



The **6th 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 17th 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 4th 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, Kosovo*. 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 Metroshare 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.



* 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.

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, we reiterated our organisation'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.