

18th Regional Steering Committee meeting

15 December 2022, TCT Secretariat's premises, Masarikova 5/9, Belgrade

Minutes and Conclusions

- The 18th Regional Steering Committee (RSC) meeting was held on 15 December 2022 in a hybrid format (physical participation and online).
- All RSC members were present in the meeting except Bosnia and Herzegovina. Meeting was followed by observers of the European Union Member States. Observing participants from Ukraine, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova were also present and representatives of Ukraine and Moldova took the floor. The meeting started with introducing RSC members and observing participants who were welcomed to the Transport Community. All sides welcomed future cooperation between the Transport Community and the representatives from Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia.
- The Regional Steering Committee Chair, Ms Emina Mujević Kara and Co-Chair, Ms Mona Bjorklund, chaired the meeting. The TCT Secretariat Director, Mr Matej Zakonjšek, reflected on the productive year of 2022 and highlighted the achievements in the past year.
- Following a proposal from the EC, Agenda point 8 on *Information on cooperation for the development of the transport sectors and systematic involvement of the Ukraine, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova in the Transport Community bodies as observing participants* was put as the first point for discussion.
- The 18th RSC meeting Agenda was adopted with the proposed change.

Agenda point 8	<p>Information on cooperation for the development of the transport sectors and systematic involvement of the Ukraine, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova in the Transport Community bodies as observing participants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The TCT Secretariat reflected on the discussion during the Ministerial Council in Brussels on 15 November 2022 and the endorsement of the Joint statement. As a follow-up to the endorsed Joint Statement, a designated grant is being negotiated with the EC/DG Near for supporting the physical participation of representatives of Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia in the meetings of the official bodies of the TCT. The grant contract shall be signed by the TCT Secretariat, which will manage its implementation. • The Commission (Mrs Bjorklund) informed the RSC Members that, as agreed in the endorsed Joint Statement, the TCT Budget will not be impacted. The EC called for a more systematic involvement
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	<p>of Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia in 2023 in the work of the Transport Community in order to benefit from the information exchange with the Western Balkans partners and the EU. In this regard, the Commission invited the Transport Community Secretariat to present an overview of plans for the progressive cooperation with UA, MD and GE in 2023 during the next RSC meeting. The Republic of Moldova expressed their readiness to present a general overview of their transport sector and acquis alignment and their needs assessment for further support. Their experts would be fully available for any consultations and drafting designated action plans in the coming period.</p> <p><i>Conclusion: The TCT Secretariat will present a proposal for a more detailed outline of the elements to be covered under the structured cooperation between the Transport Community and Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia by the next RSC meeting scheduled for March 2023.</i></p>
Agenda point 1	<p>Presentation of the 2022 Annual Report on the Implementation of Dangerous Goods Guidelines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Transport Community Permanent Secretariat (TCT Secretariat) presented the 2022 Annual Report on implementing dangerous goods guidelines. The Report covers the guidelines foreseen to be transposed and implemented in the short-term (until 2023). The Report shows a brief overview of the state of play in the regional partners and measures/actions deriving from the TDG Guidelines. It assesses the overall progress, pending issues, and recommendations for each regional partner. The Report contains recommendations with regard to the implementation of Directive 2008/68/EC and Directive 95/50/EC as well as on enforcement activities. The TCT Secretariat highlighted the support on this matter from EU member states Poland, Romania and Belgium. • The Commission acknowledged the information presented by the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat. It invited the Regional Partners to continue efforts to implement TDG-related acquis and thanked the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat for its efforts to advance the implementation of annex I TCT in the area of TDG. <p><i>Conclusion: The RSC acknowledged the 2022 Annual Report on the Implementation of Dangerous Goods Guidelines.</i></p>
Agenda point 2	<p>The 2022 Progress Report on the Strategy for Sustainable and Smart Mobility in the Western Balkans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The TCT Secretariat presented the 2022 Progress Report on the Strategy for Sustainable and Smart Mobility in the Western Balkans . The Progress Report reflects advancement in the implementation of the Strategy in the past period. In the reporting period from April 2021 to

	<p>date, progress highly varies when observing specific measures and specific regional parties. However, it can generally be said that the region has started moving in the direction of green and digital transition, to a great extent, due to encouragement, support and grant schemes by the European Commission.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Macedonia informed that, with EBRD support, a national strategy on the deployment of electronic vehicle infrastructure would be developed in line with the 2022 Strategy for Sustainable and Smart Mobility in the Western Balkans. Additional Information was also requested on the Safe and Sustainable Transport program (SSTP) implementation timeline. • The Commission thanked the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat for its efforts to promote safe, sustainable and resilient mobility in the Western Balkans and invited the Regional Partners to intensify efforts to implement the Strategy, in line with latest developments at EU level, as reflected in Annex I TCT. • The Commission (DG NEAR) informed that the World Bank will be the lead IFI for the SSTP. They will start preparing the Grant Application Form (GAF) and its submission will follow the regular WBIF calendar for call for applications early next year. The WB partners as well as the TCPS will be consulted on the process. There will be a project preparation component included for projects that are not sufficiently mature. The projects will be selected based on the criteria agreed in the SSTP GAF which will be based on the areas of interventions that were discussed so far (BCPs, improvement of safe at rail level crossing, etc.). TCT Secretariat offered to gather the requests for additional information from the regional partners regarding the next steps of the programme and together with DG Near to provide answers and clarifications. <p>Conclusion:</p> <p>1) The RSC acknowledged the 2022 Progress Report on the Strategy for Sustainable and Smart Mobility in the Western Balkans with updated Information presented during the meeting.</p> <p>2) Regarding the Safe and Sustainable Transport Financing Programme, DG NEAR will prepare additional Information in cooperation with World Bank and share it with Regional Partners via TCT Secretariat.</p>
Agenda point 3	<p>Presentation of the Report on Passengers' Rights: Making Transport Accessible and Inclusive in the Western Balkans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The TCT Secretariat presented the Report on Passengers' Rights: Making Transport Accessible and Inclusive in the Western Balkans. The objective of the Report was to identify obstacles and

	<p>barriers to accessibility in the region. The Report was explicitly focused on the accessibility of central rail and bus stations in the region, i.e. on the transposition/implementation of crucial EC Regulations on rail and bus and coach passenger rights of ANNEX I to the Transport Community Treaty. Regional partners reported limited progress regarding the transposition and implementation of the Acquis (ANNEX I to the TCT) related to passenger rights. The Report also contains an overview of the state of play, findings per each regional partner, and a set of proposed actions/measures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Commission invited the Regional Partners to intensify efforts on transposing and implementing the passenger rights acquis listed in Annex I TCT. <p><i>Conclusion: The RSC endorsed the presented Report on Passengers' Rights: Making Transport Accessible and Inclusive in the Western Balkans and agreed on the proposed way forward.</i></p>
Agenda point 4	<p>Information regarding the European Court of Justice Rulings relevant to the Contracting Parties of the Transport Community Treaty – update by the European Commission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The European Commission presented the Rulings relevant to the Contracting Parties of the Transport Community Treaty. <p><i>Conclusion: The RSC acknowledged the Information regarding the European Court of Justice Rulings relevant to the Contracting Parties of the Transport Community Treaty given by the European Commission.</i></p>
Agenda point 5	<p>Presentation of the Transport Observatory – the state of play and follow-up actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The TCT Secretariat presented Information on the Transport Observatory, i.e. the completed Phase I, the ongoing Phase II, and planned activities in forthcoming Phase III. The importance of reaching an agreement as soon as possible with the Regional Partners on the institutional set-up regarding data collection and set of data and its availability to the public was particularly highlighted. • Montenegrin Chair expressed her satisfaction with what was presented and thanked everyone involved in the process. She also highlighted the support given to the process. • The Commission welcomed the presentation and invited TCT Secretariat to further reflect about the implications of the proposed changes on deliverables mandated by the TCT, such as the five-year rolling work plan on the indicative extension of the TEN-T network to the Western Balkans. In this regard, the Commission invited the Permanent Secretariat to come back to the Regional Steering Committee on the basis of such reflections.

	<p><i>Conclusion: The RSC welcomed the presented information on the state of play concerning TODIS development. The TCT Secretariat will present a more detailed reflection on the implications of the postponement of Phase III implementation (transport modelling), especially concerning the Five-year Rolling Work Plan for the next RSC meeting envisaged for March 2023.</i></p>
Agenda point 6	<p>Presentation of the reports on the level crossings safety improvement project: mapping the most critical level crossings in the Western Balkans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The TCT Secretariat presented the Level Crossings Safety Improvement Project Report. The aim of the Report was to present the current situation on safety at level crossings (LCs) in the Western Balkans as well as to provide recommendations for improving protection at a certain number of LCs in the region. Parallel to that, the TCT Secretariat has developed and carried out a public awareness campaign for improving level crossings safety, which targeted a wider audience by means of dedicated events, broadcasters and social media, and other communication channels, as well as by using print materials, videos etc. • The Chair welcomed the Report that would serve as a solid basis for project applications for the improvement of level crossings as a part of the Safe and Sustainable Transport program. • Public awareness campaigns for improving level crossings safety in Albania and Serbia are expected to start in the first half of 2023. <p><i>Conclusion: The RSC welcomed the presented Level Crossings Safety Improvement Project Report.</i></p>
Agenda point 7	<p>Presentation of the Concept Proposal for the 2023 Connectivity Year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The TCT Secretariat presented a concept note for the activities envisaged for the 2023 connectivity year. In 2023, the TCT Secretariat will focus on connectivity and organise several events: the 2023 Connectivity Summit, the Capacity Building Summer School – transport & trade facilitation and the 2023 Social Forum “Sustainable links - stronger economy”. • The EC called for bringing all different partners (not only transport Ministries, but also customs, etc.) onboard, especially regarding the extension of Green Lanes, to reflect on the progress achieved. In addition, the Commission invited the TCT Secretariat to further specify its plans regarding the foreseen deliverables for the Connectivity Summit and requested the TCT Secretariat to also fully include Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia in its concept and plans for the Connectivity Summit.

Conclusion: The RSC welcomed the presented concept for the 2023 connectivity year and called the TCT Secretariat to present, in the March 2023 RSC meeting, a proposal for concrete deliverables at the Summit.

ADMINISTRATION

- North Macedonia called for consideration of granting per diems to the Regional Partners participants attending different meetings organised by the TCT Secretariat. Mrs Kirkova emphasised that Macedonian representatives will have difficulties participating at the TCT meetings in 2023 without per diems paid by the Transport Community, which in the opinion of the RSC Member from North Macedonia might impact the regular activities of the TCT bodies. Albania supported this initiative.

Conclusion:

1) The TCT Secretariat will, in consultation with the EC, reflect on the possible changes to the Rules on reimbursement of participants attending meetings organised by the TCT Secretariat and present the outcome of such reflection at the next RSC meeting in March 2023. This reflection will be based on a comparative analysis of rules in similar (EU) bodies and on the financial implication of any changes.

2) Regarding the proposed Decision of the Regional Steering Committee of the Transport Community on the rules on education allowance for the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat and proposed Decision of the Regional Steering Committee of the Transport Community on the rules on secondment and locally contracted experts. The rules on Education Allowance and Secondment will be put on the agenda of the following Regional Steering Committee meeting.

Agenda point 9	<p>Adoption of the Decision on the revised procedure for the implementation of the budget and presenting and auditing of accounts applicable to the Transport Community (changes to the Financial Rules)</p> <p><i>Conclusion: The Decision was adopted as presented.</i></p>
Agenda point 10	<p>Adoption of the Decisions on Rules of Procedure of the Conciliation Committee and Dispute Settlement Rules (Arbitration) and of amendments to the Staff Regulations applicable to the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat</p> <p><i>Conclusion: The Decision was adopted as presented.</i></p>

Agenda point 11	<p>Adoption of the Decision on Amendment of the Rules of Procedure of the Regional Steering Committee of the Transport Community</p> <p><i>Conclusion: The Decision was adopted as presented.</i></p>
Agenda point 12	<p>Adoption of the Decision on amending Decision N° 2019/3 of the Regional Steering Committee of the Transport Community of 5 June 2019 (amendment to the Staff Rules)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The TCT Secretariat presented draft amendments to the Staff Regulations, introducing teleworking, the education allowance and the amended composition of the Selection Panel for TCT Secretariat recruitment procedures. • The representative of Kosovo* objected to including the education allowance in the Staff Rules. <p><i>Conclusion: The Decision was adopted as presented, except for the reference to the education allowance in Heading 9 of Annex II, which was removed. The title of Heading 9 shall read Salaries, travel and moving expenses.</i></p>
Agenda point 13	<p>Adoption of the Decision on the Budget of the Transport Community for the year 2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serbia will, in due time, present in writing their consent on the 2023 Budget as soon as their internal procedure is finalised. However, there is a general agreement on the proposal. • North Macedonia informed that the budgetary allocations for TCT are planned in the Macedonian budget for the year 2023, however approval of the budget is due by end of December 2022. <p><i>Conclusion: The Decision was adopted as presented.</i></p>


Chair of the Regional Steering Committee
Ms Emina Mujević Kara


Co - Chair of the Regional Steering Committee
Ms Mona Bjorklund

*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

