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# ANNUAL WORK PROGRAM 2024

DRAFT

SEPTEMBER 2023

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# Transport Community Permanent Secretariat

## CONTENT

<b>CONTENT</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>FOREWORD</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>MILESTONES AND PLANNED ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>5</b>
Progress on Action Plans	5
Railways	5
Road	7
Road Safety	9
Transport Facilitation	10
Waterborne Transport and Multimodality	11
Green/multimodal/innovative transport solutions	12
Transport of Dangerous Goods	13
Social Issues and Passenger Rights	14
Social Forum	14
Transport Observatory	15
TEN-T Annual Report	16
5-year rolling work plan	16
Western Balkans Investment Framework (WBIF)	16
<b>MEETINGS OF BODIES ESTABLISHED UNDER THE TRANSPORT COMMUNITY TREATY</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>COMMUNICATION</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>ADMINISTRATION AND HUMAN CAPITAL</b>	<b>18</b>
Human capital / Establishment plan	18
Administration	18
<b>FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>19</b>

## List of abbreviations

<b>Full name</b>	<b>Abbreviation</b>
Transport Community Permanent Secretariat	TCT Secretariat
Trans-European Transport Network	TEN-T Network
European Railways Agency	ERA
Western Balkans Road Safety Observatory	WBRSO
Western Balkans six	WB6
European Union	EU
Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile	FIA
International Transport Forum	ITF
European Commission	EC
Central European Free Trade Agreement	CEFTA
Customs Eastern and South-Eastern Land Border Expert Team	CELBET
Port Community System	PCS
Transport of Dangerous Goods	TDG
Transport Observatory Database/ Information System	TODIS
Accounting software	ERP
Railway Infrastructure Managers Network of the Western Balkan	RIMN WB
European Union Railway Agency	ERA
Europe's Rail Joint Undertaking	EU-Rail
Western Balkans Road Safety Observatory	WBRSO
Technical Assistance	TA
Border crossing point/Common Crossing point	BCP/CCP
European Railway Traffic Management System	ERTMS
Inland Waterways	IWW
Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans	EIP
EC Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport	DG Move

## FOREWORD

In the last three years, the TCT Secretariat has become a fully functional institution, with dedicated staff and a well-defined program of work, firmly on the path to achieve the goal of integrating the transport markets of the Western Balkans into the EU.

In addition to organisation of technical committees, preparation of studies, capacity building activities, conferences, and other events, the TCT Secretariat drafts reports based on a clearly defined reporting schedule and presents these documents to the Regional Steering Committee and the Ministerial Council. While continuing to focus on all transport modes that fall within our scope of work, in 2024 we will put additional focus on issues by organising a Summit. The Summit **“Sustainable and Green Mobility”** will serve as platform for improving electro mobility, alternative fuel infrastructure, energy efficiency vehicles, innovation and resilient infrastructure. The Summit will be co-organised with the relevant international organisation and IFIs dealing with relevant above-mentioned issues related to the Sustainable Mobility. The Summit plans to bring together all relevant stakeholders in the Western Balkans, EU Member States, European Commission and IFIs, to pave the way for future actions and investments in sustainable mobility, alternative fuel infrastructure, climate proofing of rail and road network and better multimodality. Next editions of the annual Summer School and Social Forum, which have become among the most recognisable capacity-building initiatives in the Region, will take place in 2024, also dedicated to this specific topic that will tackle identified challenges in the field of Sustainable Mobility, as well as Social Issues.

In addition, as of 2024 the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat will draft and present the **“Next Gen Action Plans 2024-2027”** on: Road, Rail, Road Safety, Transport Facilitation, Waterborne Transport and Multimodality that will include additional measures deriving from the updated version of ANNEX I of the TCT, more precisely include additional legislative measures related to environment and greening of transport sector.

Upcoming year 2024 the TCT Secretariat will be continue and further strengthen on measures deriving from Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy for the Western Balkans, most of foreseen activities will also be linked with the planned Summit in 2024. In addition to that, the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat will continue to support and tackle the social issues related to this important sector, moreover, drafted action plan on Social Acquis foresees number of measures that will ease the current state, this includes the organizing of 5<sup>th</sup> Social Forum and regular meetings with the members of the working group dealing with identified challenges.

Policy development should always be backed and driven by data. Phase II of the Transport Observatory has become operational in 2023 ensuring analytical support for guiding and measuring the outcomes of project and policy related actions in the region. In 2024 we will witness the commencement of TODIS operational stage while the TCT Secretariat will be also advancing the actions agreed under transport observatory Phase III.

During 2024, the TCT Secretariat will continue providing targeted support to the relevant authorities in the Western Balkans to tackle identified challenges and issues on all sectors, as well as continue with its support to the regional partners through trainings, workshops, expert discussion meetings, study visit and other means of technical support.

Matej Zakonjšek  
Director  
of the Permanent Secretariat of the Transport Community

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## MILESTONES AND PLANNED ACTIVITIES

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### Progress on Action Plans

Action Plans for Rail, Road, Road Safety and Transport Facilitation, endorsed in October 2020 and in May 2021 for Waterborne Transport and Multimodality, are a step-by-step guide on how to achieve common political priorities of the Western Balkans Regional Partners, as well as political objectives of the Transport Community Treaty.

During the first quarter 2024, the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat will draft and then present to its Regional Steering Committee members and the Ministerial Council the **“Next Gen Action Plans 2024 – 2027”**. Out of which on fourth quarter 2024 will draft and present its 4<sup>th</sup> **Progress Report** (or the 1<sup>st</sup> progress report of the “Next Gen Action Plan Report) related upon the implementation of the new listed measures. New Gen action plan will consist of new measures deriving from the updated version of the ANNEX I, including environment, as well as other measures related to the greening/digitalisation/sustainability of the transport sector.

All five Action Plans will continue to be supported by the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat through various means such as expert discussions, workshops/trainings dedicated, CONNECTA V.2.0, and the new EU instrument/programme “Smart and Sustainable Transport Programme”. The Permanent Secretariat will continue to offer its support (in all transport modes) to all Regional Partners with similar activities in the course of 2024, that will support further improve and support the implementation of the measures (policy and project related) deriving from all action plans, strategic document/s, and most importantly ANNEX I of the TCT. within the Action Plans and Guidelines mentioned above.

### Railways

In the year 2023, the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat, supported by JASPERS and the Infrastructure Managers from the Western Balkan region, successfully completed the initial phase of a regional project under the TCT umbrella. The primary aim of this project was to enhance the safety of railroad level crossings. The first phase primarily involved identifying critical level crossings within the region. The next step, set for 2024, entails investing in improving the safety conditions of these level crossings. The TCT Secretariat will play a pivotal role by providing technical specifications to support these investments and assisting in the application for EU grant funding, as this regional project aligns with the EU Economic and Investment Plan.

In 2024, the priorities will continue to be driven by the measures outlined in the Rail Action Plan. A new Action Plan will be collaboratively developed with our Regional Partners for the upcoming planning period. The Technical Committee on Railway will be the hub for supporting Regional Participants through collective efforts. Three meetings are scheduled for 2024, tentatively in February, June, and October.

Since all the goals set in the Rail Action Plan are closely linked to the transposition of the EU Rail Acquis, the TCT Secretariat will remain actively engaged in the preparatory phase of all laws and by-law acts proposed by the Regional Partners.

Responding to the needs of our Regional Partners, the TCT Secretariat will commence a study to define the details for establishing the Regional Centre of Railway Excellence. This study is expected to be completed in 2024 and will provide a comprehensive overview of the requirements for the successful establishment of the Regional Centre of Railway Excellence.

As per the Rail Action Plan, the Railway Infrastructure Managers Network of the Western Balkans (RIMN WB), established in 2021 through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding among all Infrastructure Managers in the Region, will continue its regular meetings in 2024. The TCT Secretariat will continue to provide support. The main focus in 2024 will be on preparatory work for the establishment of a regional Railway Centre of Excellence, as well as collaborative efforts to enhance maintenance through the exchange of information about maintenance plans and support for mutual actions.

In accordance with the Administrative Agreement with the European Agency for Railways (ERA), the TCT Secretariat will arrange several workshops and training sessions for all Regional Partners. These activities will cover critical railway topics that align with the Rail Action Plan.

Building on the momentum of workshops and events held in 2023 and the latest developments in the rail industry, the TCT Secretariat, in partnership with Europe's Rail Joint Undertaking (EU-Rail) and DAC4EU, will organise a follow-up workshop addressing Digital Automatic Coupler operations and their associated benefits.

RAILWAYS MILESTONES	Time frame
Level Crossings Improvement Technical Specifications Delivery - Directive (EU) 2016/798 on railway safety. Technical assistance will be completed by first quarter of next year.	Q1 2024
Meeting on re-establishing rail passenger connections in SEE - Directive 2012/34/EU and Directive (EU) 2016/2370 on establishing a single European railway area.	Q2 2024
Digital Automatic Coupling Workshop - Directive (EU) 2016/797 on the interoperability of the rail system.	Q3 2024
Defining the details for establishing the Regional Centre of Railway Excellence	Q4 2024
Rail Infrastructure Managers Network Meetings (RIMN) - Directive 2012/34/EU	2024
Multiple workshops/trainings on relevant railway related topics (co-organised with ERA) – Railway 4 <sup>th</sup> Package (market and technical pillar)	2024

Rail market opening is on good track as the five out of six regional partners decided to open market at the domestic level. Next stage will be market opening at the regional level.

As one of the main TCT goal is transition from first to the second transitional period what considered market opening at the regional level. Pre-condition for second transitional phase is positive assessment by DG MOVE about progress in transposition and implementation of the EU Railway legislation.

Our intention is to push at least two regional partners to full file all obligation from EU Rail Acquis and hopefully become a candidates for second transitional period.

## Road

Monitoring the implementation of the Road Action Plan and supporting the transposition of Annex I.3 of Transport Community Treaty will remain at the core of the activities of the Road Technical Committee. The plan is to organise 3 meetings, tentatively in March, June, and October 2024. Furthermore, 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Network of Road Executives will take place by Q2 2024.

In close consultation with the members of Road Technical Committee, TCT Secretariat is planning to undertake two Technical Assistance projects during 2024. Both Technical Assistance are aiming to strengthen the capacities of the administrations on Regional Partners to set up the bodies in charge for ITS in compliance with EU Directive while the other one for the first time will be focused on road operations and facilitation/digitalisation of data exchange on road operators between the Regional Partners.

➤ **Supporting the implementation of ITS Directive.** This project is in line with the Road Action Plan and TCT Annex I.3 Road transport specifically:

- Directive 2010/40/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2010 on the framework for the deployment of Intelligent Transport Systems in the field of road transport and for interfaces with other modes of transport (OJ L 207, 6.8.2010, p. 1).
- Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2016/209 of 12 February 2016 on a standardisation request to the European standardisation organisations as regards Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) in urban areas in support of Directive 2010/40/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on the framework for the deployment of Intelligent Transport Systems in the field of road transport and for interfaces with other modes of transport (OJ L 39, 16.2.2016, p. 48).
- Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 885/2013 of 15 May 2013 supplementing ITS Directive 2010/40/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council regarding the provision of information services for safe and secure parking places for trucks and commercial vehicles (OJ L 247, 18.9.2013, p. 1).
- Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2015/962 of 18 December 2014 supplementing Directive 2010/40/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council regarding the provision of EU-wide real-time traffic information services (OJ L 157, 23.6.2015, p. 21).

This project comes as a follow up of CONNECTA Technical Assistance - Preparation of ITS Strategies for Preparation of ITS Strategy for Bosnia and Herzegovina (all modes), Kosovo\*<sup>1</sup> (all modes), Albania (railway and maritime) and Montenegro (railway). The aim of this project is to recommend the ITS institutional framework by describing specific ITS institutional adaptations such as the NAP related institutional adaptations, the market open to the European Electronic Toll Service (EETS). TCT Secretariat is planning to include training modules within the scope of work of this Technical Assistance.

➤ **Improvement of road operations – Phase 1 of Western Balkans Electronic Register of Road Undertakings (WBRRU)**

This project is in line with TCT Annex I.3 Road transport specifically:

- Regulation (EC) No 1071/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 October 2009 establishing common rules concerning the conditions to be complied with to pursue the occupation of road transport operator and repealing Council Directive 96/26/EC;

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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.



- Regulation (EU) No 2020/1055 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 July 2020 amending Regulations (EC) No 1071/2009, (EC) No 1072/2009 and (EU) No 1024/2012 with a view to adapting them to developments in the road transport sector.

This project aims to contribute to effectively regulating and managing the road transport operator business, promoting transparency, cooperation, and compliance within the Western Balkans region.

The project will assist the Regional Partners in the following:

- *Establishment of a National Electronic Register*: Each Regional Partner is to set up a national electronic register that lists companies authorised to operate as road transport operators.
- *Western Balkans Electronic Register of Road Undertakings (WBRRU)*: In alignment with the European Register of Road Undertakings (ERRU), a WBRRU is to be established specifically for the Western Balkans region.
- *Development of the e-Permit Exchange*: Within the WBRRU, a dedicated module is to be created to serve as an exchange terminal for electronic permits. This initiative aims to simplify and expedite the permit issuance and verification processes.
- *Recognition of Digital Signatures*: Authorities involved in road transport operations to recognize and accept digital signatures.

Continuous exchange of knowledge and information between Regional Partners and Observing Participants, IFIs and a wider stakeholder group is one of the actions included in the Action Plan. During 2024, besides the usual knowledge and experience sharing during Technical Committees, is planned FIDIC training.

- **Training on Capacity building on contracts management for works and maintenance of road (RED and YELLOW FIDIC)**. This training is in line with TCT Annex I.1:
  - Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on Union guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network and repealing Decision No 661/2010/EU (OJ L 348, 20. 12. 2013, p. 1).
  - Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2016/758 of 4 February 2016 amending Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards adapting Annex III thereto (OJ L 126,14. 5. 2016, p. 3).

The aim of this training is to strengthen the capacities of administration dealing with works contracts as per FIDIC Rules in both RED and YELLOW Books. The training is aimed at road authorities/public enterprises.

ROAD MILESTONES	Time frame
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Network of Road Executives</b>	Q2 2024
<b>Training on Capacity building on contracts management for works and maintenance of road (RED and YELLOW FIDIC)</b> to support implementation of Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on Union guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network	Q3 2024
<b>Supporting the implementation of ITS Directive 2010/40/EU</b> of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2010 on the framework for the deployment of Intelligent Transport Systems in the field of road transport and for interfaces with other modes of transport	Q4 2024
<b>Improvement of road operations – Phase 1 of Western Balkans Electronic Register of Road Undertakings (WBRRU)</b> as per Regulation (EC) No 1071/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 October 2009 establishing common rules concerning the conditions to be complied with to pursue the occupation of road transport operator	Q4 2024



## Road Safety

Achieving progress in the implementation of the Road Safety Action Plan will be the core work of the Technical Committee on Road Safety. In addition, given the multi-sectorial approach of road safety, monitoring of transposition of Annex I.3 of Transport Community Treaty will be followed in cooperation with other Technical Committees, Social Forum and Western Balkans Road Safety Observatory (WBRSO) members from the police and health sectors. There are three meetings of the Technical Committee on Road Safety planned to be held in March, June, October 2024 and two WBRSO meetings that are held back-to-back with Technical Committee.

The Technical Assistance, to have a pilot project in collecting Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) on safety belt use and Child Restraint Use in Western Balkans Regional Partners using the new EU Methodology, has started in August 2023 and is expected to be finalised by March 2024. The KPI values will be comparable across all Regional Partners and EU Member States. This will be the first time that the region will come out with data that is reliable and meet the minimum methodological requirements of the European Commission. This project will also contribute to capacity building, in particular to the Regional Partners which have not yet collected and calculated the data for the KPIs. Road safety Key Performance Indicators are an integral part of the “Safe System” approach to road safety. As such, it will show progress on the measures of the Regional Road Safety Action Plan. The results together with the way forward and recommendations will be presented to a wider audience of road safety professionals in a conference organised by TCT Secretariat.

Based on the demand and conclusions of the Technical Committees on Road Safety held on 2023, the TCT Secretariat has proposed number of actions related to the following areas/fields:

- implementation of programmes for protecting vulnerable road users: pedestrians with focus on children and elderly people, cyclists, use of e-scooters;
- build capacities and discuss steps on the implementation of the Directive (EU) 2015/413 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2015 facilitating cross-border exchange of information on road-safety-related traffic offences;
- evaluating how best to secure Maximum Abbreviated Injury Scale (MAIS3+) counts (serious injuries).

All above topics are linked with the measures of the road safety action plan and the transposition of the respective EU Acquis.

ROAD SAFETY MILESTONES	Time frame
Study Visit in support of Directive 2008/96/EC on road infrastructure safety management - Sharing experience in implementation of programmes for protecting vulnerable road users: pedestrians with focus on children and elderly people, cyclists, use of e-scooters.	Q2 2024
Conference - promoting the results of KPI on Seat Belts and Child Restraint Use- in support of implementation of Council Directive 91/671/EEC of 16 December 1991 relating to the compulsory use of safety belts and child-restraint systems in vehicles.	Q2 2024
Workshop - Build capacities and discuss steps on the implementation of the Directive (EU) 2015/413 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2015 facilitating cross-border exchange of information on road-safety-related traffic offences.	Q3 2024
Capacity building - Evaluating how best to secure Maximum Abbreviated Injury Scale (MAIS3+) counts (serious injuries)- linked to Council Decision 93/704/EC the creation of a Community database on road accidents in Europe (CARE)	Q4 2024
Initiating the process of Joining CARE for Montenegro and North Macedonia	Q1 2024

## Transport Facilitation

Based on the progress made in the implementation of the Transport Facilitation Action Plan, and the identified further needs in the area, a revision of some of the measures is expected to be defined in 2024. Continuous monitoring will be provided by the *Technical Committee on Transport Facilitation*, and its meetings are indicatively scheduled for April, June and December 2024.

**Bilateral agreements for one-stop controls** needs to be agreed and signed between most of the Regional Partners for the border crossing/common crossing points on the indicative extension of the TEN-T Network, both for road and rail BCPs. There was some progress in 2023 in respect to this priority, but it is expected that this will continue with even stronger pace in 2024.

Discussions for improving the border crossing points' management and traffic capacity at the EU-WB6 borders should be initiated between the Western Balkans Partners and its immediate neighbouring EU Member States. The joint TCT-CEFTA **Roadmap for taking forward the EU-Western Balkans/CEFTA Green Lanes and establishing coordinated border management at the EU-Western Balkans BCPs** was prepared as a follow up from the Connectivity Summit in Budva and in line with the Joint Declaration endorsed thereby. According to the roadmap's timeframe, the focus in 2024 will be to put in place the necessary coordination structure including from the EU neighbouring Member States, and to define the BCP fiches which should serve as basis to create all legal, institutional and infrastructure conditions on the relevant BCPs for improving the transport flows.

Establishing two-ways electronic exchange of data between the custom authorities of the WB6 and EUMS (through SEED+), which is at the core of the **EU-Western Balkans/CEFTA Green Lanes** concept, in order to become operational in its wholesome, remains as key priority for 2024. A close coordination with Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA) and the European Commission will be key for reaching that objective. Improving EU-Western Balkans customs cooperation require either an upgrade to the EU existing legal basis in the area, or a new legal basis, and the EC is already considering the possible options.

Upon finalisation of the technical documentation for infrastructure interventions and supply of new equipment on two pairs of BCPs between Albania - Montenegro and Kosovo - North Macedonia in 2023 under the CONNECTA Technical Assistance, these (as well as other priority BCPs for which the project documentation is ready) should have the corresponding infrastructure projects ready for tendering from 2024 onwards. The *Safe and Sustainable Transport Programme*, financed by the European Commission and the World Bank, should support these small-scale projects.

The support to the capacity building activities and to the strengthening of the inter- and intra-agency coordination will continue in 2024. Specific and targeted meetings between the border agencies and respective institutions on central level, as well as the transport associations (Chambers of Commerce) are foreseen to be organised between Albania-North Macedonia-Kosovo, and Bosnia and Herzegovina-Montenegro-Serbia-Croatia. Moreover, a study visit on the Romanian-Moldovan border is planned, in order to get familiarized with the legal and institutional framework for establishing joint BCPs between EU and non-EU partners, as well as of the concrete projects implemented at the border between the Republic of Moldova and Romania.

Following the good cooperation established with CELBET (Customs Eastern and South-Eastern Land Border Expert Team) in 2023, whose experts delivered trainings during the Summer School on Connectivity held in July in Ohrid, as well as during the joint training workshops on WB6-EU BCPs (to take place in the period October-December 2023), further activities shall be arranged in the course of 2024, upon request of the regional partners, in order for practical and useful operational and management solutions to be offered to the border services at the land (road and rail) BCPs.

<b>TRANSPORT FACILITATION MILESTONES</b>	<b>Time frame</b>
Signed bilateral agreements for one-stop controls in road and rail sectors for most of the internal BCPs in the Western Balkans	Q4 2024
EU-Western Balkans/CEFTA Green Lanes initiative implemented in both directions (WB6-EU) and on as much as possible EU-WB6 BCPs	Q4 2024
BCP infrastructure (small scale) projects prepared and in pipeline for financing under available financial instruments	Q4 2024
TCT- CELBET practical trainings for strengthening the efficiency and the competences of the customs border authorities carried out	Q3 2024
Coordination trilateral meetings on transport facilitation improvements organised, with active participation from transport companies and business associations (Chambers of Commerce)	Q3 2024
Study visit on Romanian-Moldovan BCPs for sharing best practises on models of enhanced border cooperation between EU and non-EU partners	Q2 2024

## Waterborne Transport and Multimodality

The most important activity of the Technical Committee for Waterborne Transport and Multimodality will be monitoring the implementation of the Action Plan and supporting the transposition of Annex I.4 and I.5 of Transport Community Treaty. Planned to organise 3 (three) technical committee meetings, tentatively in February, June, and November 2024.

At the same time, we will support Albania for implementation of the roadmap for improving the fleet performance regarding Paris MoU on Port State Control, the process for mutual recognition of seafarers training and certificates with EU, establishment of the Vessel Traffic Monitoring and Information System (VTMIS) and establishment from Montenegro of the Maritime National Single Window (MNSW).

In cooperation with International maritime Organisation (IMO) we will assist Albania, Montenegro Regional Partners for complying with the Regulation I/8 (Quality standard) of The International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW) and the Directive (EU) 2022/993 on the minimum level of training of seafarers and report to IMO.

In cooperation with DG NEAR after successfully application from the Regional Partners and approval 2(two) TAIEX Technical Assistance will be implemented one on Implementation of the International code for the maritime transport of dangerous goods in packaged form (IMDG Code) that will be implemented in cooperation with Albania and Durres Port Authority and the second project on Independent evaluation, Regulation I/8 (Quality standard) of STCW Convention, in line with Directive (EU) 2022/993.

We will assist European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) and Regional Partners for implementation of the second phase of the of the EMSA Technical Assistance on “Enhancing the standards of implementation of the international conventions and transposition of the European legislation”.

<b>WATERBORNE TRANSPORT AND MULTIMODALITY MILESTONES</b>	<b>Time frame</b>
Implementation of the TAIEX - Series of events on Adjustment of procedures applicable for implementation of IMDG Code in the context of the implementation of Directive 2008/68/EC.	Q1 2024
TAIEX Expert Mission on “Independent evaluation, Regulation I/8 (Quality standard) of STCW Convention, in line with Directive (EU) 2022/993”	Q2 2024

## Green/multimodal/innovative transport solutions

Implementation of the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy for Western Balkans and monitoring/support to the transposition of relevant EU acquis of Annex I of the Transport Community Treaty will remain at the core of the activities of TCT Secretariat. For 2024, most of activities are planned as a follow up of TCT work in previous years.

Given that several studies have been performed in the previous years with concrete set of recommendations, focus in 2024 will be on capacity building and training to assist the RP in concrete implementation of activities. To that purpose, we are planning several workshops/capacity building activities as follows:

- **Sustainable and Green Mobility Summit**

Focus on next year's regional Summit will be on the green agenda in transport (decarbonization of transport, climate resilience of infrastructure, promotion of green solutions, etc.), focusing on adaptation and mitigation measures. Summit aspires to foster discussions and the exchange of knowledge, aiming to raise awareness about the development of sustainable, decarbonized, energy efficient, intelligent, resilient, and eco-friendly transport infrastructure and operations. With goal is to promote mobility decarbonisation and sustainability, reduce pollution, and enhance the health and well-being of our citizens.

It will play a pivotal role in supporting the implementation of the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy for Western Balkans, as outlined in July 2021. It offers a unique opportunity to convene all pertinent stakeholders and facilitate insightful discussions on these pressing matters. Summit will feature a diverse array of informative panels designed to facilitate the exchange of experiences and knowledge regarding the imperative for sustainable, intelligent, resilient, and eco-conscious transport solutions.

- **e-Freight Regulation Implementation**

Supporting RPs and OP to implement e-freight regulation according to Annexes I.2, I.3, I.4 TCT, eFTI Regulation. This meeting is a follow up of the impact assessment study on e -freight deployment as well as Connectivity Summit declaration provisions and it aims to help the RPs and Observing participants in transposition of eFTI Regulation and to gain valuable insights into how these regulations are transforming the freight industry, optimizing processes, and contributing to a more efficient and sustainable supply chain.

- **Supporting European Mobility Week**

Aim of this activity is strengthening ties with urban centres and ensuring better connectivity between TEN-T and urban level which is according to the new revision of TEN-T guidelines, Sustainable and Smart Mobility strategy for Western Balkans and recommendations from the Sustainable and Smart mobility project. In support of European Mobility Week activities, we plan to engage with municipalities in community-driven initiatives that are shaping the future of sustainable transportation within our cities. Collaborate with them to explore ways to make urban mobility cleaner, more accessible, and people-centric, to pave the way towards greener and more connected urban landscapes.

- **Workshop on Innovation and Smart Mobility**

Specific objective is to improve coordination and cooperation regarding digitalisation and innovation in mobility and transport between the key stakeholders with the aim of achieving green and smart transition to climate neutrality of transport as one of the actions from the strategy. The aim of the

workshop is through interactive sessions and dynamic discussions, to explore EU innovative funds which are available for the region, share best practices among participants from WB and from EU and connect public authorities with innovative communities in the region such as innovation hubs to support innovation. By participating in this workshop, they will gain valuable insights into harnessing innovation to create efficient, interconnected, and user-centric transportation systems that cater to the needs of the modern world.

- **Workshop on Mobility Decarbonisation and Depollution**

Follow up of the TCT study on sustainable and smart mobility, World Bank project on road policy emissions and our activities on urban mobility as it is mentioned in TEN-T guidelines, Alternative fuel infrastructure regulation and fuel quality directives. The workshop will go deeper into the strategies, policies, and technologies that are driving the shift towards eco-friendly transportation systems according to the results of the study. Engage in collaborative discussions with experts who are leading the change in reducing emissions, improving air quality, and mitigating the environmental impact of mobility to help them implement these solutions in practice.

GREEN/MULTIMODAL/INOVATIVE TRANSPORT MILESTONES	Time frame
Implementation of e -freight regulation (supporting implementation of Regulation (EU) 2020/1056 on electronic freight transport information)	Q3/2024
Workshop on innovation and smart mobility (supporting implementation of SSMS strategy, ITS Directive 2010/40/EU and TEN-T Guidelines)	Q3/2024
Supporting Mobility Week activities	Q3/2024
Workshop on mobility decarbonisation and depollution (supporting implementation of Alternative Fuel Infrastructure Regulation and TEN-T guidelines -sustainability part)	Q1-Q4/2-24
Sustainable and Smart Mobility Summit	Q2-Q3/2024

## Transport of Dangerous Goods

Transport of Dangerous Goods related activities will continue within the Technical Committee as several Regional Partners have delays in implementing the Key Performance Indicators related to Directive 2008/68/EC on inland transport of dangerous goods and Directive (EU) 2022/1999 on uniform procedures for checks on the transport of dangerous goods by road.

Blending capacity building assistance provided by TAIEX with the support provided directly by the Transport Community activities related to implementation of Directive 2008/68/EC, the Technical Committee will continue its activities at the same pace -i.e. three sessions per year to discuss the issues where further cooperation is needed. The official sessions of the TDG Technical Committee could be supplemented with informal online, if the group will wish to address these specific issues, as it happened in the first half of 2023 in order to address the issues at stake in the Guidelines. The results of the actions commenced in 2023 by Regional Partners are to be expected.

A wider involvement of stakeholders and more pinpointed subjects were raised by Regional Partners during 2023, so a part of the requests of assistance will be addressed via TC budget.

The technical committee on TDG in cooperation with the Road Safety Committee is expected to address issues related to stimulation of implementation of 112 and eCall as a follow-up of the programs performed in 2023 for assistance of fire services in Montenegro and Albania to enhance preparedness in case of accident during

transport of dangerous goods. In order to ensure that the transport market is prepared for further integration, the work program for 2024 will include an event dedicated to Directive (EU) 2010/35 on transportable pressure equipment building upon the experience of the Regional Partners that are more advanced in transposition of this Directive, in particular in terms of implementation of construction standards for tanks and cylinders for Class 2 Gases.

To enhance rail transport of dangerous goods, further attention will be given to the areas of complementarity between the general railway law, RID and SMGS Annex II. During 2024 the TCT Secretariat will also consider a revision of the TDG Guidelines.

TRANSPORT OF DANGEROUS GOODS MILESTONES	Time frame
Transposition of Directive 2008/68/EC – translation in domestic languages of the Annexes of Directive 2008/68/EC	2024
Transposition of Directive (EU) 2022/1999 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 October 2022 on uniform procedures for checks on the transport of dangerous goods by road	2024
Preparatory actions for transposition of Directive 2010/35/EU on transportable pressure equipment	2024

## Social Issues and Passenger Rights

The Action Plan for the Implementation of EU Acquis in the Area of Social Issues and Passenger Rights in transport has been endorsed by the Regional Partners at the Regional Steering Committee in March 2023. In 2024 the TCT will continue monitoring the implementation of the Social Issues and Passenger Rights Action Plan and supporting the transposition of Annex I.3 of Transport Community Treaty. The plan is to organise the 5<sup>th</sup> Social Forum and several dedicated meetings and study visits for the two working groups.

### Social Forum

The 5th Social Forum is expected to take place in the second quarter of 2024 and it will be held back-to-back with the yearly TCT Summit. The objective of the 5th Social Forum, titled **"Engaging Social and Civil society for Sustainable and Green Mobility transition"** in 2024 is to foster collaboration and dialogue among social and civil society stakeholders to drive sustainable and environmentally friendly changes in the field of mobility. This forum aims to explore innovative solutions, share knowledge, and promote inclusive strategies that contribute to a greener and more sustainable future in transportation and mobility systems. Furthermore, **The Conclusions of the 4<sup>th</sup> Social Forum** highlighted two aspects that would guide the future work in the field of the social Acquis and passenger rights as set up in Annex I. The Action Plan will become a crucial document for the contracting parties to assist in improving social standards, job security, attractive and fair working conditions, and passenger rights. Regional Partners need to more actively involve NGOs in transport policy and project preparation and to strive for accessible mobility as it is an enabler of the right to everyone to participate in social, cultural, and economic activities.

### Working Groups

The Transport Community has recently established two working groups to address social issues and passenger rights. The first group focuses on Tachographs, the second group is dedicated to Passenger Rights. The working groups have been formed with a specific objective in mind: to provide invaluable assistance in implementing the Action Plan on Social Issues and Passenger Rights within the Transport Community. Regarding key EU legislation,



the group working on Tachographs deals with Regulation (EU) No 165/2014, which outlines requirements for tachograph use in road transport and the regulation (EU) No 2020/1054 regards maximum daily and weekly driving times, breaks. Meanwhile, the group concentrating on Passenger Rights covers various EU regulations relevant to different modes of transport, including Regulation (EU) No 1371/2007 for rail passengers, Regulation (EU) No 181/2011 for bus and coach passengers, and Regulation (EU) No 1177/2010 for maritime passengers. The groups will have two meetings during the year (2nd quarter of 2024 and 4th quarter of 2024).

**Passenger Rights**

The TCT will contract a Study for **Strengthening Regulatory Framework for Passenger Rights in the Western Balkans**. The specific objective of the study is to *first* improve the transposition and implementation of the passenger rights in the region and *second* to ensure that carriers and passengers have clear understanding of what the passenger rights entail. The Transport Community Permanent Secretariat will continue to communicate the outcomes of the **Report on Passenger Rights in the Western Balkans – focusing on making transport accessible and inclusive**.

**Diversity and Youth activities**

The Transport Community Permanent Secretariat will continue with activities on including more women in the transport sector. The activities in 2023 showed that political support is necessary to empower women to join and contribute to the transport sector, as well as to bring a gender perspective when designing and planning transport infrastructure. A Women in Transport activity is planned in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2024. The Transport Community will continue with activities on youth inclusion in the transport sector, especially on ones connected with digitalisation and innovation. We will also continue with the promotion of the programme DiscoverEU.

SOCIAL ISSUES AND PASSENGER RIGHTS MILESTONES	Time frame
Preparatory actions (TAIEX missions, study visits, workshops) to improve the implementation of the <i>Action Plan for the Implementation of EU Acquis in the Area of Social Issues and Passenger Rights in Transport</i>	2024
Technical assistance on <i>Strengthening Regulatory Framework for Passenger Rights in the Western Balkans</i>	3Q 2024

**Transport Observatory**

The activities pertaining to the setting-up of TODIS (**Transport Observatory Phase 2**) have been completed, with the system finally being taken over after a prolonged testing and fine-tuning process in September 2023. User training is on track to be completed by the close of 2023.

By the end of 2023, it is also anticipated that the RSC will endorse the procedural framework for TODIS, paving the way for normal system operations in 2024. Simultaneously, several concurrent activities are scheduled to take place in 2024, including:

- A Comprehensive TODIS data gap review and the preparation of a multi-year gap-filling plan (to be discussed and agreed within the Technical Committees and translated in dedicated TA projects);
- Development of the TODIS Data Glossary;
- The continued development of the system and data model, building upon the outcomes of the following projects carried out by TCT:
  - o Railway Market Monitoring;



- Improving climate resilience and adaptation measures in the indicative extension of TEN-T road and rail networks in Western Balkans;
- Identification of TODIS future development needs (based on experience gained from TODIS operation and fully aligned with the revision of Regulation 1315/2013).

On March 28, 2023, the RSC officially endorsed the revised concept for Transport Observatory Stage 3, encompassing the following pivotal actions:

- Initiating a series of studies with the objective of enhancing the quality and cohesiveness of regional transport planning while integrating their findings into the procedural framework of the Western Balkans Investment Framework (WBIF).
- Postponing the decision regarding the development of a Regional Transport Model until 2025.

TCT has taken additional steps to compile a comprehensive list of specific actions to be executed under this initiative (including draft budgets and potential funding sources) and initiated consultations in this regard with key stakeholders in the region (EC, IFIs).

In 2024, contingent upon the successful outcome of the consultation process, TCT will commence effective implementation of the actions agreed under this initiative.

## TEN-T Annual Report

Under Art. 8 of the Treaty establishing the Transport Community, the Regional Steering Committee shall report every year to the Ministerial Council on the implementation of the TEN-T described in the Treaty. Technical Committees will continue to assist the Regional Steering Committee in drawing up the report.

The Transport Community Permanent Secretariat will produce its **fourth Annual Report on Implementation of the Development of TEN-T Network** based on the data collection procedures already in place under the Transport Observatory framework.

## 5-year rolling work plan

Under the provisions of Article 9 of the Treaty, the Transport Community is bound to prepare and revise every 2 years a 5-year rolling plan for the development of the TEN-T Network in the region. Following the release of the 5-year plan's maiden edition in 2022, the year 2024 is poised to mark the issuance of its first revision.

The 2024 edition of the 5-year rolling work plan will benefit TODIS outcomes, employ an enhanced methodology and will build on the initiatives set in motion under Transport Observatory Phase 3.

## Western Balkans Investment Framework (WBIF)

The Transport Community Permanent Secretariat will continue to provide its **contribution to the screening of the grant applications** submitted by the Western Balkans Regional Partners to the Western Balkans Investment Framework. Coordination with WBIF on the prioritisation of green elements within their prioritisation methodology will also be continued in 2024.

Furthermore, TCT Secretariat will continue to work closely with DG NEAR and Regional Partners for the implementation of Safe and Sustainable Programme.

Also, as mentioned under the Transport Observatory topic above, TCT intends to put forward concrete improvement proposals to the WBIF framework aimed at enhancing the quality and cohesiveness of regional transport planning.

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## MEETINGS OF BODIES ESTABLISHED UNDER THE TRANSPORT COMMUNITY TREATY

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According to Article 23 of the Treaty establishing the Transport Community, the **Ministerial Council** meets on an annual basis. During 2024, up to two Ministerial Council meetings indicatively are planned to take place, in 2024.

In line with the Rules of Procedure of the **Regional Steering Committee**, indicatively four meetings will be organised during 2024.

**Social Forum**, as one of the pillars of the Transport Community, in 2024 will be dedicated to ongoing social issues related to international freight transport.

**The Budget Committee** is intended to be organised for the eighth and ninth time in the course of 2024.

Regular **Technical Committee** meetings will be organised to follow up on the implementation of the Transport Community Action Plans endorsed in October 2020 and July 2021. Three meetings in 2024 are planned for Technical Committees on Railways, Road, Road Safety and Transport Facilitation and three meetings in 2024 are planned for Technical Committees on Waterborne Transport and Multimodality, Transport of Dangerous Goods. Two meetings are planned for the Western Balkans Road Safety Observatory.

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## COMMUNICATION

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In 2024, communication activities will continue to be planned in accordance with priorities and milestones set in the Annual Work Program. The Secretariat will continue raising public awareness in the Western Balkans on its achievements and encourage public engagement. Focus will continue to be placed on concrete benefits that integration of transport markets of the Western Balkans into the EU brings to citizens' lives. We will continue cooperating with media, contacts in the institutions in the Western Balkans, EU Delegations and press offices of transport ministries, so that activities of the TCT Secretariat can receive widest possible visibility.

The TCT Secretariat's 2024 communication activities will focus on promoting the main topic of the year: ***Sustainable and Green Mobility***.

In 2024, TCT Secretariat will continue developing printed materials focused on main reports produced by the Secretariat. Other communication activities will include organisation of interviews, press briefings, op-eds and information campaigns for journalists.

During the year, particular focus will be placed on promoting the achievements of the Secretariat during the first five years of its operations. Moreover, substantial investments of resources will be directed towards public awareness raising activities revolving around topics such as road safety.

The Secretariat's website will continue to be the main communication channel with stakeholders and depository of all reports, strategies and other key documents, which will continue to be easily accessible to public. The Secretariat will continue publication of its monthly newsletter, which will be regularly distributed to all stakeholders and available via subscription on TCT website.

The social media accounts will remain updated on a daily basis to reflect work of a dynamic organisation that responds quickly to new developments and informs the public about its work.

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## **ADMINISTRATION and HUMAN CAPITAL**

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### **Human capital / Establishment plan**

No changes to Transport Community Permanent Secretariat human capital and organisational structure during 2024 is anticipated. As the renewal of the staff contracts was conducted in the course of 2023, regular yearly performance appraisals as stipulated in the Staff regulation shall be conducted in the course of 2024.

Selection procedure for the secondment shall continue with welcoming first two secondments in 2024 (first secondment is to start March 2024 and second secondment to start in September 2024).

Staff away/retreat day shall be organised in the first quarter of the year aiming to improve skills and capacities of the staff.

Depending on the future scope of involvement of Observing Participants, Transport Community Secretariat may support if needed, engagement of project staff who shall administer the cooperation with the observers.

### **Administration**

TCT Secretariat will continue with regular reporting activities with preparation and presentation of its Annual Operational Report for the previous year.

The Transparency Register is regularly updated and published on the TCT website - <https://www.transport-community.org/transparency-register/>

Pending approval on proposed changes of the Rules on the Reimbursement of expenses incurred by persons from outside the Permanent Secretariat of the Transport Community who are invited to participate in the meetings of the Transport Community. Afterwards, the Secretariat shall develop and put in practice necessary procedures for its implementation.

Depending on future engagement of project staff to administer cooperation with the Observing Participants, project office would be setup and its operations would be managed in line with the agreed scope of engagement with the observers.

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## **FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

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The management shall ensure efficient and transparent utilisation of the financial resources in line with the Financial Rules and auditing procedures applicable to the Transport Community and other rules having a financial impact, as adopted by the Regional Steering Committee. The reimbursement processes for event participants shall be further streamlined by implementing digital expense submission and approval systems, reducing the reimbursement cycle time.

The accounts for the financial year 2023 shall be established no later than 31 March 2024 as per Article 61 of the Financial Rules. A report shall be provided to the Budget Committee and the Regional Steering Committee once the Financial Statements are validated by the Director and audited by the Independent External Auditor. The External Audit Report is planned to be finalised in the first half of 2024 and submitted to the Regional Steering Committee in accordance with article 63 of the Financial Rules. The Secretariat shall launch internal consultations on the draft Budget 2025 in early 2024. The goal will be to adopt the Budget 2025 latest by the end of 2024

