

**17th Regional Steering Committee meeting
14 November 2022, Brussels, Hotel NH Brussels EU Berlaymont
Minutes and Conclusions**

1. 17th Regional Steering Committee (RSC) meeting was held on 14 November 2022, in a hybrid form (participation in person and online).
2. Most of the RSC members were present during the meeting with Bosnia and Herzegovina participating online.
3. The meeting was chaired by Chair of the Regional Steering Committee, Ms Emina Mujevic Kara of Montenegrin Presidency and Co-Chair, Ms Mona Björklund, Director of the Policy Coordination Directorate (DG MOVE)
4. Agenda of the 17th RSC meeting was adopted.

POLICY

5.	<p>Endorsement of the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat's Annual Work Program for the year 2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Transport Community Permanent Secretariat (TCT Secretariat) presented the 2023 Annual Work Programme. The Annual Work Programme reflects the TCT Secretariat's milestones and planned activities for each mode of transport in 2023. Additional focus will be put on border-related issues by organising a Summit on Cross-Border Connectivity in the first half of 2023 in Montenegro. The Summit will serve as a platform for improving border management and traffic capacity within the Western Balkans as well as between the Western Balkans and the neighbouring EU Member States. For the upcoming Connectivity Summit in 2023, EU member states bordering Western Balkans should be invited and encouraged to take part in it. In 2023, the TCT Secretariat will continue providing targeted support to the authorities in the Western Balkans to tackle maintenance-related issues for road and rail infrastructure as well as to continue work on the extension of Green Lanes to WB6-EU MS borders and development of one-stop-shops (joint border controls) in the Western Balkans. Phase 2 of the Transport Observatory will become operational in early 2023 ensuring analytical support for guiding and measuring the outcomes of project and policy-related actions in the Region. • The European Commission endorsed the presented document and acknowledged the efforts of the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat to deliver on the implementation of the Transport Community Treaty in 2022, as well as invited it to continue such efforts in 2023. The European Commission invited the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat to reflect in the Annual Work Programme 2023 the closer involvement of Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia in the work of the Transport Community. • Regional partners called for further support on project application preparation from the TCT Secretariat in 2023. On this matter, the representative of North Macedonia reiterated the importance of moving gradually from general Project Cycle Management sessions to more focused and technical topics, such as detailed design quality management, in order to help national authorities avoid costly problems during works implementation deriving from design errors and adjustments. • All representatives agreed that training needs assessment should be done in order to develop tailor made capacity building programs.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The European Commission informed that support from EU through new CONNECTA technical assistance (EUR 12 Million) and new JASPERS assistance (EUR 20 Million) will continue in the coming period. • Upon request from the RSC members, EC reported the state-of-play of the Smart and Sustainable program for the Western Balkans. <p>Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee endorsed the presented 2023 Annual Work Programme.</p>
6.	<p>Adoption of the proposal for the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat's Budget for the year 2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The TCT Secretariat presented the draft 2023 Budget. The proposed budget amounts to EUR 3,060,000.00 and shall be financed by contributions from the Contracting Parties in accordance with Annex V of the Transport Community Treaty. A stronger focus and budget increase is envisaged in the budget lines for capacity building and technical assistance for the regional partners. • The Budget Committee Chair, Ms Cristina Cuadra Garcia, presented the TCT Secretariat's budget implementation for 2022 and main outcomes of the previous Budget Committee meeting, especially with regard to the amendments to Financial rules and development of procurement guidelines that have been drafted by the TCT Secretariat. • North Macedonia representative proposed in the future to present a comparative table with previous and current budget proposal in order to present better overview on the development of specific budget lines. • The representative of Serbia underlined that their national 2023 budget is not adopted yet. Until that takes place first, they are unable to take a position on the adoption of the TCT 2023 Budget. <p>Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee agreed, in principle, on the proposal for the 2023 Budget of the Transport Community. The decision on adoption of the budget shall take place at the following meeting of the RSC in December 2022 or through written procedure, whatever precedes.</p>
7.	<p>Endorsement of the Action Plans and the EU Acquis Progress Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The TCT Secretariat presented the Second Progress Report on Implementation of TCT Action Plans. The Report presents an objective view on additional efforts, concrete measures and necessary future measures, including timeline and coordination mechanisms, to be taken by regional partners in order to implement five Action Plans. In general, the measures listed in the five Action Plans have not progressed much. The overall progress was slow, due to several factors, <i>inter alia</i>, insufficient human and financial resources, energy crisis, and recent political developments. However, some regional partners should have put more efforts and taken concrete measures in the legislation area. Therefore, all regional partners are encouraged to take further efforts and concrete measures in meeting the agreed deadlines within the five Action Plans, For the first time, the Report presents the state of play on the transposition of ANNEX I of the Transport Community Treaty. The established monitoring mechanism enables qualitative assessment of the implementation of each measure. A detailed description of progress indicators is provided in Annex I to the Report. • The European Commission acknowledged the efforts of the Regional Partners to implement the EU acquis, as listed in Annex I of the TCT, and the support of the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat in the process. It invited the Regional Partners to continue and intensify such efforts in 2023. The European Commission underlined the need for further

	<p>technical assistance to the Regional Partners, acknowledged ongoing data collection issues and invited the Regional Partners to support the efforts of the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat in this regard.</p> <p>Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee endorsed the Action Plans and the EU Acquis Progress Report in the written procedure on 31 October 2022. It reiterated the progress achieved so far, in particular on the measures supported through technical assistance and workshops offered by the TCT Secretariat. At the same time, highlights the willingness and further commitment of each Regional Partner in achieving better results and making more progress in upcoming reporting period.</p>
8.	<p>Endorsement of the Regional Steering Committee’s Report to the Ministerial Council on the Development of indicative TEN-T extensions of the Comprehensive and Core Network in Western Balkans – report 2022 and an update on the process of TEN-T revision (Article 8 of TCT)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The TCT Secretariat presented the Report on Development of indicative TEN-T extensions of the Comprehensive and Core Network in Western Balkans for 2022. The Report shows that there has been some noticeable progress on key TEN-T indicators from the 2021 report. However, progress remains uneven between transport modes and key indicators. Certain compliance indicators have deteriorated as compared with last year’s reporting. It is specifically the case with the comprehensive road network, whose compliance rate has decreased by nearly 3 percent. Insufficient maintenance remains a key problem in the region, jeopardizing not only the TEN-T compliance rates but also the anticipated benefits of large currently ongoing projects. The progress rate of the Economic and Investment Plan Flagship projects should improve. Progress has been made in relation to the TEN-T compliance criteria requiring policy reform and horizontal action (ITS, tolling interoperability, road safety) but it has yet to be translated into tangible results. Regional cooperation is also in a growing pace, strengthening ties between Regional Partners and laying the foundation for the coordinated implementation of the TEN-T Network. • The European Commission invited the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat to reflect on possible synergies with existing macro-regional strategies, such as the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region or the EU Strategy for the Danube Region. It underlined that the Western Balkans corridor, which has been proposed as part of the ongoing TEN-T revision, will be highly beneficial for the future implementation of the extended TEN-T network in the region. The European Commission invited the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat, in close cooperation with the Commission, to assess the role of the proposed Western Balkans Corridor and its needs for enhanced cooperation on transport and coordination of projects between Member States and the Western Balkans Partners. • Kosovo* called for inclusion of its rail network into the corridor network through the ongoing process of TEN-T revision. • The representatives of Albania and North Macedonia reiterated the importance of Corridor VIII inclusion into the European Western Balkans Corridor under the ongoing revision of TEN-T. <p>Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee endorsed the 2022 TEN-T Report on the Development of indicative TEN-T extensions of the Comprehensive and Core Network in Western Balkans in the written procedure on 31 October 2022. RSC members commit themselves to address with a matter of priority the shortages identified in this Report, in line with the recommendations included therein.</p>

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

9.	<p>Adoption of the decision regarding the revision of Annex I of the TCT (Article 20 of TCT, new legislation)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In accordance with Article 20 of the Treaty, TCT Secretariat presented the List of changes to Annex I to the Treaty establishing the Transport Community. <p>Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee adopted the decision regarding the revision of Annex I to the Transport Community Treaty.</p>
10.	<p>Presentation by the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat on Conclusions of Social Forum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The TCT Secretariat presented conclusions from the 3rd Social Forum addressing social issues in road transport. 4th Social forum will take place in the first half of 2023 in Pristina and will focus on better engagement of the civil society. The European Commission acknowledged the information presented by the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat. <p>Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee welcomed the Conclusions of the 3rd Social Forum.</p>
11.	<p>Information on the Ministerial Council of the Transport Community on 15 November 2022 in Brussels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The TCT Secretariat presented the agenda of the Ministerial Council endorsed in the written procedure on 23 September 2022 and supporting documents. <p>Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee endorsed the Agenda and the materials for the Ministerial Council on 15 November 2022.</p>

ADMINISTRATION

- The European Commission pointed out that the formal adoption procedure by the Council for all the presented rules has not yet been completed, so it is not in a position to endorse any of the rules yet. The European Commission underlined it supports in principle the substance of the presented documents.

12.	<p>Discussion on the Decision on changes to the Financial Rules</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The TCT Secretariat presented a draft Decision on changes to the Financial Rules. Proposed amendments refer to transfers of budget appropriations between the budget lines, carryovers, as well as introduce detailed rules (Annex I) on the procurement procedures executed by the TCT Secretariat, below the threshold set in Directive 2014/24/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council. Kosovo shall additionally provide feedback in the coming days, if any, on the proposed amendments. <p>Conclusions: The Regional Steering Committee supported in principle the Decision on changes to the Financial Rules and agreed to be presented for adoption at the next RSC meeting on 15 December 2022.</p>
13.	<p>Discussion on the Decisions on Rules of procedure of Conciliation Committee and Dispute Settlement Rules</p>


	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TCT Secretariat presented draft Rules of Procedure establishing the internal procedure for operation of the Conciliation Committee as referred to it in the Staff regulations of the Transport community. The proposed text defines the composition of the Committee, timeframe for the appeal procedure in the first instance and decision-making process. Draft Rules on Dispute Settlement define the procedure for appointment of the Arbitrator, time frame for the appeal procedure and decision-making process in the second instance. <p>Conclusion: <i>The Regional Steering Committee welcomed in principle the presented Decision on the adoption of rules of procedure of the Conciliation Committee and of dispute settlement rules applicable to the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat and agreed both documents to be presented for adoption at the next RSC meeting on 15 December 2022.</i></p>
14.	<p>Discussion on the Decision on changes to the Rules of procedure of the Regional Steering Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The TCT Secretariat presented Draft Amendments to the Rules of procedure of the Regional Steering Committee of the Transport Community of 14 November 2018, which refer to shortening the period for distribution of the draft agenda and related documents to the RSC members and observers to at least <i>four weeks</i> prior to the relevant meeting. <p>Conclusion: <i>The Regional Steering Committee welcomed in principle the Decision on the amendment of the rules of procedure of the Regional Steering Committee of the Transport Community and agreed to be presented for adoption at the next RSC meeting on 15 December 2022.</i></p>
16.	<p>Discussion on the Decision on the Amendment to the Staff Rules</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The TCT Secretariat presented draft amendments to the Staff Regulations, which introduce teleworking, education allowance and amended composition of selection panel for TCT Secretariat recruitment procedure. European Commission pointed out amendments to the Staff Rules are also introduced via the Decision on the proposed conciliation and arbitration rules. It recommended to TCT Secretariat to develop consolidated version of the Staff rules including the amendments and updated version to be available online on the TCT web page. <p>Conclusion: <i>The Regional Steering Committee welcomed in principle, the Decision on amending Decision N° 2019/3 of the Regional Steering Committee of the Transport Community of 5 June 2019 on the draft amendments referring to the selection panel and teleworking and agreed to be presented for adoption at the next RSC meeting on 15 December 2022.</i></p>
17.	<p>Discussion on the Decision on the Rules on Rules on Secondment and Locally Contracted Experts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TCT Secretariat presented Draft Rules on secondment, which define selection procedure, period of secondment, tasks, rights and obligations of secondees and locally contracted experts. <p>Conclusion: <i>The Regional Steering Committee welcomed in principle the presented Draft rules on secondment and locally contracted experts and agreed to be presented for adoption at the next RSC meeting on 15 December 2022.</i></p>
18.	<p>Discussion on the Decision on the Rules on Education allowance</p>

- The TCT Secretariat presented draft Rules on Education allowance, which define applicability and conditions for education allowance aimed for dependent child of the Staff Members, attending educational institution, where the seat of the Secretariat is.
- The representatives of Albania, North Macedonia and Kosovo were not in favor of the presented Rules on Education allowance and called instead, more focus to be put on supporting the participation of experts and members of various bodies and technical committees at the meetings with providing appropriate DSA.
- The European Commission pointed out that the proposed rules on education allowance have been discussed with the EU Member States in package with the proposed secondment rules and rules on locally contracted experts.

Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee will revisit the discussion on the Rules on education allowance for the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat, as well as the implications for the proposed secondment rules and rules on locally contracted experts, at the next RSC meeting on 15 December 2022.



Chair of the Regional Steering Committee
Ms Emina Mujevic Kara



Co - Chair of the Regional Steering Committee
Ms Mona Bjorklund