



Making Transport Accessible and Inclusive in the Western Balkans

PASSENGER RIGHTS REPORT





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* 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

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List of Abbreviations

TCT ANNEX I	Transport Community Treaty ANNEX I
DG MOVE	Directorate General for Mobility and Transport
DG NEAR	Directorate General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations
EAA	European Accessibility Act
EC	European Commission
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EIB	European Investment Bank
EU	European Union
EU Member State(s)	European Union Member State(s)
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
PRM	Persons with disabilities and reduced mobility
TCT Secretariat	Transport Community Permanent Secretariat
TEN-T	Trans-European Transport Networks
UD	Universal Design
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Transportation system needs to be inclusive, safe, and accessible for everyone, as different groups have different needs as transport users. Persons with reduced mobility have the same right as all other citizens to free movement. To create an enabling environment for everyone, stakeholders (relevant authorities, industry and social society) need to work together to ensure that the persons with reduced mobility have equal access, with others, to transportation. To achieve this in the region, it is necessary to first identify and then eliminate obstacles and barriers to accessibility at the central rail and bus stations.

The objective of this 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 of the 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. Regional Partners have provided inputs on the level of transposition/implementation of the bus and coach, and rail passenger rights. Moreover, Transport Community Permanent Secretariat has conducted dedicated visits (July – October 2022) to the central bus and rail stations and interviewed representatives of the Non-governmental Organisation from each Regional Partner.

In regards to transposition and implementation of the Acquis (ANNEX I of the TCT) related to Passenger **Rights the Regional Partners have reported limited progress.**

Visits concluded that all central bus and rail stations in the region are accessible for persons with reduced mobility regarding the infrastructure, as for the trains and busses, they do not fulfil the required criteria for persons with reduced mobility. The right to assistance is lacking at designated terminals and on board (busses or trains) in most of the Regional Partners.

The new railway station in Belgrade (**Serbia**) is a good example of accessibility for persons with reduced mobility regarding infrastructure and accessibility to the trains and busses. However, further efforts are needed in connection to interurban rail stations. **North Macedonia** has an accessible bus and train stations and some degree functioning following facilities (on/off working lift). However, further efforts are needed on the implementation of legislation. **Montenegro** infrastructure is accessible, the legal framework is in place, however, further efforts are needed to implement relevant legal framework.

Bosnia and Hercegovina, Albania, and Kosovo have accessible infrastructure, as for the trains and busses, they do not fulfil the required criteria for persons with reduced mobility. In addition to that, there is lack of assistance and general information.

Report will provide an objective view and concrete measures (short term, mid-term, and long term) to be addressed by the various stakeholders, relevant regional institutions, international institutions, by making the accessibility of transport services available for everyone. Due to above mentioned issues, there is a need for **improving coordination** by including and consulting the civil society, especially persons with reduced mobility during the planning and implementation process; a need for **awareness raising campaigns** and **building knowledge** on how important is the transposition/implementation of the EU

Regulations on rail and bus and coach and the obligations deriving from UNCRPD and the need for **guidelines and standards** for creating accessible transport systems.

In general, the measures listed in the report emphasize that a great amount of work is still needed from various actors to provide a truly accessible and inclusive transport service in the Western Balkans. It is important that persons with reduced mobility have access to the central bus and railway stations. With better access and connections for this marginalised group, public transport would become more equal to all.

1. BACKGROUND

Accessibility in **transport refers to the use of transport services with ease and on an equal footing with other users. Accessibility is a key element in transport systems**, since it is an expression of mobility in terms of people, freight or information. Well-developed and efficient transportation systems offer high levels of accessibility. Disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility, whether caused by disability, age or any other factor, **should have opportunities for accessibility to transportation comparable to those of other citizens**. Persons with reduced mobility have the same right as all other citizens to free movement, freedom of choice and non-discrimination.

Around **80 million people in the EU** are affected by a disability to some degree. Accessibility is a precondition to ensure their full and equal participation in the society. There are **no reliable, up-to-date statistics on disability across the Western Balkans region**. Existing data (*available for four Regional Partners*) are based on projections, for example using the WHO/World Bank average prevalence rates, or drawn from sample surveys, country census information or government social security records. According to the World Report on Disability, the regional prevalence rate for disabilities in the low- and middle-income European countries **estimated at 16.4%** (WHO/World Bank 2011)¹.

The disability statistics for the Western Balkans show that there are **2.5 million persons with disabilities** in the region.

Regional Partner	Most recent estimate of disability prevalence	Most recent total population estimate (in millions)	Estimated numbers of persons with disabilities (if WHO regional average of 16.4% is applied)
Albania	3.4%	2.78 (2011)	455,920
Bosnia and Hercegovina	14,6%	3.84 (2011)	629,760
Kosovo	7%	1.82 (2012)	298,480
Serbia	7.4%	7.20 (2012)	1,180,800

Table 1: Disability statistics for the Western Balkans (WHO/World Bank 2011)

¹ <https://cdn.sida.se/app/uploads/2021/05/10143345/rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-western-balkan.pdf>

The Transport Community has its legal document (ANNEX I of the TCT), the Social Forum, and Strategy (Smart and Sustainable Mobility Strategy for the Western Balkans) used as a basis on supporting and assisting its Regional Partners to improve the transport sector by making it more inclusive and accessible for everyone.

- **ANNEX I of the Transport Community** sets out relevant social acquis regarding transport that also include passenger rights. The two key Regulations are: (EC) No 1371/2007 on rail passenger rights, and obligations, and (EU) No 181/2011 on bus and coach passenger rights.

- **Social Forum, established in 2020**, is a platform for dialogue between key transport stakeholders of the European Union and the Western Balkans Regional Partners. The role of the Forum is to engage with the civil society and to promote social dialogue and a social dimension by focusing to the acquis in social matters. So far, three Social Forums have been organised. The First Social Forum² took place in October 2020. It established the working procedures and key areas were identified (workers fundamental rights, labour laws, health, and safety at work and equal opportunities in the transport sector). The Second Forum focused on social issues in rail transport, as the European Commission had identified 2021 as the European Year of Rail to make travel by rail possible and attractive again for citizens and businesses in Europe. The Conclusions³ of the Second Social Forum recognised that little progress had been made regarding rail passenger rights. The present conditions/situation had to improve to transpose and fully implement Regulation (EC) No 1371/2007 on rail passengers' rights and obligations.

The Third Social Forum focused on social issues in road transport as the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat had devoted 2022 to the year of roads. The Conclusions⁴ of the Third Social Forum state that the relevant authorities need to start improving the current conditions/situation to transpose and fully implement Regulation (EC) No 181/2011 on the rights of passengers in bus and coach transport. **The Conclusions of every Social Forum** showed that more work needs to be done to improve passengers' rights in the Western Balkans region in the rail and road sector, i.e. to make it accessible and available for everyone - entering and exiting the station and train/bus/coach, purchasing the tickets, availability of the waiting area and contacts of assistance if needed.

- Furthermore, Ministers in charge of transport of South East European Parties of the Transport Community welcomed the **Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy⁵ for the Western Balkans** at the Ministerial Council on 5 July 2021. The Strategy provides a roadmap for decarbonisation and digitalisation of the transport sector, aiming at reaching common objectives and a harmonised approach in making transport greener, sustainable, safer, and socially just for citizens and businesses of Western Balkans. **Flagship 9 in the Strategy is addressing key social issues opportunities and challenges:** transport workers' rights, working conditions, a healthy and safe working environment, passengers' rights and equal opportunities to make mobility fair and just for all. The Strategy for Sustainable and Smart Mobility is also a guiding document for the Western Balkans region to work on shaping the future of transport in a socially sustainable manner.

² https://www.transport-community.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/1st-Social-Forum_Conclusions.pdf

³ https://www.transport-community.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/2-Social-Forum_Conclusions.pdf

⁴ <https://www.transport-community.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Social-Forum-Conclusions.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.transport-community.org/strategy-for-sustainable-and-smart-mobility-in-the-western-balkans-2/>

Not only green, but the transport sector also needs to be inclusive, diverse and accessible for everyone. To that end, we need to engage and work together with the civil society. We need to give them the floor, as they are the best placed to come up with new initiatives and improve the existing rules. That is why the report has involved from the earliest stage possible the representative of the persons with disabilities from the Western Balkans.

2. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The European Union and all its Member States are parties to the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities⁶ (UNCRPD)**. This important treaty entered into force in the EU in January 2011 and has guided the content of the Strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities 2021-2030⁷.

The UNCRPD recognises that obstacles and barriers for indoor and outdoor public facilities and buildings should be removed to ensure equal access by persons with disabilities and all members of society. The UNCRPD has been ratified in over 100 countries, and as it moves forward, governments and institutions will need to implement its principles and binding obligations. Governments and the transport industry need to understand and develop expertise in operationalising access and mobility issues for persons with disabilities and persons with limited mobility in the design and implementation of transport projects.

Other important **key EU disabilities initiatives include:** The European Accessibility Act (EAA)⁸, Regulations on the Rights of Passengers with Reduced mobility in central modes of transport, EU Directive 2016/2102⁹ on the accessibility of website and mobile applications of public sector bodies, EU disability card¹⁰, EU Directive 2000/78/EC¹¹ establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation.

Furthermore, Chapter 23 of the **2021 EU reports on enlargement on Judiciary and fundamental rights** for the Western Balkans region highlights the current state of play of the rights of persons with disabilities in the region. The central observation from the reports is that every Regional Partner is at the different stage of alignment of national legislation with the EU and UN legislation and convention acts.

2.1 The EU Regulations on the Rights of Passengers with Reduced mobility in main modes of transport

The European Union Persons with Reduced Mobility (PRM) legislation is intended to ensure that persons with reduced mobility (whether disabled, elderly or otherwise) traveling via public transport, whether by air, land or sea, should have equal access to travel as compared to travellers with unrestricted mobility. Travel providers are compelled to provide and install sufficient access facilities to enable passengers with reduced mobility to enjoy similar access to other passengers (where feasible and with certain safety exemptions).

The PRM legislation applies to any travel within, into, or out of European Union and European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries, with Regulation (EU) 1107/2006^[1] covering air travel, (EU) 1177/2010^[2] covering maritime travel and inland waterways, (EU) 1300/2014^[3] covering rail travel and (EU) No 181/2011^[4] covering bus and coach travel. Each member state of the EU is required to implement the PRM rights in national legislation and establish a national enforcement body, with any breaches covered by compensation regulation (EC) No 261/2004.

⁶ <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html>

⁷ <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1484>

⁸ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32019L0882>

⁹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32016L2102&from=EN>

¹⁰ <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1139>

¹¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32000L0078&from=EN>

2.2 Regulations - ANNEX I of the Transport Community Treaty

The Contracting Parties of the Transport Treaty shall take due account of the social dimension and they shall recognise the need to involve the social partners at all appropriate levels by promoting the social dialogue in relation to the monitoring of the implementation of this Treaty and its effects. **Article 5 of the Treaty**¹² establishing the Transport Community - on social issues – stipulates that the Regional Partners should implement relevant social acquis regarding transport as set out in Annex I, that includes Passenger Rights.

Regulation (EC) No 1371/2007¹³ of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2007 on rail passengers' rights and obligations (OJ EU L 315, 3.12.2007, p. 14) gives all passengers certain rights when traveling by train, including compensation in case of delay and cancellation. It also includes a specific chapter on the rights of passengers with disabilities and passengers with reduced mobility and particularly features the right to transport and the right to assistance. Assistance shall be provided at no additional cost, notably during the boarding and alighting of the train and assistance in using facilities on board available for all passengers. Currently, the Regulation demands a maximum 24-hour notice period for assistance. Important information should also be provided to all passengers in accessible formats. In case the mobility equipment of a disabled passenger is damaged, lost or destroyed, the passenger has the right to full compensation.

Regulation (EU) No 181/2011¹⁴ of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 February 2011 concerning the rights of passengers in bus and coach transport and amending Regulation (EC)

No 2006/2004 (OJ EU L 55, 28.2.2011, p. 1) entered into force in 2013 and also includes provisions on accessibility for persons with disabilities.

The mentioned Regulation's purpose is to protect disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility travelling by rail, bus and coach against discrimination and to ensure that they receive the assistance they need. It protects any person with a physical disability (sensory or locomotor, permanent or temporary), an intellectual disability or impairment, or any other cause of disability, or age, and whose situation needs appropriate attention and the adaptation to his or her particular needs of the service made available to all passengers.

¹² [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:22017A1027\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:22017A1027(01)&from=EN)

¹³ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32007R1371>

¹⁴ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=celex%3A32011R0181>

3. SCOPE OF THE REPORT

This report aims on improving accessibility to transport as a profound impact on the quality of life of persons with disabilities and reduced mobility (PRM). Data and information collected from all Regional Partners will eventually improve the design of physical infrastructure and accessibility on trains and bus stations, in addition to that, improve the provision of better on-site assistance and information services.

The report on Passenger Rights carried out an assessment on identifying the key obstacles for main bus and railway stations in the region for person with disabilities/reduced mobility when accessing the stations.

3.1 Task description

Phase 1 – baseline assessment (2022)

An assessment of key obstacles for central bus and railway stations in the region for person with reduced mobility/mums with trollies when accessing the stations will be done.

Phase 2 – interventions/improvement (2023)

The follow up report on Passenger Rights will contain the exact mapping. The mapping would be used for next project proposals which will be in a pipeline for preparations of technical documentations for investments.

3.2 Methodology

The methodology of the report includes the analyses of the legislative framework enforced by each Regional Partner, field research (including interviews) on the EU level and compares the level of the alignment with the EU Acquis, more precisely, the Passenger Rights, as defined within ANNEX I of the TCT.

The assessment was carried in **3 different steps:**

- Step 1: Analysing the legislative framework. Analysis of the legislation was conducted before the official field research and interviews. With this, we received a better insight into what sections of the legislation need to be transposed and subsequently implemented so that bus and railway stations are accessible and that persons with reduced mobility can be on an equal footing with other users.
- Step 2: Field research. Field research was done at the six central bus and railway stations in the region. The focus of the field research was to check station accessibility: whether persons with reduced mobility can access the station, if there is an appropriate waiting area, toilettes and where/if they can contact the assistance if needed. Following the field research, a meeting with the NGO for reduced mobility took place.

Regional Partner	Name of the Organization
Albania	Together Foundation Albania
Bosna and Hercegovina	Lotus BIH
Kosovo	HandiKos Kosovo
Montenegro	Initiatives of Youth with Disabilities of Boka
North Macedonia	Polio Plus-movement against disability
Serbia	Centar za samostalnizivot OSI Srbije

Table 2: Contact group "Making transport accessible and inclusive in the Western Balkans".

- Step 3: Interviews conducted with the representatives from various NGOs, and Associations dealing with topics/measures related to persons with disabilities/reduced mobility. A group of representatives of persons with disabilities and reduced mobility was established for consultation during the making of the report. It was referred to as a contact group “Making transport accessible and inclusive in the Western Balkans “. The objective of this **person - centric approach** was to involve, from the earliest stage possible, the representatives of persons with disabilities.

4. STATE OF PLAY and FINDINGS (Main Bus and Rail Stations)

The report assesses the general legislative framework on the rights of persons with disabilities and EU regulations for each Regional Partner on road and rail sector of the passenger rights. Particularly focusing on accessibility, right to assistance at designated terminals and on board and information to disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility. The findings on the transposition and implementation of EU passenger rights acquis showed that more work needs to be done regarding passengers' rights in connection to accessibility. Passengers' rights should be better implemented in the region, and clearer for both carriers and passengers. Carriers should offer adequate assistance, and information for the persons with reduced mobility.

4.1 Albania

General overview: last year's EU Enlargement policy for Albania¹⁵ on Judiciary and fundamental rights stated that the legislative framework on the rights of persons with disabilities is partially compliant with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Albania has still not ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The implementation of the National Action Plan for persons with disabilities 2016-2020 has not produced much visible impact. A new national plan for persons with disabilities 2021-2025 was adopted in May 2021.

Transport: The EC Regulation on rail passenger rights and obligations has been partially transposed and the EC regulation on bus and coach passenger rights has also been partially transposed. **Tirana** has no main rail station, this creates more obstacles and issues for better connectivity. However, the infrastructure at the central bus station is accessible. One of the main challenges in Albania as well as other places in the region remains the access on getting in/of the busses for persons with reduce mobility. More efforts are needed to improve the current conditions and implement the legislation on road and rail passenger rights.

The Executive Director of Together Foundation/Fondacioni "Se Bashku" from Albania highlighted that urban transport in Tirana is problematic, some buses are offering access to enter them but reaching the bus station is a challenge. Also, there is no accessible information in terms of itineraries or other information for persons with sensory disabilities. While for interurban transport, the situation is unsatisfactory, the buses and the bus stations, waiting areas, and toilets, are not accessible for persons with disabilities. Access to the information is non-existent. There is no appropriate waiting area.

Regulation (EC) No 1371/2007 on rail passengers' rights and obligations	Partially transposed
Regulation (EC) No 181/2011 concerning the rights of passengers in bus and coach transport	Partially transposed

¹⁵ COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT Albania 2021 Report Accompanying the document Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions 2021 Communication on EU Enlargement Policy, page 33-34.

4.2 Bosnia and Hercegovina

General overview: last year’s EU Enlargement policy for Bosnia and Hercegovina¹⁶ on Judiciary and fundamental rights stated that persons with disabilities remain among the most vulnerable groups. There has been no progress in addressing the concerns previously identified, including the deprivation of legal capacities, status-based discrimination, accessibility. At the same time, there are no comprehensive plans for the National Strategy on Accessibility which was recommended by the UNCRPD Committee.

Transport: The EC Regulation on rail passenger rights and obligations is partially transposed and the EC regulation on bus and coach passenger rights is in progress. In **Sarajevo**, the infrastructure at the main bus and rail station is accessible but the busses/trains are not accessible for persons with reduce mobility. More efforts are needed to improve the current conditions and implement the legislation on road and rail passenger rights.

The representative from **Bosnia and Hercegovina** Lotus organization/Udruženje građana Informativn icentar za osobe sa invaliditetom “Lotos” emphasised that neither central railways station, nor bus station in Sarajevo, are fully accessible for persons with reduced mobility. The central bus station does not have accessible toilet for persons with reduced mobility, there is no sufficient information regarding the timetable/itinerary. At the railway station, platforms for passengers in the station are not accessible for persons with reduced mobility. Trains are not accessible either. Inter-city busses are not used as they are not accessible (no ramp/no help).

Regulation (EC) No 1371/2007 on rail passengers’ rights and obligations	Partially transposed
Regulation (EC) No 181/2011 concerning the rights of passengers in bus and coach transport	In progress

¹⁶ COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT Bosnia and Herzegovina 2021 Report Accompanying the document Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions 2021 Communication on EU Enlargement Policy, page 31.

4.3 Kosovo

General overview: this year’s EU Enlargement policy for Kosovo¹⁷ on Judiciary and fundamental rights stated that persons with disabilities lack institutional care, starting from the lack of proper medical care and the lack of physical infrastructure. Limited access to public buildings, schools, medical facilities and transport remains a problem, despite relevant administrative instructions. There is a clear gap in harmonising the legislation and policies with the Conventions and the EU acquis on the rights of persons with disabilities.

The Director of HandiKos, highlighted that there is no lift, ramp or an appropriate lavatory at the central railway or bus station. There is only one train connection (Pristina - Peja) and that one is not accessible for persons with reduced mobility. Despite the requirements that the law on construction imposes accessibility for persons with reduced mobility, the same law is not fully implemented during construction phase.

Transport: The EC Regulation on rail passenger rights and obligations is partially transposed and the EC regulation on bus and coach passenger rights is in progress. In **Pristina**, the infrastructure at the central train or bus station is accessible, but the busses and trains for the persons with reduced mobility are not. More efforts are needed to improve the current conditions and implement the legislation on road and rail passenger rights.

Regulation (EC) No 1371/2007 on rail passengers’ rights and obligations	Partially transposed
Regulation (EC) No 181/2011 concerning the rights of passengers in bus and coach transport	In progress

¹⁷ COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT Kosovo 2021 Report Accompanying the document Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions 2021 Communication on EU Enlargement Policy, page 35.

4.4 Montenegro

General overview: this year's EU Enlargement policy for Montenegro¹⁸ on Judiciary and fundamental rights stated that the alignment of the national legislation with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has not yet been ensured, including the definition of disability.

Transport: The EC Regulation on rail passenger rights and obligations is partially transposed and the EC regulation on bus and coach passenger rights is in progress. In **Podgorica**, the infrastructure at the central railway and bus station is accessible, but the busses and trains are not. More efforts are needed to improve the current conditions and implement the legislation on road and rail passenger rights

The **Montenegro** representative, from the Initiative of Youth with Disabilities of Boka, expressed that the central railway and bus station in Podgorica are not fully accessible for persons with reduced mobility. The legal framework is adopted. However, the implementation is not in line with adopted law. Capacity building trainings on a know-how of the usage of access ramp at the railway station is highly recommended.

Regulation (EC) No 1371/2007 on rail passengers' rights and obligations	Partially transposed
Regulation (EC) No 181/2011 concerning the rights of passengers in bus and coach transport	In progress

¹⁸ COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT Montenegro 2021 Report Accompanying the document Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions 2021 Communication on EU Enlargement Policy, page 35.

4.5 North Macedonia

General overview: this year’s EU Enlargement policy for North Macedonia¹⁹ on Judiciary and fundamental rights stated that there was little progress in improving the rights of persons with disabilities. The mechanism for monitoring the implementation of the Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was established within the Ombudsman’s Office. The national coordination body for implementing the Convention continued to meet regularly but its mandate and its capacity to influence decision makers in the state structures remain weak.

Transport: The EC Regulation on rail passenger rights and obligations is transposed and the EC Regulation on bus and coach passenger rights is still in progress. The central railway and bus station in **Skopje** are to some degree accessible (infrastructure) and designed (lift, appropriate lavatory) for persons with reduced mobility. Meaning infrastructure is accessible and there is a lift. But more efforts are needed to improve the current conditions and implement the legislation on road and rail passenger rights.

The representative from Polio Plus movement in **North Macedonia** indicated that the central railway and bus station in Skopje are to some degree accessible and also designed for persons with reduced mobility. There is a lift, but is not working, the lavatory is designed properly and there is a parking space in front of the station. Public transport is not friendly to use for persons with reduced mobility, trains are old and new ones are not in line with the Accessibility standards. Transport companies are not implementing UD elements and are not familiar with the UNCRPD obligation, they do not have and are not regulating the concept of reasonable accommodation.

Regulation (EC) No 1371/2007 on rail passengers’ rights and obligations	Transposed
Regulation (EC) No 181/2011 concerning the rights of passengers in bus and coach transport	In progress

¹⁹ COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT North Macedonia 2021 Report Accompanying the document Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions 2021 Communication on EU Enlargement Policy, page 31.

4.6 Serbia

General overview: this year’s EU Enlargement policy for Serbia²⁰ on Judiciary and fundamental rights stated that an Action plan for the implementation of the Strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities was adopted in April 2021.

Transport: The EC Regulation on rail passenger rights and obligations is transposed and the EC Regulation on bus and coach passenger rights is still in progress. In **Belgrade**, the central bus and rail station (Belgrade Centar) are accessible for the persons with reduced mobility regarding the infrastructure and accessibility of the trains and bus. Further work is needed in connection to interurban connectivity.

The **Serbian** representative from the Centar za samostalnostivot OSI Srbije highlighted that the new railway station (Belgrade Centar) has been built by the standards accessible for persons with reduced mobility (lift, rampa, parking space, lavatory) and the new fast train Soko is accessible and appropriate for persons with reduced mobility. Unfortunately, other bus and rail stations in Serbia are not at the same level of accessibility as the Belgrade Central station.

Regulation (EC) No 1371/2007 on rail passengers’ rights and obligations	Transposed
Regulation (EC) No 181/2011 concerning the rights of passengers in bus and coach transport	In progress

²⁰ COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT Serbia 2021 Report Accompanying the document Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions 2021 Communication on EU Enlargement Policy, page 38.

5. PROPOSED MEASURES TO IMPROVE ACCESS AND INCLUSION IN TRANSPORT

Building on the analytical approach (analysing the UN conventions and EU legislation), field results and the insights from the interviews, we can focus on how to improve accessibility and usability of transport services in the Western Balkans region.

5.1 Proposed Actions / Measures

Actions/Measures	Indicative timetable	Responsible authority
Awareness-raising among officials, planners and builders.	Short term ²¹	RPs, TCT
Awareness-raising campaign to improve social attitudes and transport etiquette towards persons with disabilities and access needs.	Short term	TCT
A review of national design standards for different modes of transports.	Mid term ²²	RPs
Involvement of disability/accessibility experts mandatory for the development of standards for vehicles, mobility systems and transport services.	Mid term	Industry
Involvement of representatives of persons with disabilities in the planning and implementation process.	Mid term	RPs
Employing persons with disabilities.	Mid term	RPs
Adoption of appropriate design standards and guidelines.	Mid term	RPs
Investments in the transport infrastructure to make the transportation system accessible and inclusive.	Long term ²³	RPs
Terms of Reference for launching a tender for the development of Detail Designs for the central bus and rail stations	Short term	TCT
Supporting the Regional Partners in allocating financial resources to eliminate the identified obstacles at the central railway and bus stations	Short term	TCT

Table 3: Proposed actions and measure that will make transport more accessible and inclusive

21 Short Term = 1 year
 22 Mid Term = 2 -3 years
 23 Long Term = 3 - 5 years

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The report identified that the biggest challenge is the lack of participation and representation of disability community within the transport industry at all levels.

Furthermore, the Western Balkans region are not applying the Universal Design Elements²⁴, the UNCRPD or the EU Regulation on rights and obligations for rail and bus and coach passenger rights.

Therefore, given recommendations should be taken under consideration, concrete measures (as defined within the above given table three: Actions/Measures) should be taken by all Regional Partners as the identified challenges are common throughout the region. Identified gaps need to be addressed to ensure that all bus and rail stations be inclusive by fostering connectivity and accessibility for all.

Proposed recommendations:

- **Guidelines and standards** for creating accessible transport systems. Guidelines and design standards that will cover different parts of transport systems such as the built environment (different public transport systems and vehicles used, service and information).
- **Building knowledge** by better understanding from all stakeholders in the transport sectors and government regulatory bodies of the EU Regulations (ANNEX I of the TCT), on rights and obligations of passenger (accessibility part) and the UNCRPD obligations.
- **Improving coordination** by including and consulting the civil society, especially with the persons with reduced mobility on how to overcome identified challenges.
- **Awareness raising** on how important the transposition and implementation of EU Regulation on rail, bus and coach passenger rights is, and the importance of different Universal Design Elements.

TCT Secretariat will remain active and supporting its Regional Partners by assessing potential support either through its own Budget, as well as established structures (Social Forum, Workshops, Round Tables), support with the TAEX applications, and/or other financial or technical support through IPA instruments. In addition to that the TCT Secretariat will regularly monitor and report upon implementation of the key legislation related to Social Acquis (Passenger Rights).

²⁴ Easy access for persons with reduced mobility. Easy orientation and better information systems.

