promising results reported by Albania and Serbia so far.
All Regional Partners will clarify the administrative structures to be put in place for transposition and implementation of Directive 2010/35/EU.	Q4 2022	Ongoing – Moderate progress during this reporting period.
Second report on the implementation of the Guidelines to be presented to the Regional Steering Committee by the end of 2022.	Q4 2022	Ongoing – A follow-up of the Guidelines Report was drafted for 2022.



## 7. SOCIAL FORUM

The Transport Community Permanent Secretariat has devoted 2022 to the year of roads. Throughout the year 2022, we have organised three key events, starting with Social Forum (11 May, Sarajevo), followed by the Road Summit (7 June, Tirana) and capacity building Summer School (20-24 June, Sarajevo). During these events we have addressed the social aspects in road transport focused on the exchange of best practices that will improve the working conditions and making the sector more attractive.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Social Forum took place in Sarajevo on 11 May 2022, focusing on social issues in road transport. Conclusions of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Social Forum highlighted that more efforts are needed in transposition and the implementation of social legislation in road and road passenger rights. On that note, the Transport Community committed to draft an Action Plan with measures related with the transposition/implementation of social legislation. Based on the agreed conclusions, the TCT Secretariat organised a Study visit to Slovenia on transposition/implementation of the road-related social legislation (smart tachographs), study visit held on 21 December 2022.

The Ministry for Infrastructure of Slovenia hosted a study visit for the regional participants on issues related to implementation of social issues legislation – smart tachographs. More than 10 participants from the Ministries in charge of transportation participated. The Slovenian Ministry for Infrastructure presented their experience on transposition of EU Directive 165/2014 and EU Directive 2020/1054. The second part a site visit was related to the tachographs, focussing on calibration, inspection checks for tachographs 2GEN, reports on the drive cards and infringements examples. The participants were actively engaged in the discussion, at the end of the workshop Regional Partners addressed their interest for organising additional similar workshops, on that request the TCT Secretariat agreed to explore the instrument of TAIX to organise the workshop on the topic related to tachographs.

In addition to the above, the TCT Secretariat drafted a Passenger Rights report – Making Transport Accessible and Inclusive in the Western Balkans. The objective of the report is to identify obstacles and barriers to accessibility in the region at the central rail and bus stations. The report has focused specifically on the accessibility of the central rail and bus stations in the region, meaning transposition/implementation of the key EC Regulations on rail (No 1371/2007) and bus and coach (No 181/2011) passenger rights as stipulated on ANNEX I of the Transport Community Treaty. Particularly on infrastructure accessibility, right to assistance at designated terminals and on board and information to persons with reduced mobility.

The report obtains inputs from a range of stakeholders by providing information/data on the level of transposition/implementation of the bus and coach, and rail passenger rights. Moreover, the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat expert engaged in social issues of the acquis conducted dedicated several visits (July – October 2022) to the central bus and rail stations, in which she interviewed representatives of the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) from the whole region.



Moreover, the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat organised an online event on 8 March, on the topic related to Woman in Transport” Towards Gender Balanced Transport in the Western Balkans”. Gender equality is a highly important topic, and Conferences like this one are a major step towards empowering women to join the transport sector and thus take over key roles in domestic and global transport. This was the second event organised by the TCT Secretariat on the topic of gender balance in the transport sector. The Conference highlighted the need for a stronger regional cooperation when addressing the gender gap in the sector, which brought together fifty key regional stakeholders, from the Western Balkans region, the European Commission, Regional Cooperation Council, World Bank, UN Women, and the International Transport Forum.

*Figure 18. Online conference: Towards Gender Balanced Transport in the Western Balkans*

## 8. TRANSPORT OBSERVATORY

2022 has been a year of delivery for the Transport Observatory, with its main analytical tool (the Transport Observatory Database/Information System – TODIS) being designed, developed and deployed.

This will mark the completion of Transport Observatory Phase II that would instead allow routine performance of three of the main core functions of the Transport Observatory (TEN-T Network performance monitoring, projects monitoring and EU Acquis tracking), as shown **Error! Reference source not found.** below.

TODIS is being delivered under a services contract that kicked off in January 2022, following its successful award in late 2021. The Inception phase was successfully completed by the end of April. The draft Business Analysis and System Design Report has been approved in August 2022. In parallel with system development, a comprehensive data collection exercise has been carried out with the help of local experts employed by the Consultant. TODIS has been populated with data and deployed on the TCT physical infrastructure in December 2022. Based on the approved Acceptance Plan, TODIS testing has started in late December and will continue in January 2023.

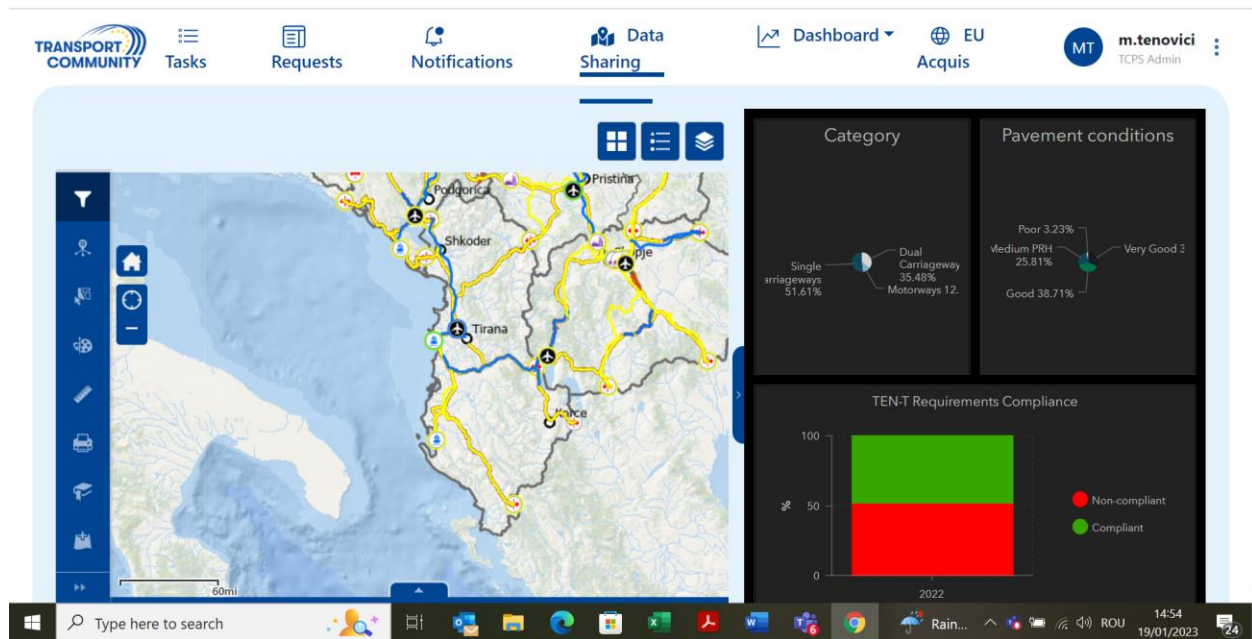


Figure 19. TODIS screenshot: Selection of various road indicators

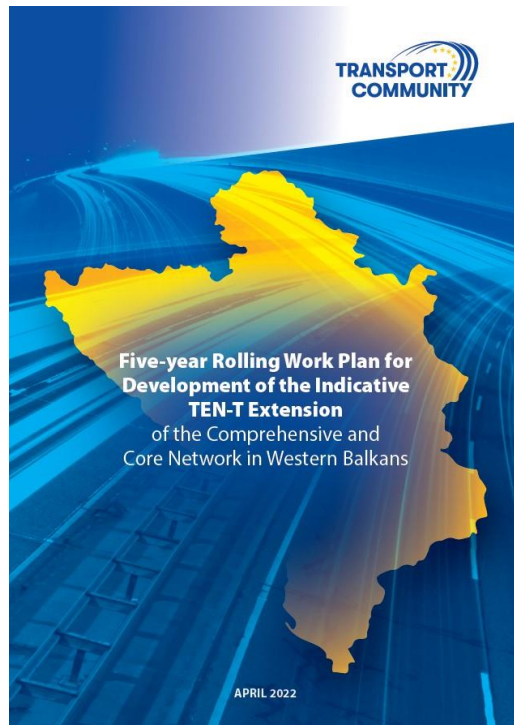
In parallel, TCT Secretariat has also started the process of TODIS institutionalisation, i.e. setting-up the institutional and procedural framework that will keep TODIS alive and relevant for the years to come through regular data updates. Extensive consultations were held at technical and decision levels with all Regional Partners to identify the key data owners and stakeholders. Once the process completed, the nominated users will benefit of dedicated training sessions. It is envisaged that, upon taking over and full institutionalisation, TODIS shall become the sole official data source for TEN-T related matters in Western Balkans.

In parallel, the TCT Secretariat has already taken preliminary steps for the upcoming Transport Community Phase 3. Under the initially considered implementing schedule, preparation for Phase III was due to commence in 2022, so that the transport model could be used for the upcoming revision of the 5 years rolling plan due for delivery in 2024. However, considering that:

- The proposed calendar was extremely ambitious for an initiative that complex;
- The necessary costs have been estimated to almost EUR 1.2 million and could not be covered on short-term through Transport Community's budget;
- The overall inter-institutional framework is not favouring top-down transport planning at regional level (WBIF is based on prioritisation by each Regional Partner through Single Project Pipelines and open calls/competition),

TCT Secretariat held a series of consultations with EC representatives to identify the most efficient and effective ways of achieving the Transport Community's goals regarding TEN-T development planning and projects prioritisation at regional level. The process was also supported by JASPERS, who is providing specialized assistance and support for Transport Observatory implementation. New concept and delivery schedule was proposed in this regard during the RSC meeting in December 2022, and a decision is expected in March 2023 following a second round of discussions/consultations with the EC.

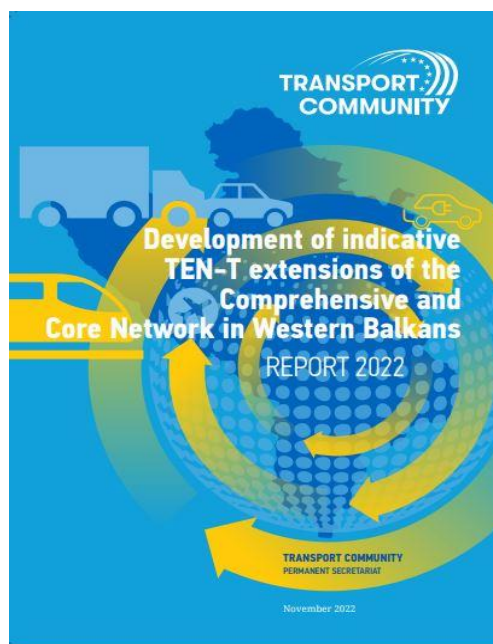
## 9. FIVE-YEAR ROLLING PLAN



*Figure 20. Five-year Rolling Work Plan for Development of the Indicative TEN-T Extension of the Comprehensive and Core Network in Western Balkans*

Following the Regional Steering Committee's decision of 20 May 2021 to proceed with the drafting of the first edition of the Five-Year Rolling Work Plan within the current conditions (data availability, lack of TODIS etc), TCT Secretariat started the data collection process in June 2021. Most of the data was delivered from the Regional Partners by the end of September 2021. TCT Secretariat prepared the draft Five-Year Rolling Plan and consulted it with European Commission in late January 2022. After revising the Report to incorporate the constructive comments received on how to improve further the Draft Five-Year Rolling plan in compliance with the requirements of the Treaty, it was shared with Regional Partners. Furthermore, it was discussed in the Regional Steering Committee on 15 March 2022. Finetuning of the document took place in the second half of March and the Report was finalised in early April 2022. The Five-Year Rolling Plan was endorsed by the Ministerial Council on 18 May 2022.

## 10. DEVELOPMENT OF INDICATIVE TEN-T EXTENSIONS OF COMPREHENSIVE AND CORE NETWORK IN WESTERN BALKANS



The first Trans-European Networks Transport (TEN-T) Annual Report released in July 2021 laid the basis for TEN-T Network performance monitoring in the region, defining key indicators, baseline values and methodology. Publication of the second annual TEN-T monitoring report has marked another milestone in the monitoring process, providing updated information on progress for the year and a consolidated forecast of developments likely to follow by 2027.

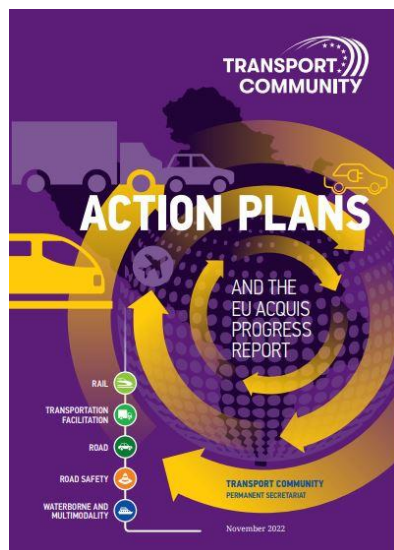
The Regional Steering Committee has been informed about the methodology and timeline for delivery of the 2022 TEN-T Annual Report during the meeting dated 15 March. The first version of the Report was compiled by the TCT Secretariat in September 2022, mostly based on data collected under TODIS framework. After being reviewed individually by Regional Partners and the European Commission, the 2022 TEN-T



Annual Report was endorsed by the Regional Steering Committee on 14 November 2022 and welcomed by the Ministerial Council on 15 November 2022.

Progress achieved on the ground is visible, as some important projects have become operational, making their contribution to current TEN-T Network shape and performance. The pace of change is, however, far from sufficient to ensure that the entire network meets full standards by the dates set forth in Regulation no. 1315/20131. While the focus is, and should, remain on the Core Network upgrade, it is essential that infrastructure maintenance also improves in order not to undermine the progress achieved so far. Coordinated efforts are needed, therefore, from all Regional Partners, as clearly shown by the findings and conclusions of this year's TEN-T report. The substantial financial package committed by the European Union (EU) for the Western Balkans within the framework of the Economic and Investment Plan (EIP) will definitely improve the rhythm of investments in the region's transport network. Around EUR 5 billion (of which EUR 2 billion in grants) will be channelled in the coming years towards the transport sector to help the region meet TEN-T standards and address the objectives of the Green Agenda in the Western Balkans. The gap between needs and resources will nevertheless remain or even increase, in view of the overall macro-economic context and perspectives. Focusing efforts and resources in a coherent strategic approach, securing the priority projects list, and improving implementation records are now, more than ever, essential if the deadlines stipulated under the TEN-T Regulation are to be met.

## 11. ACTION PLANS AND THE ACQUIS PROGRESS REPORT



The main aim of the Transport Community is the integration of transport markets of the Southeast European Parties with the EU. This is achieved through the adoption and implementation of transport related legislation, the EU acquis Communautaire (as stipulated in Annex I to the Transport Community Treaty, which is regularly updated), and through the support and development of connectivity projects on indicative extension of the Trans-European Network (TEN-T) that better connect not only the Western Balkans countries, but also the region with the EU. The Action Plans serve as a compendium/roadmap that will help all Regional Partners better plan and prioritise their work in implementing the required legislation and improve overall project planning. The five Action Plans endorsed by the Transport Community Ministerial Council on 26 October 2020 and the Transport Community's Action Plan on Waterborne and Multimodality<sup>3</sup> endorsed in July 2021 comprise important steps and milestones.

The Action Plans aim to guide the region in delivering safer, smart, and sustainable roads, a reliable, modern, and interoperable rail system, and reduced queuing times at borders. These Action Plans are key documents concerning the region, by the region, for the region.

## 12. REVISION OF THE TRANS EUROPEAN TRANSPORT NETWORK REGULATION

One of the specific objectives of the Regulation is to promote an “enhanced connectivity between the EU and neighbouring and other third countries”. The existing Regulation already includes provisions to connect the EU network with infrastructure networks of neighbouring countries. Its scope covers in

particular Western Balkans for which indicative maps comprising Core and Comprehensive networks have been included in the Regulation. The revised TEN-T Regulation should further promote (high quality) connections with the neighbouring countries. This will benefit both Western Balkan partners and EU Member States.

Ongoing revision of the TEN-T Regulation comes therefore timely for the Western Balkans, to better align the infrastructure developments with the EU and to enhance compliance with the TEN-T network standards, policies and applicable legislations.

First informative meeting on TEN-T Revision between DG MOVE and Western Balkan Parties was organised on 14 July 2021, with TCT Secretariat's support.

Further bilateral meetings were held between DG Move and Western Balkan Parties (with North Macedonia, Albania and Montenegro on 28 September 2021, and with Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Serbia on 29 September 2021).

In accordance with the Commission's request, all Regional Partners delivered update of their current network (completed sections) and modification proposals to be considered for TEN-T Revision process in the Western Balkans.

On 10 and 11 March 2022 a second round of bilateral meetings between DG Move and Western Balkan Parties (with BiH, Montenegro and Serbia on 10 March, and with Albania, Kosovo and North Macedonia on 11 March 2022) was organised, and all proposals discussed were discussed in detail. TCT Secretariat ensured administrative and logistic support, facilitation coordination between Regional Partners (bilateral meetings on common proposals) and with the European Commission, ensuring that the proposals put forward were coherent, complementary, have a regional dimension.

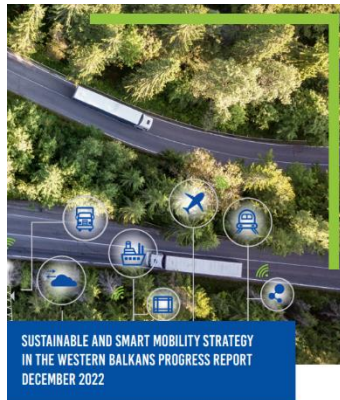
The Ministerial Council meeting in May 2022 provided a good opportunity for the Ministers in charge of Transport to present their proposals and to discuss with the Commission importance of the revision for the Region. The expected approval of the revised TEN-T Regulation represents a significant opportunity for the region to make its transport network fit for the future.

Following 5<sup>th</sup> December Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council (Transport), an agreement was reached, enabling the EU to build a sustainable and smart trans-European transport network (TEN-T). With this first-ever Western Balkans, European Transport Corridor is one step closer to reality.

Specific Annex to the Proposal for a regulation on Union guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network, amending Regulation (EU) 2021/1153 and Regulation (EU) No 913/2010 and repealing Regulation (EU) 1315/2013 concerning the Western Balkans that is also available on the following website: <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-15058-2022-ADD-33/en/pdf>. TEN-T Revision process is not finalised yet. This is the Council's Proposal that will need to be negotiated in the European Parliament between representatives of the Parliament, the Council and the Commission.

It is expected that during 2023 revised TEN-T Regulation will be adopted.

### 13. SUSTAINABLE AND SMART MOBILITY



The TCT Secretariat together with Ad-hoc group members has developed a Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy for Western Balkans which was welcomed by the Ministers at the Ministerial Council in July 2021. In 2022, TCT Secretariat developed a Sustainable and Smart Mobility monitoring mechanism, which was presented on the Technical Committees, as the primary source of information on the implementation of the Strategy. First progress report on implementation of Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy was prepared by the TCT Secretariat. Report was adopted by the Regional Steering Committee on the RSC meeting held on 15 December 2022.

The TCT Secretariat together with EIB and EBRD organised Western Balkan Road Summit dedicated to making roads safe, smart and sustainable in Tirana, on 7 June 2022, hosted by Albania.

Additionally, the TCT Secretariat organised the Summer School in June to educate young leaders on the same topic of making roads safe, smart and sustainable.

Additionally, as a part of CONNECTA Sustainable and Smart Mobility project- several awareness workshops have been organised:

- E - mobility workshop was held on 06th July in Belgrade with more than 20 participants. Workshop focused on electromobility development in the Regional Partners and best-case practices regarding safe locations for the e-charging locations and capacity and locations for e-charging.
- Smart and Resilient mobility. As a part of the TCTPS regional Sustainable and Smart Mobility project implemented by CONNECTA, a two-day workshop was organised in Tirana on 22 and 23 November with more than 20 participants. The workshop held on 22 November was dedicated to Smart and Green Mobility, while the workshop held on 23 November tackled Resilient Mobility.

From November 18-20 the Techstars Startup Weekend Western Balkans (Mobility Edition) took place in Prishtina. The regional event was led by the Innovation Centre Kosovo during the 2022 Global Entrepreneurship Week Kosovo and was supported by the Transport Community. The Startup Weekend Western Balkans gathered 80 people (participants and mentors) that were addressing pressing challenges in reducing transport emissions, better passenger access and interconnectivity between modes under the theme 'Smart and sustainable mobility. Better connectivity.' Additionally, as a part of hackathon, the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat organised a kick-of roundtable on Boosting innovation and digitalisation in the transport sector in the Western Balkans with the regional ICT hubs to discuss main challenges and possible solutions to improve innovation in the mobility sector. As identified in the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy for Western Balkans innovation is crucial to enable green and digital transition in transport.

The Danube region transport days 2022: "Towards energy efficient, sustainable transport" were held on 28 and 29th November 2022 in Ljubljana, Slovenia and gathered more than 50 participants. Meeting was organised by Organised by the EUSDR PA1b coordinators in cooperation with the UNECE, the Transport Community and the OJP4Danube Consortium under the auspices of the Slovenian Presidency of the EUSDR. Discussions focused on making transport more sustainable and energy efficient in the light of new

reality of high energy prices and the EU energy deficit as well as identifying possible ways and developments of energy efficiency in transport.

Furthermore, the TCT Secretariat was engaged with several projects to improve smart and sustainable mobility:

- Technical Assistance for the Deployment of smart and sustainable mobility in the Western Balkans, financed through CONNECTA, started in March 2022: The result of the study will give us more insight how to practically start implementing sustainable and smart mobility in Western Balkans. Project has two components:
  - Component 1 – impact assessment and cost effectiveness analysis of the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy for the Western Balkans;
  - Component 2 - Strategic framework for the deployment of e-charging stations in the Western Balkans;

The late start of CONNECTA financed Technical Assistance for the Deployment of smart and sustainable mobility in the Western Balkans call for a revision of the deadlines presented in the Annual Work Programme 2022, from Q4 2022 to Q2 2023.

GREEN/MULTIMODAL/INNOVATIVE TRANSPORT SOLUTIONS MILESTONES	Deadline	Progress
Implementation of the CONNECTA supported <i>Technical Assistance for Cost Effectiveness Analysis of the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy for the Western Balkans</i>	Q2 2023	Project started on 8 March 2022

- Project electronic freight transport information exchange and implementation of the Regulation (EU) 2020/1056, financed through TCT budget, started in February and finished in December 2022. Main objective of the TA was setting the basis in achieving an interoperable electronic freight information exchange system and enabling wider use of digital technologies for fulfilling regulatory information requirements. Administrative burden for logistics operators will be reduced, and multimodal transport facilitated. TA covered road, rail and inland waterways. Scope of the project included:
  - European Union institutional and legal framework and best practice examples
  - State of play and gap analysis by Regional Partners
  - Economic and Environmental impact assessment
  - Report on roadmap of eFTI implementation in the Western Balkans

Main deliverable of the TA was roadmap of eFTI implementation and pilot projects to deploy e-freight and implement the eFTI Regulation in the Western Balkans. Roadmap provides clear pathway, covering organisational, legal and technical perspective, for implementation of the eFTI Regulation and making freight transport information exchange paperless.

Additionally, the TCT Secretariat has been assisting the Ministry of Infrastructure, Environment and Spatial Planning of Kosovo to update the Multimodal Transport Strategy with sustainable and smart mobility elements. More efforts are needed to include sustainable, smart and safe elements into the strategic and project planning documents from Regional Parties in order to ensure green and digital transformation.



TCT Secretariat will continue to assist the Regional Parties in this process through raising awareness activities, capacity building workshops and presentation of best EU practices.

#### 14. ACQUIS TRANSPOSITION

The Transport Community Permanent Secretariat continuously monitors the acquis transposition for all transport modes and areas covered by the Treaty.

To that end, the Annual Action Plans and the Acquis Progress Report for 2022 approved at the Regional Steering Committee meeting on 14 November, and Ministerial Council held on 15 November in Brussels, besides the progress on the implementation of each Action Plan (Rail Action Plan, Transport Facilitation Action Plan, Road Action Plan, Road Safety Action Plan and Action Plan for Waterborne Transport and Multimodality), included (for the first time) stronger emphasis on the level of transposition of the ANNEX I of the Treaty as per the respective areas, for each regional partner.

The level of the alignment of the legislation in each Regional Partner with the ANNEX I of the Transport Community Treaty will constitute a part of the above-mentioned Progress Reports on the 5 Action Plans. A series of meetings with each Regional Partner were organised to collect information related to alignment of EU Acquis. The information delivered by the Regional Partners will be screened and added to the Progress Reports.

Detailed questionnaires for each regulatory area have been sent to members of Technical Committees on the current state of play as well and the latest Regional Partners Acquis Transposition Plan.

The TCT Secretariat participated and contributed to the preparation of discussion documents of the Sub Committee meetings organised by the EU Commission (DG NEAR), with Kosovo on 15 March, North Macedonia 17 March, Bosnia and Herzegovina on 19 May, Montenegro on 7 June, Serbia on 12 December and Albania on 13 December. In addition to that, the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat has contributed to enlargement reports prepared by the EU Commission (DG NEAR), by summarising our observations on issues within our sphere of activities/domain, Chapter 14 and Chapter 21 of the Enlargement Report.

In order to address relevant issues concerning enforcement of rules applicable to road transport services, e.g. tachograph rules, the TCT Secretariat organised, in cooperation with the Polish General Inspectorate of Road Transport, and courtesy of the Polish Embassies in the Serbia and in the North Macedonia, a series of two Road Transport Inspection Workshops. Enforcement of tachograph rules, which govern the driving and resting time of drivers thus contributing to both road safety and driver's wellbeing, were explained in a detailed manner, both theoretically and practically during roadside checks.

The first session of the Workshop offered capacity building to inspection officers in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro and was held in Belgrade, 8 – 10 December 2021.

The second session of the Road Transport Inspection Workshop was held in Skopje, 29 June – 1 July 2022, for officials from North Macedonia, Albania, and Kosovo.

The workshops were organised in a series to offer the opportunity to attend to a larger number of participants from each Regional Partner.

Transport Community Permanent Secretariat wishes to use this opportunity to thank all the counterparts from Poland for their excellent cooperation.

## 15. MEETINGS OF BODIES ESTABLISHED UNDER THE TRANSPORT COMMUNITY TREATY

- On 18 May 2022, in Pristina - the first **Ministerial Council** meeting for the year 2022. The meeting agenda included the endorsement of the Five-Year Rolling Work Plan, as well as discussion and presentation by the Commission on the ongoing process of the TEN-T revision. On 15 November 2022, in Brussels-the second Ministerial Council meeting for the year 2022. Meeting was focused on TEN-T Annual Report, Action Plan and Acquis Progress Report. Ministerial Council welcomed Ukraine, Georgia and Republic of Moldova as Observing Participants to the Transport Community.
- Four meetings of the **Regional Steering Committee**, in hybrid format, on 15 March 2022 in Belgrade, on 15 June in Tirana, on 14 November 2022 in Brussels and 15 December 2022 in Belgrade.
- Four meetings of the **Technical Committee on Railway**, all in person, took place in 2022 as follows: 10 February - Skopje - 11<sup>th</sup> meeting, 22 June - Podgorica - 12<sup>th</sup> meeting, 21 September - Tirana - 13<sup>th</sup> meeting and 1 December – Brussels - 14<sup>th</sup> meeting.
- Four meetings of the **Road Technical Committee** took place in 2022, respectively 7<sup>th</sup> meeting on 10 March in Podgorica, 8<sup>th</sup> meeting on 6 June in Tirana, 9<sup>th</sup> meeting on 5-6 October in Belgrade and 10<sup>th</sup> meeting on 7 December in Brussels.
- **Transport of Dangerous Goods Technical Committee** held 4 sessions in 2022, as follows: Skopje – 19 May, Belgrade – 14 June, Belgrade – 26 October. The last session was organised back-to-back with the Waterborne Committee and the eFTI group in Antwerp, between 14-16 December. To address practical issues related to enforcement of road operations two specialised workshops were organised. The **Road Transport Inspection Workshop** was organized in Skopje, 29 June - 1 July 2022, courtesy of the Polish Road Transport Inspectorate and the second one on **TDG rules** was organized in Bucharest, 5-7 September 2022.
- Four meetings of the **Technical Committee on Road Safety**, one online and 3 in person, took place in 2022, with an average of 12-18 participants in each. In addition, two meetings of the **Western Balkans Road Safety Observatory** were held back-to-back with Technical Committees. Respective dates of these meetings were: 9<sup>th</sup> Technical Committee – 17 March (Virtual), 10<sup>th</sup> Technical Committee – 6 June in Tirana, 11<sup>th</sup> Technical Committee and 3<sup>rd</sup> WBRSO – 6 October in Belgrade, 12 Technical Committee and 4<sup>th</sup> WBRSO - 6 December in Brussels.
- Three meetings of the **Technical committee on Transport Facilitation** took place in 2022: on 29 March, the 10<sup>th</sup> meeting was held in Tirana, back-to-back with the central training event under the TCT Technical assistance for transport facilitation: *“Building the institutional capacities for implementation of transport facilitation instruments and solutions”*; 11<sup>th</sup> meeting was held in Ulcinj, Montenegro, back-to-back with the *joint workshop between Montenegro and Albania* under the same Technical assistance. On 8 December, the 12<sup>th</sup> meeting was held in Brussels, back to back with the *CEI Panel on connectivity* named “An Integrated Concept of Connectivity for the CEI Region”.
- **Waterborne Transport and Multimodality Technical Committee**. Three meetings and two workshops took place in 2022 respectively: 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting - 20 April - Lisbon, 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting 4 July - Bar, Montenegro, 4<sup>th</sup> meeting - 14-16 December - Antwerp, Belgium. 31<sup>st</sup> March - Slavonski Brod the Project Generation Workshop on “Sharing experiences and best practices of EU Core Network IWW Ports in developing and implementing EU funded projects” and 20 May 2022 - Port of

Pireaus, Athens, Greece -Maritime Workshop for Western Balkan Maritime Ports on “Greening of ports including alternative fuel projects as per TENT- T Regulation 1315/2013”.

- On 24 March 2022 at the premises of the TCT Secretariat (hybrid mode) - the **Budget Committee held its 4<sup>th</sup> meeting**,
- On 11 May 2022, in Sarajevo – the second **Social Forum** dedicated to road issues.

## 16. COOPERATION BETWEEN TRANSPORT COMMUNITY AND OBSERVING PARTICIPANTS – MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES 2022

Following the Presidency Conclusions of the Ministerial Council of the Transport Community of 15 November 2022 and the endorsed Joint Statement from the Contracting Parties of the Transport Community Treaty and the Ministers in charge of Transport from Ukraine, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova on cooperation for the development of the transport sectors, the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat started facilitating closer collaboration between the Transport Community and Ukraine, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova (observing participants). Ministers in charge of transport of Ukraine, Georgia and Republic of Moldova were present for the first time in the Ministerial Council, as an observing participants.

The overall objective of observing participants is the progressive involvement in ongoing and future activities of the Transport Community bodies, in support of their alignment with EU acquis and of relevant projects in view of their closer association with EU transport markets and their respective EU perspectives.

In December 2022, TCT Secretariat organised first round of meetings with high level representatives of Ukraine, Georgia and Republic of Moldova, introducing Transport Community scope of work and main documents important for TCT functioning.

In 2023 TCT Secretariat will continue delivering on their closer association with the Transport Community



*Figure 21. Budget Committee meeting, 24 March, hybrid event (TCT premises and online)*

## 17. CAPACITY BUILDING INITIATIVES

Number of meetings were held (two online January and one in person in February, Pristina) with the working group from the Ministry of Infrastructure and Spatial Planning of Kosovo, in charge for updating and reviewing the Multimodal Transport Strategy. The Ministry has requested from the TCT secretariat support in drafting the Multimodal Transport Strategy, next meetings/workshops (in person) is foreseen in May and June 2022. Furthermore, TCT Secretariat organised meetings with members of the Department on Road Infrastructure, Road Management and the Director of Legal Directorate to discuss on the ITS Administrative Instruction and preparation of ToRs for Road Asset Management. As a follow up, best examples from the region were shared with the Ministry of Infrastructure and Spatial Planning of Kosovo.

TCT Secretariat with the support of the DG NEAR via TAIEX, organised a number of events dedicated to capacity building in the administrations of the Regional Partners, as follows:

- 1) TAIEX Regional Workshop on Railway Border Crossing Points (7-8 March 2022) was organized at the request of Montenegro for all Regional Partners.
- 2) TAIEX Regional Workshop on Safety Requirements for Tunnels took place on 18-19 October 2022 in Sarajevo.
- 3) TAIEX training related to the 4<sup>th</sup> Railway Package was organised at the request of Albania on behalf of all Regional Partners in November 2022.
- 4) Regional ERA Workshop on Interoperability was organised in Novi Sad in December 2022.
- 5) TAIEX Emergency services capacity building in case of accident during transport of dangerous goods is to be organized at the request of Montenegro in 2023. A similar project has been developed in cooperation with Albania.

For further information concerning these projects and their technical content please consult the relevant part dedicated to the Technical Committees above.

## 18. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Technical Assistance for Developing an Information System for the Western Balkan Road Safety Observatory has commenced on 04 February 2022 and the Kick off meeting was held on 11 February 2022. The contractor, Devellop d.o.o. has finalised the assignment by 4 December 2022 and has made available online the WBRSO Information System. The system is placed in DEVELOP servers until TCT Secretariat make available the servers in its premisses. The system is accessible in the following link [https://autotrack1.develop.com/transport\\_community/](https://autotrack1.develop.com/transport_community/). The WBRSO APP is developed as well and the uploading in Google Play, IOS and Huawei stores is ongoing. WBRSO System is presented to Regional Partners and from February 2022 they will be able to submit the data online for WBRSO. The Technical Assistance has started the periodical maintenance which will last until December 2023.

TCT Secretariat's supported *Technical Assistance in capacity building for transport facilitation in the Western Balkans (Project No. PS/SRV/TFA/012/2021) which started on 28 December 2021 and was completed on 13 December 2022*. This TA assignment is deemed successfully closed, having met the ToR requirements. All project deliverables, including the *Inception report; Gap assessment report; set of legal documents provided for pairs of Regional Partners; separate, as well as consolidated Reports from the central training event and from the 8 local workshops; as well as a Final Report* were delivered and approved.

In addition, the CONNECTA *Technical Assistance for preparation of technical documentation for modernization and infrastructure's capacity improvements of selected road border crossing points (BCP) on the extended TEN-T network in the Western Balkans (CONNECTA-TRA-CRM-REG-BCP-09)* kicked-off in January 2022. The aim of the assistance is to prepare design and technical documentation for infrastructure and equipment on two pairs of BCPs, between Albania and Montenegro, and Kosovo and North Macedonia. Missions on the relevant BCPs were organized by the Consultancy team in March 2022 and hosted by the relevant border authorities. Inception/Scoping report was delivered in April 2022, after which, the design stage commenced. The detailed ToR and conceptual design were finally approved in September and November respectively for each pair of BCP. The deadline for completion of the technical documentation is by end of April 2023.

TCT Secretariat's supported Technical Assistance on baseline assessment and financial impact of electronic tolling interoperability started on 24 January 2022 and the Kick off meeting took place on 28 January 2022. Contract was completed in September 2022.

Furthermore, CONNECTA's support on preparation of the *Strategic framework for the deployment of e-charging stations in the Western Balkans*, as part of the 'Preparation of Strategy/Policy documents concerning Sustainable and Smart mobility in the Western Balkans' started on 8 March 2022, with a total duration of 12 months. Inception Report was submitted on 16 April 2022. In addition, CONNECTA's support, the 'Preparation of Strategy/Policy documents concerning ITS for all transport modes in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and for rail and maritime in Albania' started on 4 April 2022, with a total duration of 12 months. Inception Report is expected by 5 May 2022.

Technical Assistance for the Deployment of Sustainable and Smart Mobility in the Western Balkans, financed through CONNECTA, started in March. This study is a follow up of the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy and will assess impact and cost of the measures listed within the Strategy.

Additionally, TA on electronic freight transport information exchange, financed through the TCT budget, started in February. Main objective is setting the basis in achieving an interoperable electronic freight information exchange system and enabling wider use of digital technologies for fulfilling regulatory information requirements.

TCT also started the Technical Assistance on the "Assessment of the rail market in the Western Balkans in terms of capacities, policies, economic and technical level of development of freight and passenger transport segments"

The general objective of this assignment is to contribute towards the fulfilment of the obligations derived from the Transport Community Treaty signed by Regional Parties, related to Annex 1 of the Treaty the Rail Action Plan as well.

The specific objective of this assignment is delivering a comprehensive overview of the transportation needs, traffic flows, and market situation on the Western Balkans by assessment of the capacities, economic and technical level of development of freight and passenger transport in the region.

To this purpose, the contractor is requested to:

1. Create structure and data collection for creation and delivery of report on Western Balkan Rail Market Monitoring as per Regulation (EU) 2015/1100 for 2021 as baseline year.
2. Update of the Preliminary Implementation plan, the Transport Market Study, the Inventory of Rail Freight Facilities and the appendixes done in 2017 taking into consideration the latest updates and changes of strategies and data related to rail transport in EU and SEE.



We expect the Contractor MC Mobility Consultants will perform its obligation as per the contract signed. TCT remains open to support the Consultant in the extend possible so the contract can be successfully finalised.

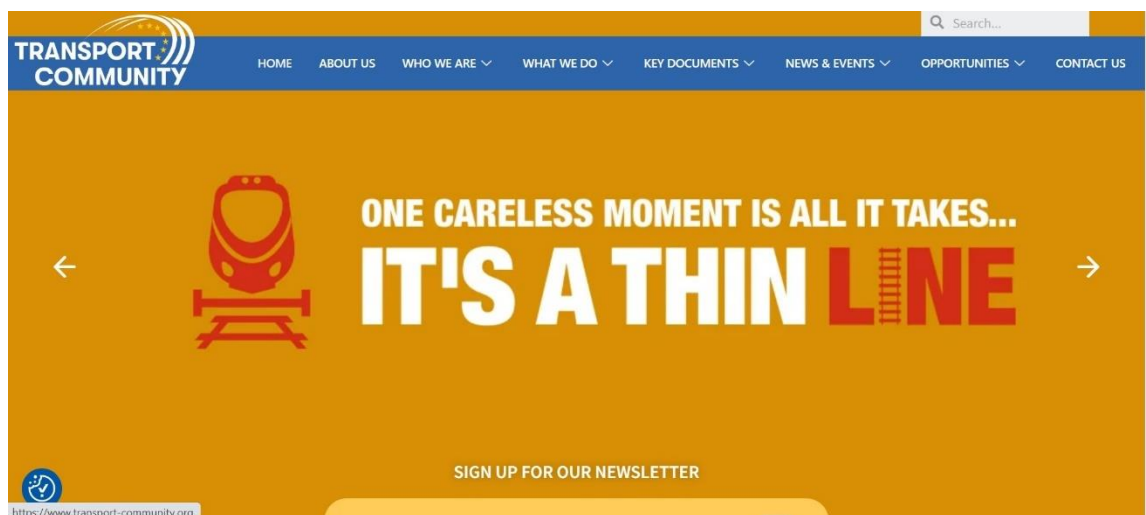
#### 19. WESTERN BALKAN INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK

The TCT Secretariat representatives have attended as observers the meetings of the newly set managing structures for WBIF. TCT was also involved in the screening process of the transport application submitted under TA Round 27.

## COMMUNICATION

Throughout the year, all the activities of TCT Secretariat were supported with communication and visibility efforts to best highlight the numerous achievements of the organisation.

A new version of TCT Secretariat's website was launched on 1 September 2022 and due to its interactive and streamlined overview, it can now offer more content, better visibility and is more user-friendly. It offers visitors a modern, regularly updated platform showcasing Transport Community work.



High-quality publications were printed and widely distributed: 1. The Five-Year Rolling Work Plan for Development of Indicative TEN-T Extension of the Comprehensive and Core Network in Western Balkans, 2. The Second Progress Report on the Implementation of Transport Community Action Plans and the EU Acquis and 3. The Second Annual Report on the Development of Indicative TEN-T Extensions of the Comprehensive and Core Network in Western Balkans.

In accordance with the TCT Communication Strategy, interviews with TCT officials and articles about TCT work continued to be published in major media outlets in the Western Balkans.

The Secretariat continued to publish its monthly newsletter (Annex 1), which was regularly distributed to all stakeholders and available to the public via subscription on the TCT website. Social media accounts were updated regularly with the aim of increasing visibility and public awareness of our work, ensuring continuous and efficient information flow and communication with partners, communities, and the wider public. The Secretariat continually strived to attract and support the engagement of diverse stakeholder groups, including youth, civil society, regional and international partners. The number of followers and engagement continued to increase on all platforms, further strengthening the reputation of Transport Community as a modern international organisation, which is keeping track of developments in the modern digital age.

On 9 May 2022, the campaign "It's a Thin Line" was launched. It aims to increase awareness about dangers of level crossings and it targets a wide Western Balkans audience via dedicated events, printed materials, social media, TV and other communication channels. A uniform slogan "It's a Thin Line" was translated

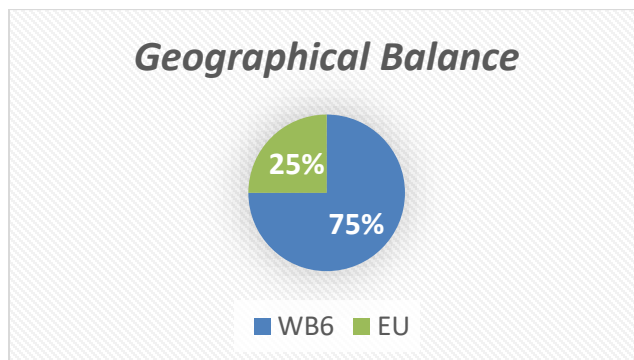
into languages of Western Balkans Regional Partners. Till December 2022, the campaign was promoted in four Regional Partners. Visibility events in Albania and Serbia will be organised in the course of 2023. The main campaign video was played on public broadcasters. In this way, our campaign reached up to 500,000 people in the Western Balkans. The three animated educational videos were adapted to the languages of six Western Balkans Regional Partners and uploaded to YouTube. In order to achieve widest reach possible, an agreement was made with Regional Partners and EU Delegations for distribution of our materials. In this way, through mentioning and tagging, the message was spread, and new audience was reached. This kind of collaborations allowed the Secretariat to familiarise the public with the visual identity and the important work of the Transport Community in the area of road/rail safety, while reaching a younger audience through a network of social media partners.

The Transport Community Twitter accounts' impact remained high, while giving the Secretariat an opportunity to react quickly to latest developments in the Region and beyond. Both the official TCT account and the Director's account continued to attract new followers in 2022. More importantly, the engagement rate from leading experts in the field of transport has been significant, making it possible to reach an even wider audience. With the goal of sharing updates about the TCT Secretariat's work and building connections with professionals, Director and Deputy Director engaged more systematically with their followers on LinkedIn and initiated discussions on transport issues in Western Balkans. This resulted in steady increase in the number of LinkedIn followers.

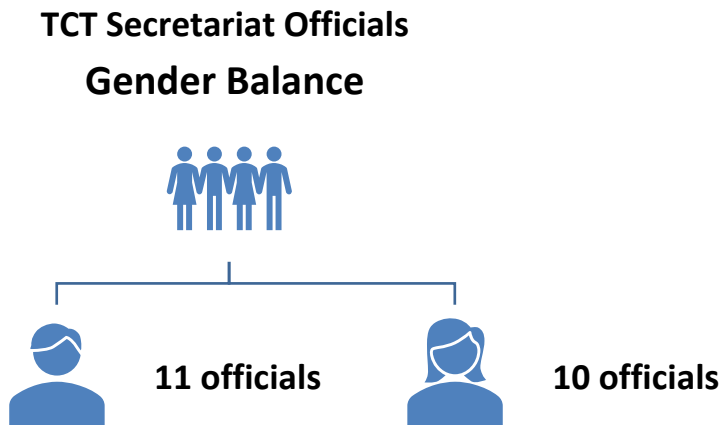
## ADMINISTRATION AND HUMAN CAPITAL

### 1. HUMAN CAPITAL

In 2022, Permanent Secretariat of the Transport Community counted work with 21 officials, as was at the beginning of 2021 whereas, when speaking about geographical equilibrium out of 21, there is a higher percentage of WB6 Officials (75%):



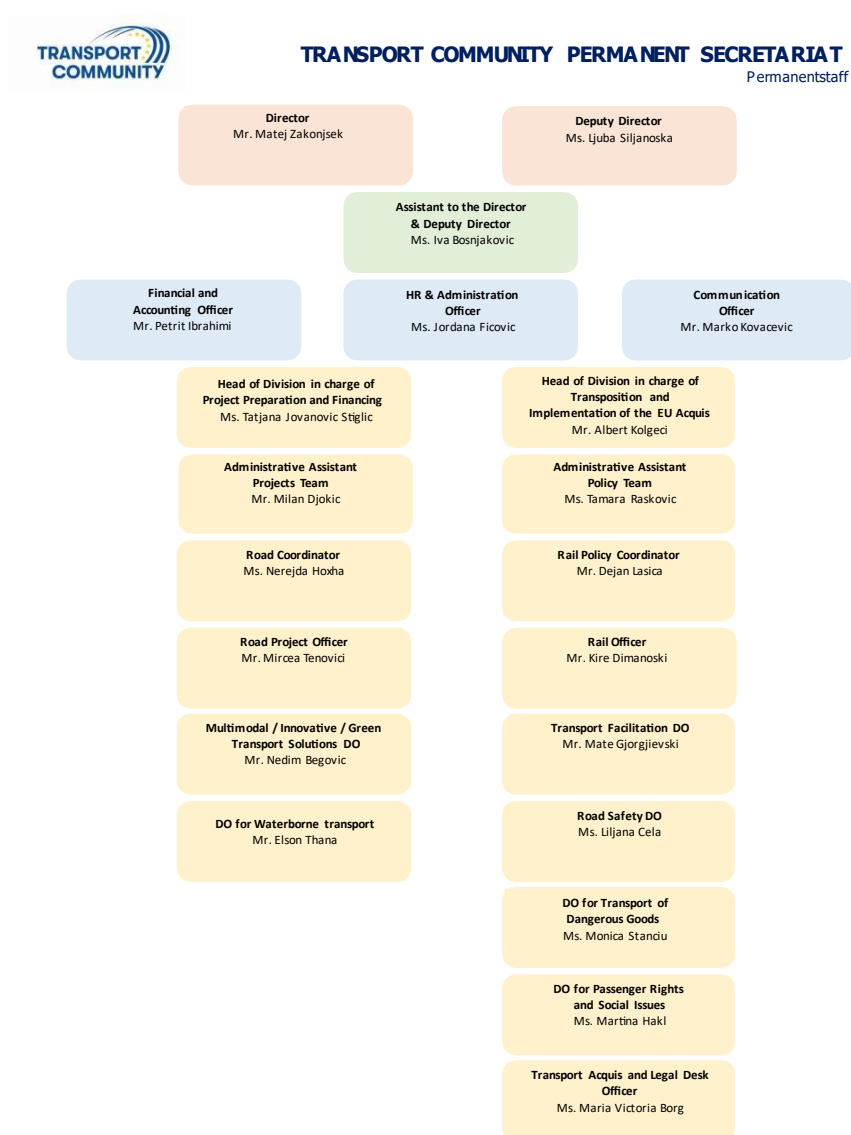
In regards to gender balance, there is a small difference between male and female TCT Officials whereas the percentage of male Officials is slightly higher (52.38%).



Due to staff turnover, in the second half of 2022, 3 new TCT Officials were recruited:

- June 2022 – 1 Administrative Assistant joined the Secretariat;
- November 2022 – 2 Desk Officers, 1 for Waterborne Transport and 1 for Transport Acquis and Legal matters joined as well.

As of 1 November 2022, the Secretariat's team counts 21 staff members - <https://www.transport-community.org/about-permanent-secretariat-2/>



In 2022, HR management software was introduced for TCT Secretariat staff data management, with appropriate software system data protection as well as with the specific code and authorisation for access.

Annual performance appraisals were conducted in line with the Staff Regulations.

Having in mind Staff Regulations of the Transport Community, Article 4.8 – Appointments and Extension periods, following the specific instructions of the Article 4.8/(b), a round of talks took place with the ones whose contracts are expiring in the first quarter of 2023.



Staff away day was organised on 27 and 28 October 2022 focusing on the work done in the past period and achieved results, but also to reflect and discuss the expectations for 2023. The activities for the year of 2023 will be further developed and will involve different cooperation mechanisms with the observing participants, Ukraine, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova. In the context of improved delivering of presentations and better conveying of different information, a training on presentation skills and storytelling was part of the team building.



In order to support the implementation of the TCT Secretariat procurements, Procurement Manual was developed in the course of 2022 and all staff undertook a dedicated procurement training.

As part of the development of the TCT web page, a training was conducted for webpage management and content upload.

## 2. ADMINISTRATION

As of January 2022, in line with the HQ Agreement, the TCT Secretariat has been again functioning from the “Beogradjanka” building, located in Masarikova street no 5.

In line with the TCT Staff regulations, additional implementing Rules, such as Rules of Procedure of Conciliation Committee and Dispute Settlement (Arbitration), Rules on Secondments and Locally Recruited Persons were developed, whereas the rules already in place such as Rules of Procedure of the Regional Steering Committee and Financial Rules were scrutinised and updated to allow better implementation.

The Transparency Register is updated on a regular basis and published on the website of the Transport Community <https://www.transport-community.org/transparency-register/>.

# FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

## 1. EXTERNAL AUDIT OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The annual accounts for the financial year 2021 were closed on 31 March 2022. The external audit was performed starting 3<sup>rd</sup> week of April 2022. The independent auditor produced the report on 31 May 2022. The report, which was shared with members of the Regional Steering Committee and Budget Committee, and published on the official website states that the accompanying financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Organization as at 31 December 2021, and of its financial performance and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS). Full report is publicly available [online](#)<sup>7</sup>.

A review of the interim financial statements for the period January to June 2022 was also conducted by the independent external auditor. It took place between October and November 2022. The report was issued on 22 December 2022. The conclusion of the report states: “Based on our review, nothing has come to our attention that causes us to believe that the accompanying interim financial information as at and for the six months ended 30 June 2022, are not prepared, in all material respects, in accordance with IAS 34 Interim Financial Reporting”.

## 2. 2022 BUDGET FUNDING AND EXECUTION<sup>8</sup>

All parties to the Treaty fulfilled their financial obligations towards the TCT Secretariat. Contribution payments were received in full from the European Union, whereas the contributions by the South East European were adjusted by the allocated surplus from previous financial years 2019, 2020 and 2021.

The 2022 budget execution rate is 83.26%, or **87.43%** excluding the reserve. For comparison the execution rates of 2021 budget were 77.03% and 83.06 respectively.

Budget Heading / SubHeading	Total Budget	Budget Transfers	Modified Budget	Actual & committed expenditure	Execution Rate	Remaining balance
I. PERMANENT SECRETARIAT	2,637,788	17,709	2,655,497	2,343,400	88.25%	312,097
1. Personnel Costs	1,504,868	0	1,504,868	1,313,862	87.31%	191,006
2. Travel costs	156,910	(15,691)	141,219	124,678	88.29%	16,541
3. Office costs	481,300	8,400	489,700	475,316	97.06%	14,384
4. Other costs and services	274,710	3,000	277,710	196,984	70.93%	80,726
5. STUDIES, Technical Assistance	220,000	22,000	242,000	232,560	96.10%	9,440
II. MINISTERIAL COUNCIL	30,400	0	30,400	5,763	18.96%	24,637
III. REGIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE	18,560	0	18,560	16,683	89.89%	1,877
IV. TECHNICAL COMMITTEES	154,800	(15,480)	139,320	127,365	91.42%	11,955
V. SOCIAL FORUM	10,800	(2,229)	8,571	5,213	60.82%	3,358
VI. BUDGET COMMITTEE	6,800	0	6,800	1,248	18.36%	5,552
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>2,859,148</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,859,148</b>	<b>2,499,673</b>	<b>87.43%</b>	<b>359,475</b>
Budget Reserve (approx. 5%)	142,957	-	142,957	-	0.00%	142,957
<b>GRAND TOTAL:</b>	<b>3,002,105</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3,002,105</b>	<b>2,499,673</b>	<b>83.26%</b>	<b>502,432</b>

Figure 22. Preliminary Report on the budget execution Jan-Dec 2022 in EURO

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.transport-community.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/2021-AUDIT-REPORT.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Presented report is in preliminary form. Final numbers pending closure of the accounts by 31 March 2022.

### 3. THE BUDGET COMMITTEE

The Budget Committee convened twice, in hybrid mode, at the premises of the TCT Secretariat. Discussion topics included the 2021 Annual Operational Report of TCT Secretariat, selection of external auditor for financial years 2021 and 2022; 2022 budget funding and execution, 2023 Budget outline, and issues around the reimbursement rules for event participants.

The Budget Committee issued its own 2021 Annual Report.

After each meeting, the Chair participated in the subsequent meeting of the Regional Steering Committee where she presented the work and conclusions of the Budget Committee.

As a result of the discussions which originated during the earlier meetings of the Budget Committee, the Regional Steering Committee in its 18<sup>th</sup> meeting adopted the amendments to the financial rules and auditing procedures of the Transport Community.

### 4. 2023 BUDGET OF THE TRANSPORT COMMUNITY

As per Article 35 of the Treaty, the Regional Steering Committee shall adopt the budget of the Transport Community every year. The budget shall cover the operational expenses of the Transport Community necessary for the functioning of its bodies. The expenditure of each body shall be set out in a different part of the budget. The 2023 Budget was adopted by the Regional Steering Committee during its 18<sup>th</sup> meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2022. The decision is publicly available on the [TCT website<sup>9</sup>](#).

The main distinction of the 2023 Budget compared to prior year is that there will be more focus on capacity building activities for Regional Partners and Technical Assistance/Studies. The adopted Budget amounts to EUR3,060,000, representing a 2% increase compared to 2022. It shall be financed by contributions from the Contracting Parties in accordance with Annex V of the Treaty.

Budget Heading / SubHeading	2023 Budget	2022 Budget	(Decrease)/Increase
<b>1. PERMANENT SECRETARIAT</b>	<b>2,738,584</b>	<b>2,637,788</b>	<b>100,796</b>
1.1 Personnel Costs	1,502,097	1,504,868	(2,771)
1.2. Travel costs	119,220	156,910	(37,690)
1.3. Office costs	64,150	481,300	(417,150)
1.4. Other costs and services	543,117	274,710	268,407
1.5. STUDIES, Technical Assistance	510,000	220,000	290,000
<b>II. MINISTERIAL COUNCIL</b>	<b>28,000</b>	<b>30,400</b>	<b>(2,400)</b>
<b>III. REGIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE</b>	<b>18,560</b>	<b>18,560</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>IV. TECHNICAL COMMITTEES</b>	<b>177,300</b>	<b>154,800</b>	<b>22,500</b>
<b>V. SOCIAL FORUM</b>	<b>10,800</b>	<b>10,800</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>VI. Budget Committee</b>	<b>5,720</b>	<b>6,800</b>	<b>(1,080)</b>
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>2,978,964</b>	<b>2,859,148</b>	<b>119,816</b>
Budget Reserve (approx. 3%)	81,036	142,957	(61,921)
<b>GRAND TOTAL:</b>	<b>3,060,000</b>	<b>3,002,105</b>	<b>57,895</b>

*Figure 23. Draft outline of the proposal for 2023 Budget*

<sup>9</sup> [https://www.transport-community.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Decision-No.-2022-07\\_Adoption-of-Budget-2023.pdf](https://www.transport-community.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Decision-No.-2022-07_Adoption-of-Budget-2023.pdf)

## 5. OVERVIEW OF DEROGATIONS FROM THE RULES

To provide sufficient level of transparency and to review the process of implementation of the different applicable Rules of the Transport Community, as a part of internal management and control system, summarized overview on derogations of the rules is presented below. This will allow, if needed, to update or adjust respective rules in order to improve their applicability.

Based on the evidence in the filing system of the TCT Secretariat, namely Decisions adopted for the year 2022, approving derogation from respective TCT Rules and Procedures due to exceptional circumstances, there were eight (8) Decisions approved by the Director of the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat for the following circumstances:

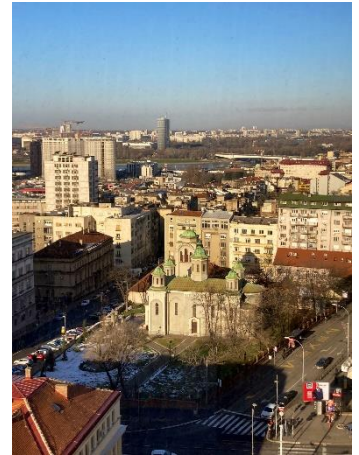
1. Three (3) on increase of the number of participants envisaged for training/capacity building due to combination of several different topics under one event (*Article 1.3 of the Rules on the reimbursement of expenses incurred by persons outside of the Permanent Secretariat of the Transport Community, who are invited to participate in meetings of the Transport Community*);
2. Three (3) on increase of DSA rates due to exceptional circumstances (*Article 12.3 of the Travel rules for the staff of the Transport Community*);
3. Two (2) on increase of allowed rates for hotel accommodation for participants of TCT events due to exceptional circumstances (closeness of the hotel to the venue of the meeting and unavailability of hotel accommodations within the defined threshold).

Every decision is supported with proper justification, documented in note to the file before the action took place.

Following the 18 January return to our permanent Headquarters at “Beogradjanka” building, the year 2022 began with our organisation’s participation at the European Transport Workers’ Federation’s meeting for Western Balkans, where we presented **our work in shaping the future of regional transport in a socially sustainable manner**. TCT presentation focused on issues such



as improving working conditions and equal opportunities for transport workers in the Western Balkans. (Social aspect of transport will feature prominently in our activities in 2022. On **International Women’s Day**, we will organise a **major conference dedicated to addressing the gender gap and promoting the rights of women in transport**.) In terms of planning for 2022, in January the Transport Community Permanent



Secretariat initiated a preparatory meeting with partnering financial institutions – EIB and EBRD – for the organisation of Road Summit. A meeting with

representatives of the International Road Federation on 20 January was an opportunity to discuss plans for this year’s Summer School, which will take place in Bosnia and Herzegovina and gather young professionals from the region for discussions on safe, smart and sustainable roads.



During a visit to Tirana on 26 January, work of TCT was presented at the **meeting of EU Member States Ambassadors**. In his briefing, Director Zakonjšek focused on rail reforms that will connect Albania better with its neighbours and informed the diplomats about the **plans to hold the Road Summit in Tirana**.

A day later in Podgorica, at a briefing for Deputy Heads of Missions, TCT presentation focused on modernisation of the Port

of Bar, upgrade of the Bar – Belgrade railway, the Blue Highway along the Adriatic coast, as well as policy reforms. TCT stands ready to provide all the necessary support to regional partner Montenegro in moving forward with the EU negotiation talks on Chapters 14 and 21. This message was reiterated also at the meeting with the EU Ambassador to Montenegro Oana Cristina Popa. Strengthening administrative capacities in our Regional Partners is essential for successful implementation of reforms. On 27 January, Director Zakonjšek met with the Minister of Capital Investments Mladen Bojanić to discuss Montenegro’s progress on **the European Commission’s flagship projects in the country** – rehabilitation of the Bar-Belgrade railway, improvements on the road from Podgorica to Sarajevo, rail connections with Albania and the Budva bypass. This month, TCT began preparations for implementation of one more major project – Transport Observatory Database/Information System (TODIS). At a kick-off meeting with consultants from IDOM on 27 January, the project to establish the main information repository about TEN-T corridors in the Western Balkans officially began.





On 9 February 2022, the first meeting of all rail infrastructure managers of Western Balkans took place in Skopje. The gathering is a follow up to the Memorandum of Understanding for establishing a network of railway infrastructure managers, which was signed at the Western Balkans Rail Summit in Belgrade on 13 September 2021. The 11<sup>th</sup> Technical Committee on Railways also took place in Skopje the following day, to review progress on implementation of the TCT Rail Action Plan, which specifies how to align legislation, improve infrastructure and re-establish rail passenger transport in the Region.



Infrastructure projects and rail sector reforms were in focus also during the TCT Secretariat delegation's visit to Albania on 1-2 February 2022. At the meetings with the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure, the National Inspectorate and the Albanian Railways it was concluded that finalising construction of rail Corridor VIII remains a priority for Albania. Focus will be on rehabilitation of the Tirana-Durres railway, building a new railway section to Mother Teresa International Airport, modernising the line from Durres to Lin and building a railway link from Lin to the border with North Macedonia. Once completed, Corridor VIII rail route will connect the Port of Durres to the Bulgarian Black Sea via North Macedonia. The TCT Secretariat delegation stressed that these important infrastructure investments need to go hand in hand with policy and institutional reforms.

TCT Secretariat representatives met on 3 February 2022 with the Minister of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure, Mr. Tomislav Momirović and his team to discuss cooperation with emphasis on joint initiatives planned for 2022. Progress on development of rail in Serbia was reviewed with focus on modernisation of the railway line between Belgrade and Budapest. To move forward on making rail travel more appealing for the citizens of Serbia, interlocutors agreed that adoption of several key laws such as Law on Interoperability, Law on Railways and Law on Safety, will be essential. Finalising rail infrastructure projects and establishing regular rail passenger service between Belgrade and Timisoara was highlighted as one of priorities for 2022.



Director Matej Zakonjšek met in Pristina with Prime Minister of Kosovo Albin Kurti and the Minister of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Liburn Aliu, who expressed highest political support for connectivity in the Western Balkans. Major infrastructure projects from the European Commission's Economic and Investment Plan, namely the "Peace Highway" Nis – Pristina and upgrading of the rail network will enhance connectivity in the Region.

On 8 February 2022, the TCT Secretariat delegation met in Budapest with the Director General of the Danube Commission, Mr. Manfred Seitz for discussions on how to address bottlenecks on the Danube, improve navigability of Sava and Tisa and utilise the potential of ports of Belgrade and Novi Sad. Representatives of regional organisations working on the economic development of the Western Balkans met at the Headquarters of the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat on 24-25 February 2022. The Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), the Central European Free Trade Agreement, the Energy Community, the Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO) and the Transport Community presented their priorities for 2022, focusing on areas of established or planned cooperation with other organisations.



Synergies with regional organisations and coordination of major initiatives planned for 2022 were the topics of meetings with the Deputy Secretary General of the Central European Initiative Ms. Nina Kodelja on 15 February 2022 and with the Director of the Energy Community Mr. Artur Lorkowski a day later.

Cooperation and Development Institute (CDI) Albania organised a panel on extension of TENT network to the Western Balkans on 16 February 2022. Director Zakonjšek's intervention focused on Transport Community's support to infrastructure projects on rail corridor VIII linking Albania, North Macedonia and Bulgaria.

## Decrease of Road Deaths in Western Balkans 2010-2020



During the ministerial session of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) on 22 February 2022, TCT presented its continual focus on road safety in the Western Balkans. In order to obtain reliable data, which is crucial for well-targeted road safety policies, the Western Balkans Road Safety Observatory was established under the auspices of the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat. Special focus also needs to be put on level crossings, intersections of roads and railways, as one of the most sensitive points. The Transport

Community Permanent Secretariat, together with its Regional Partners and with support of the EU, is mapping the most critical level crossing points in the Region and is working to increase their safety by improving infrastructure, training the staff, as well as planning a region-wide awareness raising campaign. On 10 February 2022, TCT Secretariat's road safety expert participated at the WHO Europe webinar on the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021-2020 and highlighted priority actions to improve safety and save lives on roads in the Region.

In February, TCT continued preparations for major events that will be organised in 2022. On the occasion of the International Women's Day, the Transport Community will organise an online event „**Women in Transport**“ on 8 March as a call for action to increase women's participation in the transport sector. **The Western Balkans Road Summit** is expected to take place in Tirana on 7 June 2022, to exchange knowledge and raise awareness on development of safer, efficient, interoperable, digitalised, sustainable and green road infrastructure.

Transport Community delegation joined the Serbian Minister of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure Mr Tomislav Momirović and the President of the Assembly of Autonomous Province of Vojvodina Mr Istvan Pasztor on the visit to the border crossing Horgos/Roszke between Serbia and Hungary on 21 March 2022, to witness the start of construction works for **enlargement and modernisation of the crossing**. Traffic volumes for both passengers and freight



at Horgos border crossing are among the highest in the region and physical interventions to improve the traffic capacity and remove bottlenecks are a priority. Expansion to four new traffic lanes for passenger cars and busses to enter Serbia will make transport more efficient. This crossing also has the potential to implement the Green Lanes concept. For this to happen, it is necessary to have special lanes that would be used for the priority passage of trucks.

Establishment of a **well-functioning Green Corridor** and integrated border crossing Tabanovce - Presevo between North Macedonia and Serbia reduced waiting times and accelerated export, import and transit of goods. North Macedonia and Serbia were the first Western Balkans Regional Partners to establish joint border controls and ensure joint execution of border and customs formalities. The visit on 17 March 2022 with the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA) to Tabanovce-Presevo crossing together with the representatives of customs authorities of Greece, Serbia and North Macedonia was an opportunity to review the operations of the Systematic Electronic Exchange of Data (SEED). Electronic exchange of data has been implemented since 2010 and has enhanced management of the crossing points in the Western Balkans.



During the last EU-Western Balkans Summit in Slovenia in 2021, the leaders supported extension of Green Lanes to the borders between the EU and the Western Balkans and the visit was an important step towards realisation of this goal.

On 7 March 2022 in Podgorica, Transport Community organised a workshop aimed at providing guidance on legislation and procedures regarding customs controls on railway border crossings. Experts from Estonia, Poland and Romania shared the best practice from the EU and advised Regional Partners how to implement the rules in the Western Balkans. Joint rail border crossings in the region were cited as good examples of regional cooperation that lead to lower waiting times. Currently, the only functional joint rail border crossing is between Montenegro and Albania. Transport Community will continue supporting Regional Partners to apply the same model at other crossings in the region. Rail border agreements exist between Montenegro and Serbia, Serbia and North Macedonia, and North Macedonia and Kosovo\*, but the opening of joint rail stations in Bijelo Polje, Tabanovce and Hani i Elezit is still not taking place. Establishing additional joint rail crossings with improved customs procedures will serve the citizens and businesses and facilitate easier travel and commerce.

On 7 March 2022, Director Zakonjšek met in Sofia with the Bulgarian Minister of Transport and Communications Mr Nikolay Sabev for discussions how to improve connectivity between Bulgaria and the Western Balkans. Interlocutors reviewed progress on construction of essential transport links such as Rail Corridors VIII and X. Completion of the route from Serbia to



Bulgaria (Corridor X) and establishment of one-stop rail border crossing in Dimitrovgrad is expected to reduce border waiting time by 50%. Railway line between Skopje and the Bulgarian border (Corridor VIII) has been identified as one of key projects of European Commission's Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans. Corridor VIII is an essential east-west route, connecting the Albanian Adriatic port of Dures to the port of Varna via North Macedonia. Last year's Memorandum of Cooperation on the construction of sustainable infrastructure along Pan-European Corridor VIII was a sign of clear commitment to finalise this important project with the EU's support.



The 7<sup>th</sup> session of the **Road Technical Committee** was held in Podgorica on 10 March 2022. Participants reviewed implementation of Road Action Plan, technical assistance to Regional Partners and plans for the Road Summit in Tirana, which will be focused on safe, smart and sustainable roads of the future.

On the occasion of **International Women's Day** on 8 March 2022, Transport Community organised the conference "Women in transport: towards gender-balanced transport in the region". In her remarks, Deputy Director Ms Ljupska Siljanoska highlighted the importance of political support to empower women to join the transport sector. Promotion of education opportunities, giving greater visibility to employment in the transport sector and offering training and professional development were noted as necessary preconditions to encourage women's participation.

Meeting with the Director of Serbia's Traffic Safety Agency Mr Duško Pešić on 14 March 2022 was an opportunity to highlight importance of Serbia's membership in the EU's road safety statistics system CARE and to present Transport Community's **regional campaign to improve safety of level crossings in the region**. On the same day, we met with the Director of Serbia's Ports Governance Agency Mr Vuk Perović to discuss Danube and Sava River ports as a key enablers of sustainable transport, moving cargo from roads to inland waterways and **regional cooperation as precondition for modal shift**. On 17 March 2022, Transport Community representatives participated at the Traffic Solutions Expo in Novi Sad and presented the Overview on the TEN-T standards compliance of the Western Balkans rail network. In parallel with the construction of new rail lines, the maintenance of the existing network is a basic precondition for an efficient transport system which can facilitate steady development of the region's economy. The EU has been funding construction and upgrade of transport corridors in order to remove bottlenecks and promote sustainable and seamless transport. Promoted under the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) policy, the projects contribute to the completion of Core Network that will connect EU and the region.

The 15<sup>th</sup> **Regional Steering Committee** met on 15 March 2022 for discussions on TEN-T network extension, plans for the upcoming Ministerial Council in Pristina and the Road Summit in Tirana on 7 June 2022. During a visit to Brussels on 18 March 2022, Director Zakonjšek met with the Ambassador of Montenegro to EU Mr Petar Markovic with whom he discussed

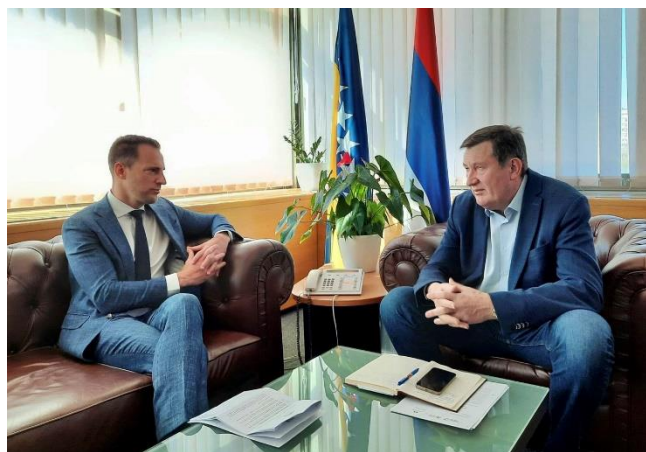


Montenegro's EU accession negotiations with focus on Chapters 14 Transport Policy and 21 Trans-European Networks. On 22 March 2022, Director Zakonjšek, participated as the speaker at the 46<sup>th</sup> International Road Conference CESTE in Rovinj. Zakonjšek addressed the participants and discussed the 2022 as the year of roads, emphasising the importance of sustainable and smart mobility, as well as importance of reliable data for improving the road safety in the region.

The 4<sup>th</sup> Transport Community **Budget Committee** meeting chaired by the European Commission met on 24 March 2022 to review the 2021 Annual Operational Report, selection of auditor for 2021 and 2022 accounts, 2021 budget execution and the budget outline for 2023.

At the Invest in Balkans regional meeting organised by the French Chamber of Commerce, Director Zakonjšek highlighted importance of green, digital investments in rail infrastructure as well as our organisation's focus on supporting projects which are part of the European Commission's Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans.

On April 7, the announcement was made of the opening of the **first priority truck lane dedicated to the Green Lanes in the Western Balkans at the border crossing Presevo -Tabanovce**. A sign “Open Balkan/Green Lanes/AEO” has been placed on the entry point of the border crossing. The priority lane is intended for CEFTA priority list of goods and it allows **priority passage of vehicles carrying this type of goods. Vehicles need to be appropriately marked in order to be able to use the lane**. Holders of Authorised Economic Operator authorisations (AEO) from Albania, North Macedonia, and Serbia, as well as economic operators (importers, exporters, transporters, freight-forwarders) from these three countries can use the priority lane. Another important milestone for connectivity in the Western Balkans was made possible with a strong regional commitment, streamlined coordination done by the leading three regional organisations (TCT, RCC, and CEFTA) and by endorsing joint proposals at the highest political level.



During a **visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina** on 19 April, Director Zakonjšek met in Sarajevo with the Minister of Communications and Transport of Mr Vojin Mitrović to discuss joint events planned for this year, regional connectivity and transport infrastructure projects in BiH connected to the European Commission's Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans. The meeting was an opportunity to review progress on infrastructure

projects on Corridor Vc – Svilaj, Gradiška bridge and associated border crossing with Croatia, as well as investments in railways. One of the joint initiatives planned for 2022 is the regional campaign aimed at raising awareness about dangers of level crossings. The campaign will be promoted with visibility events planned in all six Regional Partners.







On 19 April, Deputy Director Siljanoska opened a **regional working meeting in Belgrade dedicated to the opening of the Western Balkans railway market**. The meeting was an opportunity for participants from railway undertakings and institutions from Montenegro and Serbia to discuss how to advance the regional transport policy and contribute to building a sustainable rail transport systems in line with the EU standards.

Perspectives of the Common Regional Market & the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans were presented to Prime Ministers' sherpas during a meeting in Brussels on 20 April. Transport Community reiterated commitment to reducing the waiting times and increasing capacity at borders, as well as to capacity building and extending the Green Lanes to borders with the EU.



Regional Cooperation Council



On 20 April, the European Maritime Safety Agency hosted the Transport Community's **2nd meeting of the Technical Committee on Waterborne Transport and Multimodality**. Development of waterborne transport, in parallel with rail remains a priority for the Western Balkans in efforts to contribute to greening of freight transport.

During the month of April, the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat continued **collaborating with regional organisations on joint initiatives**. Synergies are essential for effective capacity building assistance in the Western Balkans. On 15 April, we discussed the possibilities for cooperation with the new Director of the Regional School for Public Administration (ReSPA) Director Maja Handjiska-Trendafilova and her team.







The highlight event of May was the Transport Community Ministerial Council, which took place on 18 May in Pristina where the ministers in charge of transport met for discussions on the **extension of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) to the Western Balkans**. Transport Community's Five-year rolling work plan for the development of the indicative TEN-T extension was endorsed at the Ministerial Council. The document highlights importance of regionally coordinated projects that will help

the region achieve transition to an integrated transport network and better connect the regional transport market with the EU's. A day before the Ministerial Council, Transport Community delegation visited the main train station as well as construction site Miradi with Minister Liburn Aliu. This EU co-funded project, key point on rail Route X, will mean improved connections for more passengers and freight, shift to rail and better regional connectivity with North Macedonia and Serbia.

**Road Summit in Tirana on 7 June "Shaping the future: safe, smart and sustainable roads"** is a Minister-level event, organised jointly by the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat, the European Investment Bank (EIB), and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) will focus on safe infrastructure for road users, Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) and innovative solutions for green mobility, climate proofing of road networks and deployment of emission zero fuels. On 19 May, the Five Year Work Plan was presented to the Western Balkans Investment Framework (WBIF) financiers group in Belgrade, where it was highlighted the importance of regionally coordinated



infrastructure projects that will help Western Balkans achieve an integrated transport network and better connect the regional transport market with the EU. On 9 May, **Europe Day**, with Macedonian Ministers of Interior and Transport, Oliver Spasovski and Blagoj Bocvarski, in the transport high school "Vlado Tasevski" in Skopje **the level crossings awareness raising campaign was launched** that specifically targets youth and highlights importance of road safety at intersections of roads and railways in the region.

The marking of Europe Day continued in Ohrid, where 2nd meeting of the Western Balkans Railway Infrastructure Managers Network was organised. The meeting focused on future opportunities for education and possibilities for establishing regional center of excellence to support region's administrative capacity building. In a separate meeting with the Ohrid Harbour Captain Goran Ustijanowski, Director Zakonjšek discussed alignment EU legislation for waterborne transport and tourist potential of Lake Ohrid, one of the oldest European lakes.

**Productive cooperation with regional partner Montenegro** was main topic of courtesy meeting with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Capital Investments Ervin Ibrahimović on 13 May in Podgorica. Interlocutors discussed flagship infrastructure projects in Montenegro such as rail routes Bar-Belgrade and Tirana-Podgorica, roads Sarajevo-Podgorica and Budva bypass, policy reforms in chapters 14 and 21, as well as Montenegro's upcoming Presidency of Transport Community's Regional Steering Committee.



On 11 May in Sarajevo, the Transport Community organised **3rd Social Forum** and for the first time included **workshop on social dialogue** focused on road transport, which will serve as guideline for the Regional Partners in Western Balkans to engage further with all stakeholders. The Minister of Communications and Transport of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Vojin Mitrović, opened the **Social Forum** together with Director Zakonjšek, who noted that for the Transport Community it is a matter of priority to improve working conditions for all modes of transport. Social Forum conclusions can be found at:

<https://www.transport-community.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Social-Forum-Conclusions.pdf>

Our focus on social issues was reiterated in Transport Community's May Day message focused on advocating for improved staff safety, managing the ageing work force and recruiting young people. To emphasise the **constructive role of young people** not only in transport, but in all spheres of life, we met on 20 May with the **Young European Ambassadors**. During the **EU Year of Youth**, Transport Community will continue reaching out to youth across the region and advocating for young people's access to reliable information to make informed choices concerning environmental and climate change, areas in which transport plays a crucial role.



At the European Council COWEB meeting held on 5 May in Brussels, Transport Community's role in **bringing Western Balkans closer to EU was presented**, with focus on investments in flagship projects and transport policy reforms.

**6th session of committee on Transport of Dangerous Goods** was held on 19 May in Skopje. Participants discussed implementation of Directive 2008/68/EC, enforcement in Western Balkans of road transport of dangerous goods rules according to Directive 95/50/EC and the upcoming workshop in Romania.

As core port of extended TEN-T network towards Western Balkans, WB Port of Durres and Port of Bar are expected to comply with key performance indicators of TEN-T. To address a key challenge in this process - availability of alternative clean fuels – Transport Community organised a **workshop hosted by the Piraeus Port Authority** on 20 May.





During the 23 May European Rail Supply Industry Association (UNIFE) **web event dedicated to rail integration through investments and reform**, Director Zakonjšek noted Transport Community's focus on upcoming flagship rail projects and took stock of the ongoing extension of Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) to Western Balkans.

Since the start of covid pandemic, 2 million trucks crossed Western Balkans Green Lanes. This milestone was marked with the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) and the Central European Free Trade Agreement as jointly we continue working on reducing waiting times & removing barriers to trade. Take a look at the video produced on this occasion: <https://bit.ly/3wAp5li>



On 25 May in Vienna, at the invitation of the Austrian Federal Railways (ÖBB) and the Austrian Federal Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology (BMK), hosted by the South East Europe Strategic Alliance for Rail Innovation (SEESARI), Transport Community presented 5-year work plan for bringing rail back on track in Western Balkans and highlighted innovation as key element of efficient and modern railway. The **SEE Digital Automatic Coupling Forum "Delivering Digital Automatic Coupling in Europe – transformation of rail freight"**

addressed the importance of introduction of Digital Automatic Coupling (DAC) in entire Europe by 2030.

**Technical assistance projects for connectivity reforms** in Western Balkans were presented on 27 May from Transport Community Headquarters. "Greening" of transport in line with our Sustainable Mobility Strategy for the Western Balkans, modernisation of road border crossings and intelligent transport systems (ITS) strategies for Regional Partners are in focus of currently ongoing technical assistance projects financed by European Union through the CONNECTA instrument.

On 15 May, Transport Community team proudly joined #TeamEurope and participated in this year's Belgrade Marathon.



At the **Western Balkans Road Summit** held in Tirana on 7 June, ministers in charge of transport signed the “Dedication to Roads of the Future”, committing to a number of priorities including to set in place road maintenance systems, rehabilitate the existing infrastructure, work together on e-tolling interoperability, increase safety and build



e-charging stations across the region. The summit, which was organised in cooperation with the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), and under the auspices of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy of Albania, gathered ministers from the Western Balkans, representatives of the European Commission and practitioners of road sector for **discussions on how to create a climate resilient, intelligent, and resource-efficient road network in the Western Balkans.**

The region demonstrated dedication to development of a sustainable road transport network, while at the same time promoting green mobility, climate proofing of road networks and deployment of emission zero fuels. Building of safe infrastructure and protection of road users remain a priority as we continue working with Regional Partners to on adopting the “Vision Zero” perspective and the “Safe System” approach. In practice this means identifying the most dangerous sections of the road network and increasing the safety of level crossings where 59% of fatal and serious accidents happen in the region. To tackle this issue, **Transport Community developed a public awareness campaign for improving safety of rail/road intersections** that targets a wider audience via dedicated events, social media campaign and printed materials. The campaign received significant attention from our partners at the European Commission on International Level Crossing Awareness Day on 9 June and was selected as flagship initiative for promotion on the day: [https://road-safety.transport.ec.europa.eu/news-events/news/european-commission-marks-international-level-crossing-awareness-day-2022-06-09\\_en](https://road-safety.transport.ec.europa.eu/news-events/news/european-commission-marks-international-level-crossing-awareness-day-2022-06-09_en)



The campaign was officially launched in Bosnia and Herzegovina on 21 June at the **annual Summer School of Transport Community focused on roads.** The Summer School, which took place on 21 – 24 June in Sarajevo, was co-organised with the Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA) and the International Road Federation (IRF) and officially opened by the Minister of Communications and Transport Mr Vojin Mitrović. The Summer School offered participants from the Western Balkans an opportunity to gain knowledge about latest development at the EU and regional level specifically focusing on safe, smart and sustainable roads.



Another important event organised by the Transport Community in June was a three-day **workshop in Skopje on roadside checks** on 29 June – 1 July. Together with the Polish Road Transport Inspectorate, the Embassy of Poland in Skopje and with support of the Macedonian Ministry of Transport and Communications, we organised a training which consisted of theoretical part covering the EU acquis on tachographs and technical conditions of vehicles, and



the practical part during which the Polish Road Transport Inspectorate demonstrated the roadside check at the tolling station Petrovec close to Skopje. This workshop is the second one in a row organised for Regional Partners from Albania, Kosovo<sup>10\*</sup>, and North Macedonia, after a successful event in Serbia in December 2021 for participants from Serbia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Roadside inspections allow us to identify and remove from traffic the vehicles that are malfunctioning, detect drivers and operators who do not possess the appropriate qualifications and documentation. To prevent these issues, there is a need for strengthening the capacities and knowledge of the inspectorates in the region. At the **International Road Federation Conference “Vision Zero for Balkans”** on 1 June in Sofia, we highlighted the importance of establishing a system in which road crashes do not result in serious injuries or loss of life and the importance of cross-border cooperation on road corridors, as well as reliable data for development of effective road safety policies. On 10 June, Transport Community delegation took part in a train ride organised in Pristina as part of Kosovo Sustainable Development Week. Together with government and representatives of dip corps, we spoke about the need for a common strategy for making transport greener and sustainable, including electrified regional railways as the best way for the decarbonisation of transport. At this year's **European Development Days** on 21 June, Director Zakonjšek joined the European Commissioner Adina Valean, Foreign Minister of Gambia H.E Mamadou Tangara and Executive Director at the International Trade Center Pamela Coke-



Hamilton at a high-level panel on sustainable and smart corridors. Predefined, multimodal and multi-regional transport corridors were highlighted as a key for sustainable economic development and social cohesion. At the **Western Balkans ministerial meeting** organised in Lyon as part of Connecting Europe Days 2022, our organisation's presentation on 29 June focused on the newly proposed European Transport Corridor – Western Balkans – and the corridor's benefits to the region in terms of connectivity and access to the EU market. To coincide with the Road Summit in Tirana, we organised two technical committee meetings – on road safety and roads on 6 June. At the **Regional Steering Committee meeting** held a day after the summit we presented the ongoing technical assistance projects, an outline of the 2023 budget and a mid-year report on our activities.





On 4 July, Transport Community organised a three-fold event at the Port of Bar. We **launched our road safety campaign “It’s a Thin Line”**, marked the **handover of Transport Community presidency from Kosovo to Montenegro** and celebrated **Port of Bar’s joining the European Sea Ports Organisation as observers**. Last year in Montenegro, five persons lost their lives and nine were seriously injured on level crossings. To tackle this issue, we are raising awareness in Western Balkans about the dangers of the improper crossing of railways. Regional campaign “It’s a Thin Line”, which aims to increase the safety of intersections of railways and roads, was launched in Montenegro after successful events in North Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. In addition to raising awareness, the Transport Community is supporting its

six Regional Partners to improve the infrastructure, procure safety equipment and install proper signaling on level crossings in Western Balkans. The campaign includes animated videos, flyers for drivers and students, and a video currently being shown on TV stations across the region. Together with the Minister of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Liburn Aliu we launched the campaign in Pristina at Fushë Kosova/Kosovo Polje on 5 July. On 1 July, we **concluded a three-day workshop in Skopje on roadside checks**. Together with the Polish



Road Transport Inspectorate, the Embassy of Poland in Skopje and with support of the Macedonian Ministry of Transport and Communications, we organised a training which consisted of theoretical part covering the EU acquis on tachographs and technical conditions of vehicles, and the practical part during which the Polish Road Transport Inspectorate demonstrated the roadside check at the tolling station Petrovec close to Skopje.



The first Green Lane border crossing between Western Balkans and the EU became functional between Greece and North Macedonia, thanks to the SEED+ System for Electronic Exchange of Data. On 7 July, customs representatives of two countries signed a Memorandum of Understanding at the Thessaloniki Connectivity Forum, organised by the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This cooperation opens the possibilities for further **expansion of the Green Lanes initiative to other EU Member States**. “The first operational Green Lane between the EU and the



Western Balkans is a crowning achievement of two years of coordinated actions of numerous stakeholders, in line with the commitments made at the EU-Western Balkans summit in Brdo pri Kranju. By establishing the Green Lanes within the entire region first, and then on borders with the EU, we are bringing the region closer to the EU. This kind of crossings are a steppingstone to even better managed borders, decrease of waiting times for passengers and freight, and the one-stop-go approach at all our borders. This concept can and should be applied to other border crossings with the EU and I would like to encourage more EU Member States to join,” Director Zakonjšek was quoted as saying at the event in Thessaloniki. The **second workshop within CONNECTA’s sub-project ‘Technical Assistance for the Deployment of Smart and Sustainable Mobility in the Western Balkans’** was held in Belgrade on 6 July. The event was attended by the representatives of the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat, the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy of Albania, the Albanian Institute of Transport, the Albanian Agency for Energy Efficiency, the Ministry of Transport and Communications of North Macedonia, the Public Enterprise for State Roads of North Macedonia, the Ministry of

Construction, Transport, and Infrastructure of Serbia, the Public Enterprise *Roads of Serbia* and the representative of the Charge&GO company. July 22 **visit to integrated border crossing Tabanovce/Preševo**, was an opportunity to highlight the role of joint border crossings in reducing waiting times at borders in Western Balkans. Together with Minister of Transport and Communications of North Macedonia Blagoj Bochvarski and Minister of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure of Serbia Tomislav Momirovic, Transport Community delegation reiterated that all border crossings in the region should become integrated in order to increase capacity and reduce waiting times. On 21 July, Director Matej Zakonjšek **met with the Executive Director of the Shift2Rail Joint Undertaking Carlo Borghini** to discuss role of innovation and research as an opportunity for rail in Western Balkans to advance to modern future. High-capacity, flexible, multimodal, sustainable, reliable and integrated railway system in Europe for passengers and cargo is a joint priority of our two organisations.



1 September - 16 days to go until the **European Mobility Week!** The European Mobility Week is the **European Commission's** flagship awareness-raising campaign on sustainable urban mobility. It encourages behavioural change in favor of active mobility, public transport and other clean, intelligent transport solutions. The annual 2022 theme is **'Better connections'**. With more towns and cities joining each year, the campaign continues to drive Europe, and beyond, toward sustainable urban mobility. Last year 55 cities and towns in the Western Balkans participated at the European Mobility. Towns and cities can register their permanent measure, sustainable mobility activity or a car free day here: <https://mobilityweek.eu/register-for-mobilityweek/>. The Transport Community Permanent Secretariat will also move sustainably in September. **Stay tuned for news on the first green employee of the month!**



On 30 August, Director Zakonjšek participated in the **Bled Strategic Forum 2022: The rule of power or the power of rules?** ([www.bledstrategicforum.org](http://www.bledstrategicforum.org)), a platform that gathered participants from various fields with diverse knowledge who exchanged views and seek innovative solutions to contemporary and future political, security, strategic and developmental challenges. Director Zakonjšek took part in the panel discussion **"Sustainable business models: From theory to action"** together with other prominent panellists from automotive industry, innovation technology companies and sustainable business networks.

On 18 August, the Transport Community Secretariat representatives met in Niš their counterparts from the **Faculty of Mechanical Engineering** as a follow-up of the ongoing cooperation between both institutions. The hosts presented latest achievements and ongoing innovation project results mostly related to the railway automatisisation process. During the meeting, both parties discussed details of the forthcoming **International Rail Conference (RAILCON 2022)**, which will be held in Niš this autumn where the latest railway system related results will be shown.







The Transport Community continues with activities aimed at emphasising the importance of rail safety, particularly when it comes to level crossings. Level crossings equipment, their operational condition and maintenance, adherence to road signalisation by vehicle users, marking of level crossings with proper road signalisation, the triangle of visibility, and density of road traffic can all affect the safety of the level crossings. Alongside the media campaign on the safety of the level crossings, the Transport Community Secretariat has prepared an analysis to prioritise the level crossings for their future

improvement based on the risks they carry. Based on that, the Regional Partners can improve the safety level by investing in safety equipment or denivelation.

From 24 until 25 August 2022, Transport Community Permanent Secretariat was visited by European Agency for Railways representative. These two days were used for discussions related to the cooperation between both organisations on possibility for creation of a railway training centre of excellence, further cooperation between national investigation bodies and rail transport of dangerous goods.

Staff working document of the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat, *Strategy for sustainable and smart mobility in the Western Balkans* is providing the Western Balkans region with a roadmap for decarbonisation and digitalisation of its transport sector (<https://www.transport-community.org/strategy-for-sustainable-and-smart-mobility-in-the-western-balkans-2/>). In line with this, Permanent Secretariat undertook activities to support developments of the Western Balkans region with providing several technical assistances:



**Technical Assistance for the Deployment of smart and sustainable mobility in the Western Balkans**, consisting of two components, both aiming to support the Smart and Sustainable mobility in all Western Balkans. The results of the project shall quantify the costs and the effects of measures, which will help implementation of the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy for the Western Balkans and a strategic framework for the deployment of e-charging stations in the Western Balkans. The activities are expected to be completed in the course of 2023.

The **Technical assistance for deployment of e - freight in Western Balkans and implementation of the Regulation (EU) 2020/1056 on electronic freight transport information** is setting the basis in achieving an interoperable electronic freight information exchange system and enabling wider use of digital technologies for fulfilling regulatory information requirements. As a result, administrative burden for logistics operators will be reduced, and multimodal transport facilitated. This technical assistance is expected to present the best practice examples of the European Union institutional and legal framework, further analyse the state of play of the Regional Partners and develop a gap analysis, assess the economic and environmental impacts and propose implementation plan for gradual deployment of e-freight Regulation within the Western Balkans region. The activities are expected to be completed by the end of 2022.

The **Technical assistance for baseline assessment and financial implications to e-tolling interoperability across the Western Balkans** is aimed at supporting the Regional Parties by reaching two objectives: to fulfil the obligations derived from the Transport Community Treaty related to Road User Charging of the Road Infrastructure (RUC and to enable E-toll interoperability in the region in a way that a road user can travel seamlessly in the whole region. This technical assistance will provide assessment of the current systems, identify gaps, analyse strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of e-tolling interoperability in Western Balkans and give best practices from EU, and develop assessment on the impact of a Common e-tolling framework in the Western Balkans. The activities are in the final stage and the results will be presented in the *'Effective Road Charging Strategies on a region on the Move'* Conference to take place in Belgrade on 5 and 6 October 2022, back to back with Road Technical Committee and Tolling interoperability stakeholder group.

Transport Community Permanent Secretariat continues with actions aimed at removing non-physical barriers along the main transport and trade corridors across the Western Balkans and linking Western Balkans to EU Member States as well as supporting actions, which will lead to reducing physical barriers with modernization and capacity improvements of the crossing points and improving the border management, with a view of establishing one stop controls. This is exactly the aim of the ongoing CONNECTA TA for preparation of technical documentation (design) for two BCPs on the extended TEN-T Network in the Western Balkans (Hani i Hotit/Bozaj between Albania-Montenegro, and Hani i Elezit/Blace between Kosovo and North Macedonia). The main outcome of this activity which is expected to be completed by end March 2023, are prepared designs for physical interventions (engineering works) and tender specifications for procurement of equipment to be installed and made operational on the selected border points.

The **Technical assistance for capacity building in management and operations of the border crossing points along the indicative TEN-T Network in the Western Balkans** aims to support completion of the legal framework for the Regional Participants for introducing joint or one stop control systems at the road and rail BCPs, and to assist them in setting the appropriate institutional framework. In parallel, intention is to increase the capacities of the central bodies and of the border agencies in performing joint border controls with specific, tailored- made trainings. This activity is expected to be completed by end of 2022 and as a result of it, it is expected that in 2023 bilateral agreements shall be signed and a few BCP pairs are set to operate as joint BCPs with joint controls being performed.



A **Workshop on enforcement of road transport of dangerous goods rules** will be held in Bucharest, Romania, on 5-7 September 2022. The representatives of the Ministries and the inspection officers from the Regional Partners will benefit from an exchange of experience organized in cooperation with the State Inspectorate for Road Transport Control and the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure in Romania bearing upon the implementation of the Council Directive 95/50/EC of 6 October 1995 on uniform procedures for checks on the transport of dangerous goods by road.





During the **European Mobility Week 16–22 September**, the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat participated and supported activities in the three cities, Sarajevo, Podgorica, Elbasan in the Western Balkans that are part of the EU Mission for 100 climate-neutral and smart cities by 2030. On 18 September in **Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina** TCT Secretariat delegation took part in the traditional Giro di Sarajevo cycling event. We joined hundreds of cyclists who rode through the city to promote sustainable transport and Sarajevo as a bike-friendly city.

Participation in the EU programme Missions for 100 climate neutral and smart cities by 2030 will give Sarajevo an opportunity to improve cycling infrastructure that will lower CO2 emissions and reduce air pollution in the city.

In **Podgorica, Montenegro** on 19 September in the panel titled “Sustainable mobility in Podgorica”, organised by the EU Delegation in Montenegro, Director of TCT Secretariat Zakonjšek spoke about the Smart and Sustainable Mobility Strategy in the Western Balkans and its implications for promoting sustainable urban mobility at the local level. An engaging debate followed after the panel that underlined that cyclists need a modern public transport network such as cycling lanes, charging stations, park+ride options. The last stop was **Elbasan**, Albania’s fourth largest city. TCT Secretariat delegation met with the Mayor, Mr Gledian Llatja, with whom issues on cycling and safe bike lanes were discussed. The meeting discussion brought attention to the need to create better cycling infrastructure especially for the youngest citizens. Mayor and TCT Director after the meeting participated in the race on bicycles with enthusiastic young cyclists.



On 5-7 September, supported by Romanian partners at the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure, TCT Secretariat organised a **workshop dedicated to enforcement of road transport of dangerous goods (TDG) for six Regional Partners from the Western Balkans**. The need for proper controls of transport of goods that can pose dangers was highlighted as essential for safety of people, property and environment. On the second day of training, Romanian petrol producing company Petrom OMV

offered the participants invaluable practical demonstration of targeted check of tanks carrying the most frequently transported dangerous goods – benzene, diesel and GPL.



On 27 September, Deputy Director Ljupka Siljanoska met in Warsaw with the Deputy Minister Rafal Weber at the headquarters of the Polish Ministry of Infrastructure. This opportunity was used to **thank Poland for providing expert support to the Western**

**Balkans** Regional Partners on road transport inspections and discuss the possibilities for further streamlined cooperation. The visit in Warsaw was used as well to take part in the celebration of the 20. anniversary of the Polish State Inspectorate, which provided expert support to two regional trainings of road inspectors of the Western Balkans.



On 9 September, the customs representatives of Albania, Montenegro and Italy signed in Rome the Memorandums of Understanding on the electronic data exchange. By **establishing CEFTA-TCT Green Lanes within the Western Balkans**, and then on borders with the EU, the **region is getting closer to the EU**. Extending the concept to seas and establishing the first **“Blue Lane”** aims to **bolster multimodal transport and trade flows between the region**

**and the EU**. This cooperation will serve not only Albania and Montenegro, but also other Western Balkans partners that will use ports in Albania and Montenegro for trade. Establishment of the IT infrastructure is ongoing, and it is expected that the system will be operational in autumn.

Ports of Durres and Bar should become multimodal, green transportation nodes of the region connecting economies and people. For this to happen, modern rail links are essential. Potential of region's port to be drivers of growth and sustainable development was discussed at this year's **Tirana Connectivity Forum 26-28 September**, an event in which TCT Secretariat now traditionally takes an active part.

In September, TCT Secretariat organised joint workshops, one at the Karakaj/Mali Zvornik and Kotroman/Vardiste border crossing points between Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina and one at Hani i Hotit/Bozaj between Albania and Montenegro. With that TCT Secretariat continues to support the Western Balkans partners to **improve the situation at region's borders** with joint controls, use of digital instruments and better communication of border agencies. One-stop border crossings in addition to updated and modern infrastructure will improve efficiency of border agencies and reduce formalities. On **22 September** in Ulcinj, Montenegro, **11th meeting of Transport facilitation technical committee took place**.

**13th session of Technical committee on railways** was organised in Tirana on 21 September to discuss implementation of Rail Action Plan, TEN-T Progress Report, safety of level crossings in the region and activities planned until end of 2022.



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. In his opening remarks, Director Zakonjšek 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 initiated separate **meetings in Budapest** on 18 October with **representatives of the ministries of Innovation and Technology and Foreign Affairs** to discuss TCT priorities such as 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.

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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.

**Progress on construction of rail Corridor VIII** continued in October. Transport Community delegation attended inauguration of works on sections Tirana – Durres and Kumanovo – Bulgarian border.







The **6<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Council** of the Transport Community took place in Brussels on 15 November, hosted by the European Commission. The Commissioner for Transport Adina Vălean welcomed the Western Balkans ministers in charge of transport, representatives of the EU Member States and ministers in charge of transport from Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, for the **endorsement of the Joint Statement on closer association** to the

Transport Community. Establishing closer cooperation in the transport sector between the European Union, the Western Balkans and Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine is an important step further in development of international transport in Europe that will improve the efficiency and safety of transport, and achieve the objectives of green and sustainable mobility. Western Balkans ministers endorsed the [Second Progress Report on the Implementation of Transport Community Action Plans and the EU Acquis](#), as well as the [Second Annual Report on the Development of indicative TEN-T extensions of the Comprehensive and Core Network in Western Balkans](#), which monitors development of transport infrastructure in the region and provides a forecast of developments expected by 2027. The day before, the Regional Steering Committee of the Transport Community met in Brussels for the 17<sup>th</sup> time.

On 2 November, the **TCT delegation met with the newly appointed Minister** of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure of Serbia Mr Goran Vesić. Discussions focused on upcoming policy reforms as well as progress on projects on the TENT network, especially those which are part of the European Commission's Economic and Investment Plan for Western Balkans. On the occasion of the 55th jubilee of the Macedonian Road Association, Director Zakonjšek delivered **remarks at the Road Congress in Skopje** focusing on the significance of the indicative TEN-T network in the region and the plans to develop the network in line with the applicable EU standards. During November, two important events focused on railway system improvement were organised: **Western Balkans Rail Innovation Workshop** on 8 November in Niš and the **TAIEX workshop on the 4<sup>th</sup> Railways Package** on 15–16 November in Tirana. The Western Balkans Rail Innovation Workshop was



organised by the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat, Europe's Rail Joint Undertakings (JU), and the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering. The intention was to promote innovative solutions applicable to the railway

system, to make rail more attractive, user-friendly, and competitive. The first part of the workshop was devoted to the Digital Automatic Coupling, and the second to SMART2 – automatic detection of obstacles on rail. Digital Automatic Coupling (DAC) is an innovative component that is key to enabling the needed increase in efficiency of rail freight for automatically coupling and decoupling the rolling stock in a freight train both physically and digitally. The event gathered more than 70 participants from universities, public institutions, rail companies and industries from the region and the EU. The participants agreed - in parallel with infrastructure construction, the region should focus on innovative solutions in order to advance to the next phase of development.

The **TAIEX workshop** on 15-16 November in Tirana was devoted to the 4th Railways Package. One of the primary tasks for all Regional Partners and the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat is the transposition and implementation of the EU Acquis and the Secretariat is dedicated to facilitating this process in the region. To fulfil all preconditions set in the Transport Community Treaty, all Regional Partners should recognise the rail documents issued by the other parties. That includes safety certificates, operating licenses, vehicle permits, and train driver's licences. Meeting all requirements as set in the Transport Community Treaty will require additional efforts by the Regional Partners, and the workshop was a step forward in achieving these goals.

During a visit to Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA) HQ on 16 November, we announced the **Connectivity Summit** to be organised in 2023 focusing on transport facilitation.

Priority projects and policy reforms are key for cutting transport emissions and adapting to climate change in the Western Balkans, Director Zakonjšek noted in his **remarks at the “EU at COP27”** side event at the UN Climate Change Conference on 17 November.



Deputy Director Ljupka Siljanoska kicked off the **Start-up Weekend Western Balkans** edition focused on mobility on 18 November in Pristina. The regional event was led by the Innovation Centre Kosovo\* during the 2022 Global Entrepreneurship Week and was supported by the Transport Community. Under the theme “Smart and sustainable mobility. Better connectivity.” participants looked to foster synergies between people,

places and the environment. The event gathered 100 participants who addressed the pressing challenges in reducing transport emissions, better passenger access and interconnectivity between modes. The front runners of this year’s hackathon were Bisha Studio, Supernova and Metroshare. Bisha Studio developed an application to better utilise private and public parking spaces in the major cities of the region, Supernova developed an application for micromobility with the reward system (digital currency) and Metrosahre developed an application for carsharing for students.

On 20 November, we marked the **World Day of Remembrance** for road traffic victims by participating in events in Pristina and Belgrade. This year’s theme of the World Day of Remembrance put the spotlight on Justice. TCT representatives noted in their remarks that traffic law enforcement, investigation after a crash and civil





compensation are part of the system of justice that needs to be strengthened in order to provide better support for road traffic victims and victims' families.

On 22 November, Director Zakonjšek spoke at a **panel organised by the French-Serbian Chamber of Commerce** to offer insights on safe and sustainable transport systems and the Secretariat's focus on integration of region's transport markets, adoption of the EU

legislation and sustainable infrastructure projects.

As a part of the regional project implemented by CONNECTA, a **two-day workshop was organised in Tirana** on 22 – 23 November focused on smart, green and resilient mobility, specifically on assessing the impact and prioritising the measures in the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy for the Western Balkans and mapping and setting the e-charging stations along the TEN-T corridors were also presented at the workshop.

On 24-25 November, Transport Community Permanent Secretariat representative participated in the **annual conference organised by the European Commission to mark the International Day of Persons with Disabilities**. This 2-day event brought together more than 400 policy-makers, high-level experts and disability advocates. The wide participation of persons with disabilities allowed for hearing of their concerns and aspirations and establishing a dialogue with public authorities and other stakeholders.

At the **EU Strategy for the Danube Region conference**, which took place in Ljubljana on 28 November, TCT delegation shared perspectives about the potential of transport in the Western Balkans to reduce energy consumption. **Capacity building** exercise in Zagreb organised in cooperation with our Croatian partners on 30 November, **focused on traffic control centres and ITS deployment in the Western Balkans**. With partners, Transport Community is working on addressing green and digital transition of transport, better management of road infrastructure and improving road safety.

At a **high-level workshop dedicated to road safety** on 30 November in Skopje, Director Zakonjšek noted Transport Community's support for establishment of the Road Safety Agency in North Macedonia and the need for strong road safety management. Speaking at the **Shift 2 Rail Joint Undertaking's governing board meeting**, Transport Community Permanent Secretariat representative highlighted opportunities for cooperation with our organisation - Digital Automatic Coupling (DAC) for rail freight in Western Balkans, track monitoring train for the region and the establishment of the regional Railway Centre of Rail Excellence.



On 9 December, Transport Community reached another important milestone of 2022. With the signing of Memorandum of Understanding by customs administrators of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Montenegro, **Green Lanes with the European Union were further extended.** The initiative for extending Green Lanes towards EU Member States began in July this year with the establishment of the electronic exchange of data between North Macedonia and Greece and continued with

establishment of Blue Lanes between Albania, Montenegro and Italy in September. The signing of the latest Memorandum of Understanding enabled speeding up of customs procedures and other formalities at crossings between Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Montenegro. This represents a steppingstone to even better managed borders and will decrease waiting times for transport of freight. The Transport Community will continue supporting all parties to further extend the Green Lanes. During the **meeting with Serbia's Minister of Trade Tomislav Momirović**, it was agreed that trucks and cars wait too long at the border crossings and that further efforts need to be made to reduce waiting times and increase capacity of BCP. **Extension of Green Lanes to all borders between EU and the Western Balkans and establishment of one-stop crossings**, would reduce the waiting times. On 8 December, Director Matej Zakonjšek participated in the **expert panel** organised by the Central European Initiative in Brussels to share insights on our work in Western Balkans to enhance connectivity, facilitate border procedures and drive the region's economic development.

Transport Community welcomed the [agreement](#) reached on 5 December by the Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council (Transport), enabling the EU to build a sustainable and smart trans-European transport network (TEN-T). With the decision, the **first Western Balkans European Transport Corridor** got a step closer to becoming reality. Through inland waterways and roads, rail freight and passengers, ports and airports, and rail-road terminals, it will connect seven European Union member states (Bulgaria, Greece, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Austria and Slovenia) with the Western Balkans into one region. Unequivocal support for connectivity was expressed also at the **EU – Western Balkans Summit** in Tirana. It was the first time the meeting was held in the region. European leaders welcomed the progress made on key connectivity projects and will continue supporting Western Balkans partners in advancing the twelve newly approved investment projects.





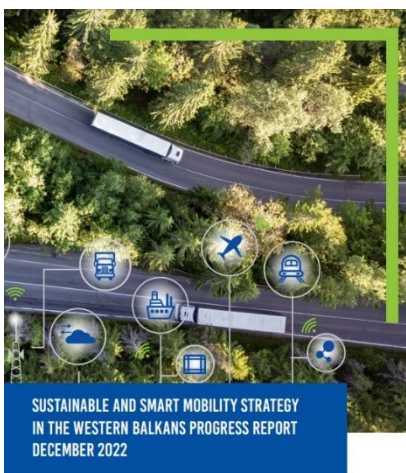


In December, the Secretariat organised in Brussels a series of technical committees. The first, **technical committee on railway**, met on 1 December for productive talks on plans for next year, including the Digital Automatic Coupling for rail freight in Western Balkans and the rail track monitoring train that would inspect the state of region's railways. Important discussions with road safety experts took place on 6 December during the **road safety technical committee**. The discussion reflected on the progress regarding implementation of the action plan on road safety in the Western Balkans. The Commission gave a state of play of planned proposals to revise rules on driving licenses, the cross-border enforcement of road traffic rules, and

vehicle roadworthiness. The partners from the Western Balkans also had the opportunity to **visit the Belgian road safety institute, VIAS**, for an introduction to its knowledge institute and a hands-on introduction to its work in assessing medical fitness to drive, adherence to drink-driving rules, and the testing of helmets. On 14-16 December in Antwerp, the Secretariat organised a joint meeting of **technical committees on transport of dangerous goods and waterborne transport and multimodality**, as well as a meeting on electronic freight transport information. The aim of the meetings was to ensure cross-sectoral cooperation in order to stimulate integrative thinking in the administrations of the Regional Partners based on the Belgian model. Antwerp, as one of the biggest ports in the EU, presented its current flagship projects for development and research. Site visits to the port were organised, as well as discussions with Belgian experts.

On 21 December, Transport Community delegation participated in **a study visit on digital tachographs in Slovenia** for sharing of best practices on the preparation of smart tachographs for better working and safer conditions in the road transport sector.

Transport Community's **cooperation with Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine** officially began with introductory meetings on 7 December (with Moldovan Deputy Prime Minister Andrei Spiniu), 14 December (with Georgian Deputy Minister Guram Guramishvili) and 22 December (with Director at Ukrainian Ministry of Infrastructure Iryna Kucheruk). The meetings set the course for alignment of three countries' transport legislation to that of the EU, efficient and safe transport and connectivity projects.



Regional Steering Committee of the Transport Community met in Belgrade and online on 15 December. In addition to important discussions about the 2022 budget, three reports produced by the Secretariat were presented:

- [Sustainable and Smart Mobility – Progress Report](#)
- [Sustainable and Smart Mobility – Progress Report](#)
- [Report on Dangerous Goods](#)
- [Report on Dangerous Goods](#)
- [Report on Level Crossings Safety](#)
- [Report on Level Crossings Safety](#)
- [Report on Passenger Rights and Accessibility](#)
- [Report on Passenger Rights and Accessibility](#)

The meeting was also an opportunity to **welcome the observing participants Ukraine, Republic of Moldova and Georgia as we look ahead to new connectivity opportunities and challenges in 2023! Happy Holidays!**