

2023 ANNUAL OPERATIONAL REPORT



Transport Community Permanent Secretariat

2023 IN NUMBERS



100

members of our
technical committees



27

meetings of the
technical committees



37

study visits
organised



140+

partnerships with different
institutions and organisations



1700+

participants in the activities
organised during 2023

FOREWORD

I am pleased to present the Annual Operational Report for 2023, highlighting the efforts and achievements of the Transport Community and its bodies.

Aligned with the decisions of our Regional Steering Committee, the TCT Secretariat diligently formulated the Annual Work Programme 2023. This report reflects the key activities and notable accomplishments spanning from 1 January to 31 December 2023.

Throughout the year, our focus remained on fostering sustainable and efficient transport systems, recognising its substantial role in driving investments and enhancing economic development. During the last year, the Transport Community's Connectivity Summit was a highlight event, which attracted a diverse group of professionals and political stakeholders. This summit not only shed light on dynamics within the Western Balkans but also underscored its crucial role in connecting with the European Union.

Notably, 2023 marked the establishment of the Western Balkan Eastern Mediterranean Corridor, a significant milestone enhancing regional connectivity internally and with the EU Member States. Additionally, high-level understandings were reached between Regional Partners and the EU, finalising the TEN-T revision, and expanding the Core Network to include Corridor VIII along with new ports and airports. A few important roads and rail connections were also recognised as a part of the same, too.

Last year also witnessed the presidencies of Montenegro, and North Macedonia over the Transport Community's Regional Steering Committee. During the Montenegrin presidency, the Transport Community achieved numerous milestones, including the establishment of the Western Balkans Road Safety Observatory system, the organisation of the Connectivity Summit, monitoring the revision of TEN-T maps and agreeing on new revised maps, implementation of Green Lanes initiatives within the Western Balkans and with EU Member States, and the successful conduct of political and technical level meetings. The presidency of North Macedonia continued with the same energy and efficiency, organising the Ministerial Council Meeting at the end of 2023.

I am pleased to report that our strategic plans remained on course, delivering tangible outcomes in integrating Western Balkan transport markets into the European Union. Moreover, significant progress was made in systematically involving Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, and Georgia as observing participants in various Transport Community bodies. The observing participants, alongside the Western Balkans, share a common vision: the full integration of their transport markets into the EU, achieved through establishing common standards and service quality across a truly interconnected Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T).

I extend my sincere gratitude to all who contributed to the success of the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat in 2023. Together, we have laid a solid foundation for a more connected, efficient, and sustainable future.



Matej Zakonjšek,

Director

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Annex I	Annex I to the Transport Community Treaty
BCPs	Border Crossing Points
CEFTA	Central European Free Trade Agreement
CFL	Luxembourg Railways
CONNECTA	Technical Assistance to Connectivity in the Western Balkans
DG MOVE	Directorate General for Mobility and Transport, European Commission
DG NEAR	Directorate General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, European Commission
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EC	European Commission
EDDP	European DAC Delivery Programme
EIB	European Investment Bank
ERA	European Union Agency for Railways
ERTMS	European Railway Traffic Management System
EVR	European Vehicle Register
EU	European Union
EU DEL(s)	European Union Delegation(s)
EU Member State(s)	European Union Member State(s)
IPA	the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
ITS	Intelligent Transport Systems
JASPERS	Joint Assistance to Support Projects in European Regions
JBCPs	Joint Border Crossing Points
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
Observing Participants	Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine
RSC	Regional Steering Committee
SEE Parties	Southeast European Parties: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia
TA	Technical Assistance
TCT Secretariat	Transport Community Permanent Secretariat
TSIs	Technical Specifications for Interoperability
WBRSO	Western Balkans Road Safety Observatory
WHO	World Health Organization

* 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.

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ACTIVITIES IN 2023

1. RAILWAY

Rail Action Plan primarily focuses on policy reform and the enhancement of the rail system, with the opening of the rail market being one of the most critical components of the plan and an integral element of the Transport Community Treaty. However, progress in this area has been between 2% to 12% 2023, with the rail market opened at the domestic level in five out of six regional partners, and twelve private Railway Undertakings established across these five regional partners. Certainly, main highlight was adoption of changes in Railway System Law in the North Macedonia.

The key objective is to fully implement the EU legislation on interoperability, with additional work required to implement Technical Specifications for Interoperability (TSIs) and to establish a comprehensive plan for reviewing and revising existing technical and safety regulations in accordance with the EU rail acquis, as well as enhancing the governance of the railways.

The Transport Community Permanent Secretariat successfully accomplished majority of the railway objectives outlined in the Annual Work Program for 2023 as presented in the table below:

RAILWAYS MILESTONES	Time frame	Progress
Rail Excellence Summit Pristina	Q1 2023	Completed
ERTMS Challenges and Opportunities Training	Q3 2023	Completed
Digital Automatic Coupling – Show-case Workshop	Q3 2023	Completed
Further progress on establishing Regional Rail Centre of Excellence	Q4 2023	Completed
Establishing rail passenger connections between capitals in the Western Balkan	Q4 2024	Ongoing
Assessment of the rail market in the Western Balkans in terms of capacities, policies, economic and technical level of development of freight and passenger transport segments. Publishing the first Regional Rail Market Report. Executing the related contract	Q3 2023	Completed
Technical specifications for level crossings upgrade	Q2 2024	Ongoing
Not planned but delivered		
Training on Train Driver Licensing	Q1 2023	Completed
Two trainings on European Electronic Vehicle Register (EVR)	Q1 and Q2 2023	Completed
Panel discussion on Intermodal and Rail Freight Transport in Western Balkan Region	Q2 2023	Completed

Rail Technical Committee and other main activities:

Implementation of the Rail Action Plan and monitoring/supporting the transposition of Annex I.2 of the Transport Community Treaty were at the core of the activities of the Rail Technical Committee during 2023. There are 4 meetings of the Rail Technical Committee organised during 2023, respectively in: Pristina, Dobož, Zagreb, and Athens.

All activities were carried out in collaboration with the Technical Committee members. Additional support was received from derives from: the European Commission (DG MOVE and

DG NEAR), European Agency for Railway, Europe`s Rail JU as well as EU member states. Below is a summary of the activities completed during this reporting period:

- On 24 January in Zagreb, the TCT Secretariat organised a high-level on **Re-establishing train link (connection)** between Villach – Ljubljana – Zagreb - Beograd. Representatives from all railway operators from Slovenia, Serbia, and Croatia attended the meeting and confirmed their willingness to initiate and finalise this initiative - despite the technical and financial challenges that must be addressed. TCT Secretariat also drafted a cost estimate based on inputs received from the three interested parties and will explore possibilities for the project to be supported by EU cross-border programmes. Letters with a detailed explanation and request for financial support of the initiative/project were addressed to the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR) and the Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO). Nevertheless, the TCT Secretariat remains committed to restore the connections between main cities in the Western Balkans region.
- On 21 February, the TCT Secretariat organised the **Rail Excellence Summit** in Pristina. The key objective of the Rail Excellence Summit was to establish job opportunities and attract young persons to railway companies and administrations, by bringing together rail experts, universities, and representatives from public institutions to discuss faced challenges. The objective is in line with the TCT Secretariat aim to attract and retain individuals in the region. This initiative will be followed with the establishing of a Regional Centre for Rail Excellence in cooperations with the universities, rail companies, and administrations. This initiative was set in motion by the signing of the Memorandum of Cooperation by educational institutions and railway operators from South East Europe.
- On 23 February in Pristina, TCT Secretariat and ERA organised training devoted to the **train driver licensing** from the region.



Figure 1. The signing of the MoC for Rail Excellence at the Summit in Pristina

- On 21 June in Doboj, the TCT Secretariat organised a follow-up meeting to the Summit in Pristina. During this gathering, over ten educational institutions signed Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC). Currently, a total of around 25 (twenty-five) institutions are involved, providing positive feedback, and establishing a solid foundation for advancing preparations toward the establishment of a Regional Centre of Excellence.



Figure 2. The signing of the MoC for Rail Excellence at the Summit in Doboj

- On 23 March 2023, the TCT Secretariat facilitated the **3rd meeting of the Rail Infrastructure Managers Network** in Tirana. The meeting is a follow up and in accordance with signed the Memorandum of Understanding (at the first Western Balkans Rail Summit - 13 September 2021, Belgrade) on for the creation of the Network of Infrastructure Managers. The key conclusions were related to the continuation of activities on establishing of Regional Centre for Rail Excellence, and preparations for the second phase of the Level Crossing project. In collaboration with the organisers of "Rail Live Madrid" and SEESARI (South East Europe Strategic Alliance for Rail Innovation), the TCT Secretariat facilitated the **4th meeting of RIMN (Railway Infrastructure Managers Network)** on 30 November 2023 in Madrid.



Figure 3. RIMN Meeting at Rail Live Madrid

- The TCT Secretariat actively participated and contributed to the **revision process of the indicative extension of the TEN-T Core and Comprehensive Network to the Western Balkan**, aiding the European Commission and regional partners in identifying real network needs.

Technical Assistances:

- The **Level Crossings Safety Improvement public awareness campaign**, initiated in 2022, was completed in the first quarter of 2023. The first regional project (study) on Level Crossings Safety Improvement was supported by the Regional Infrastructure Managers and JASPERS, was completed in 2022. On November 2023, as a follow up measure the TCT Secretariat contracted consultant Their tasked to prepare technical as well as administrative specifications part of a tender documentation for 140 level crossings in the region. Expected deadline is May 2024.
Second phase of the project will be focused on **Improvement of the safety at the level crossings**, the TCT Secretariat offered technical assistance to aid in securing investments and applying for the EU grants.

- On 16 September 2022, the TCT Secretariat Contracted consultants on drafting a study on the **Assessment of the rail market in the Western Balkans in terms of capacities, policies, economic and technical level of development of freight and passenger transport segments**. With the completion of this assignment in September 2023 the obligations derived from the Transport Community Treaty, including Annex I, the Rail Action Plan were fulfilled. The specific objective to provide a comprehensive assessment of the Western Balkans' transportation needs, traffic flows, and market situation was achieved. This study evaluated the economic and technical level of development of freight and passenger transport in the region as per the two tasks:
 - a. Establish a structure and data collection system for creation and delivery of report on Western Balkan Rail Market Monitoring as per Regulation (EU) 2015/1100 for 2021 as baseline year.
 - b. An update has been made to the Preliminary Implementation Plan, the Transport Market Study, the Inventory of Rail Freight Facilities, and their respective appendices from the year 2017.

In this regard, two key goals of the study have been successfully achieved:

- Completion of data collection for the Western Balkan Rail Market Monitoring, including the presentation of progress and identification of statistical challenges. The 1st RMMS Report has been duly published, serving as a foundational document for ongoing data collection and comparative analysis.
- Provision of recommendations to South East European Parties and the TCT Secretariat concerning the advancement of the rail market. These recommendations will guide and support further progress in the region's rail market development.

Capacity Building Activities:

The Transport Community Permanent Secretariat, with the support of the European Union Agency for Railways, conducted various capacity-building events for the administrations of the regional partners and observing participants, including:

- On 23 February in Pristina organised a training session on train driver licencing held. This workshop promoted professional development and standardisation. Additionally, it mitigates risks, encourages networking, collaboration, and facilitates adaptation to technological changes, ensuring a well-prepared and competent workforce.
- On 18-20 April in Luxembourg, a training session was organised in cooperation with the European Union Agency for Railways on the European Railway Traffic Management System (ERTMS), training was supported by Luxembourg Railways. The training was led by experts from ERA and covered a range of topics including the fundamentals of ERTMS and the testing and validation processes. The training also included practical exercises, such as train drive observation and group discussions, to help participants apply their newly acquired knowledge in real-life scenarios.



Figure 4. ERTMS Training - practical operations demonstration

- On 25 April in Belgrade, organised a **training session on the European Vehicle Register (EVR)** dedicated more specifically for two regional partners, Serbia, and Montenegro. The second one was held in Doboj on 8 June, for experts of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In cooperation with ERA, training for remaining regional partners will be organised by the end of first quarter of 2024. These trainings are important step in the inclusion of the all-Western Balkans partners to the EEVR in terms of monitoring and managing of rolling stock.
- On 28 April in Belgrade, the TCT Secretariat in cooperation with the Faculty of Transport and Traffic Engineering organised a **panel discussion on current and future challenges and opportunities in railway transport**. The discussion took place, as part of the 10th International Conference on Railway Operations Modelling and Analysis – Rail Belgrade 2023. As a co-organiser, the Secretariat supported the participation of 16 young professionals from the region and Georgia. The discussion covered various topics including human resource needs, educational programs for rail specialists, rail freight transport in Western Balkans. This initiative aims to facilitate the exchange of information and knowledge, benefiting all participants involved.



Figure 5. Panel discussion on current and future challenges and opportunities in railway transport

- On 12-13 September in Belgrade, the Transport Community together with ERA hosted a **Rail Freight Seminar** at its premises in Belgrade focused on two critical topics – transport of dangerous goods and risk management as well as multimodality in rail. The first part of the seminar covered reporting methods in the railway sector, with practical exercises on dangerous goods transport, as well as insights into risk management. The second part focused on multimodality, discussing various transport modes and concluding with topics like single wagon load and multimodal terminals, along with the presentation of the final railway market assessment report.
- On 14 September in Belgrade, the TCT Secretariat, in cooperation with the European DAC Delivery Programme and the Serbian authorities, organised a **Show-Case Workshop for Digital Automatic Coupling**. The showcase had focus on the efficiency, safety, and connectivity – that's what Digital Automatic Coupling (DAC) brings to rail freight! Because improvement not only increases the overall efficiency of rail freight transportation but also minimizes potential bottlenecks in the logistics chain. Moreover, DAC enhances safety by providing real-time data and automated control mechanisms, reducing the risk of accidents, and ensuring the secure coupling of railcars.



Figure 6. Rail Technology Showcase Event on Digital Automatic Coupling

- On 10-12 October in Germany, TCT Secretariat in partnership with the European Union Agency for Railways (ERA) and the Association of the European Rail Supply Industry – UNIFE, organised a study visit for railway experts from the Western Balkans and the Republic of Moldova, focusing on **alternative fuels for railways**, with a specific emphasis on hydrogen fuel cells and battery electric technologies.



Figure 7. Study Visit in Germany related to alternative fuels

2. ROAD

The activities carried out during 2023 were focused on supporting the implementation of the Road Action Plan, Technical Assistance provided by the European Commission and Transport Community and thematic capacity building (study visits and training events).

Planned activities were delivered within agreed timeline as defined within the workplan 2023:

ROAD MILESTONES	Time frame	Progress
Preparation of dedicated strategies for deployment of ITS in compliance with EU Directives and standards	Q2 2023	Completed Expected finalisation of the approval procedure in RPs
Preparation of the strategic framework on where and how to start deployment of e-charging along the main road corridors	Q2 2023	Completed Expected finalisation of the approval procedure in RPs
Improvement of the practices on climate resilience assessment and planning of interventions on the most vulnerable sections of the road network	Q4 2023	Completed Expected finalisation of the approval procedure in RPs

Road Technical Committee and other main events activities:

Implementation of the Road Action Plan and monitoring/supporting the transposition of Annex I.3 of the Transport Community Treaty were at the core of the activities of the Road Technical Committee during 2023. There were 4 meetings of the Road Technical Committee organised during 2023, respectively in Skopje, Ljubljana, Warsaw, and Vienna.



Figure 8. Road Technical Committee meetings - 2023

- Three out of four Road Technical Committee meetings were organised back-to-back with study visit in the respective institutions of Slovenia, Poland and Austria. The study visits were focused on implementation of the ITS EU Directive 2010/40/EU in Ljubljana, electronic tolling enforcement, ITS and alternative fuels deployment in Warsaw. The last meeting on 22 December 2023 was organised back-to-back with the joint meeting with Energy Community Secretariat on the synergies between transport and energy as well as a visit to AustriaTech on deployment of charging stations and decarbonisation of transport.
- On 23 May in Belgrade (TCT Secretariat HQ), was organised the **1st meeting of General Road Directors**. This meeting followed the Memorandum of Understanding that was signed by the Directors of Road Authorities/Public Enterprises during Road Summit June 2022. The scope of this network is to bring a new impetus to better planning of the indicative TEN-T extension of the Road Core/Comprehensive Network to Western Balkans. The meeting was attended by the Road Directors of Western Balkans, Georgia and Moldova. Rules of procedure were approved and the chair for the first year is Albania. All the Road Authorities/Enterprises presented their development plans and highlighted the main challenges.



Figure 9. Meeting of Road Directors Network, Belgrade

- On 12 - 13 December in Skopje, TCT Secretariat organised the Regional ITS Conference "**Towards a Connected Future: Delivering Intelligent Transport Systems in the Western Balkans**". The conference gathered experts, policymakers, and stakeholders in the field of Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) and served as a platform for discussing the role of ITS in the Western Balkans and how it can contribute to the region's growth, development, and connectivity. More than 60 participants attended the conference and engaged in discussions during the panels on deployment of ITS on roads, rail, and waterborne transport. The Ministers in charge of transport from the Western Balkans and Observing participants signed the Declaration on Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) deployment as a common pledge towards a connected future.



Figure 10. Signing of the ITS Declaration, Regional ITS Conference, Skopje

Technical Assistances:

Progress was made on studies supported by CONNECTA. The studies were planned to be completed by May, but due to the incorporation of all comments received were finalised by September 2023, respectively:

- Greening road transport, through CONNECTA's support, the Strategic framework for the deployment of e-charging stations in the Western Balkans, as part of the 'Preparation of Strategy/Policy documents concerning Sustainable and Smart mobility in the Western Balkans'.
- ITS Strategies: Through CONNECTA's support, the 'Preparation of Strategy/Policy documents concerning ITS for all transport modes in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and for rail and maritime in Albania'.

Deliverables were shared with all the regional partners, and it is expected that the findings are incorporated into the strategies documents under preparation or as thematic separate policy documents.

Climate resilience. Furthermore, in ongoing assistance for the implementation of measures outlined in Road Action Plans aimed at enhancing climate resilience, the TCT Secretariat started the Technical Assistance on 26 January 2023. This assistance focused on preparing a risk assessment and a Resilience Plan for the road network. Two workshops were conducted in May and November 2023 within the framework of this project to deliberate on the study's findings. The study was successfully concluded according to the contract terms in December 2023. The anticipation is that the regional partners will integrate these findings into their efforts to enhance the climate resilience of the road network.

Capacity Building Activities:

- On 28 June 2023 in Rome, TCT Secretariat organised a study visit – **Best practice of e-tolling interoperability**. This activity aimed to support the implementation of the Road Action Plan and TCT Annex I.3, Road transport specifically:
 - Directive 2004/52/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the interoperability of electronic road toll systems in the Community (OJ L 166, 30.4.2004, p. 124)
 - Directive (EU) 2019/520 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 March 2019 on the interoperability of electronic road toll systems and facilitating cross-border exchange of information on the failure to pay road fees in the Union (OJ L 91, 29.3.2019, p. 45).
 - Commission Decision 2009/750/EC of 6 October 2009 on the definition of the European Electronic Toll Service and its technical elements (OJ L 268)

The study visit in Italy was selected as the best case for experience-sharing since it is the sole EU member state with EETS (European Electronic Toll Service) providers for both light and heavy goods vehicles. The participants comprised transport ministries, road authorities, and a digital expert from the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC). The study visit was divided into two parts: the first part involved a visit to Autostrada per Italia to gain insights into the practical aspects of EETS, and the second took place at AISCAT premises, focusing on legal considerations.



Figure 11. Study visit on EETS, Rome, Italy

- On 21 to 22 November in Tirana, the TCT Secretariat in cooperation with the World Bank organised 2 days capacity building programme on **Road maintenance and asset management**. The training was attended by more than 35 participants from the region and the Observing participants. This training provided the professionals and decision-makers with the latest insights and best practices in road maintenance and asset management.



Figure 12. Road maintenance and asset management training, Tirana

3. ROAD SAFETY

Road Safety measures of the Action Plan and the activities under the three-year work plan of the Western Balkans Road Safety Observatory (WBRSO) were the main topics and key focus of the agenda for improving road safety.

Planned activities were delivered within agreed timeline as defined within the workplan 2023:

ROAD SAFETY MILESTONES	Deadline	Progress
7 th United Nations Road Safety Week	Q2 2023	Completed TC on Road Safety and WBRSO Meeting held back-to-back with the IRF Conference “Vision Zero for the Balkans”
Western Balkans Road Safety Observatory Information System	Q2 2023	Completed Online platform accessible via TCT Secretariat’s Website from 15 May 2023
Regional training for RSA and RSI DIRECTIVE 2004/54/EC on minimum safety requirements for tunnels in the trans-European road network	Q4 2023	Completed 4-6 December, Montenegro
Collecting Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) on Seat Belt Use and Child Restraint Systems (CRS)	Q1 2024	Ongoing – to be finalised by 17 March 2024 Technical Assistance for collecting Road Safety KPIs on Seat Belt and Child Restraint Systems (CRS) in the Western Balkans region

The statistics reveal that in 2022, the Western Balkans region tragically lost 1,246 lives. Although there has been a slight decrease in road deaths (a reduction of 5% compared to the baseline year 2019), it must be emphasised that three out of six regional partners experienced an increase in fatalities.

On the other side, observing participants achieved better results and had a reduction of road deaths by 14.5% in comparison with the baseline year 2019.

Regional Partner	Year 2019	Year 2020	Year 2021	Year 2022
Albania	227	181	197	164
Bosnia and Herzegovina	261	244	255	222
Kosovo	113	81	111	106
Montenegro	47	48	55	77
North Macedonia	132	125	116	124
Serbia	534	492	521	553
Western Balkans	1,314	1,171	1,255	1,246

Observing Participants	Year 2019	Year 2020	Year 2021	Year 2022
Georgia	481	450	449	430
Republic of Moldova	277	244	254	217
Ukraine				
Observing Participants	758	694	703	647

Note: Official data of road traffic crashes for the year 2023 will be available in April 2024

Road Safety Technical Committee and other main events activities:

- Four meetings of the Technical Committee on Road Safety took place in 2023, with an average of 20 participants in each meeting and three meetings of the Western Balkans Road Safety Observatory were held back-to-back with Technical Committees. The meetings were held respectively in Montenegro, Belgrade, Poland, and Slovenia. Learning from the experience of Member States on how to reduce the number of road crashes with fatalities and serious injuries was part of the agenda.

13 th Technical Committee & 5 th WBRSO	14 th Technical Committee & 6 th WBRSO	15 th Technical Committee	16 th Technical Committee & 7 th WBRSO
22-23 March 2023, Kotor, Montenegro	15-16 May 2023, Belgrade, Serbia	28-29 September 2023, Warsaw, Poland	14-15 December 2023, Ljubljana, Slovenia

- On 15 May in Belgrade, the TCT Secretariat organised a conference “Vision Zero for the Balkans” jointly with International Road Federation on the use of technology in diagnosing the roads and reducing road traffic deaths. Showcases from the EU Member States and methodologies to be used on Network Wide Assessment which is part of the Amended EU Directive 2018/96/EC on Road Infrastructure Safety Management brought fruitful insights to our road safety experts.



Figure 13. Vision Zero for the Balkans, Regional Road Safety Conference

- Beginning of 2023 the TCT Secretariat launched the **Western Balkans Road Safety Observatory Information System** which became operational and available for its users as well as for public users. The system, online platform brings together road safety data from the police, transport, and health sectors from all Western Balkan’s regional partners. The platform offers a tailored solution, monitors road safety targets, and contributes to the improvement and harmonised road safety data in the region.

- On 1 December 2023 in Belgrade, on the occasion of Serbia joining the Community Database for Road Accident Data (CARE) the TCT Secretariat organised a visibility event to mark this significant milestone, featuring the participation of prominent Serbian key stakeholders at high levels.



Figure 14. Serbia joins EU CARE database on road crashes

Capacity Building Activities:

- On 15 March 2023 in Kotor, the TCT Secretariat organised a Case Study training related to the amendments of the Road Safety Law and transposing the Road Safety EU Acquis this was among key topics of the 13th Technical Committee meeting. The activities for strengthening road safety management are supported by the IPA project “*Technical Assistance for Capacity Support to the Transport Sector and EU Acquis Alignment in Montenegro*”. The project strives for legislation aligned with EU Acquis and capacity building through a sector approach. The project will further aim for legislation gap assessment, work on black spot identification, and drafting the Road Safety Strategy 2023-2030.
 - In the framework of building knowledge, the Technical Committee and WBRSO members learned about the new Road Safety package adopted by the European Commission on 1 March 2023: the Directive on driving licences, the Directive on the Union's wide effect of certain driving disqualifications and the Amendment to the Directive facilitating cross-border exchange of information on road-safety-related traffic offences.
- On 28–29 September 2023 in Warsaw, the TCT Secretariat organised a study visit related to road and road safety policies applied in Poland. The counterparts in Poland have shown remarkable results in reducing the number of fatalities and serious injuries winning the European Transport Safety Council (ETSC) Performance Index (PIN) Award for 2023. The efforts of Poland were presented by the Secretariat of the National Road Safety Council, Ministry of Infrastructure, explaining how Poland secured the prestigious ETSC PIN Award.
- On 4–6 December in Podgorica, event supported by TAIEX in cooperation with the TCT Secretariat was organised a training for road safety audits and Road Safety Inspections on Tunnel Safety requested by Montenegro and supported by all other regional partners as a need to increase the capacities in expertise of tunnel safety was approved by TAIEX. It has a direct link with the Road Safety Action Plan and with the Annex I.3, Directive

2004/54/EC which aims at ensuring a minimum level of safety for road users in tunnels in the trans-European road network. The training took place. It gathered more than 45 persons, 5 representatives from each regional partner and 3 per Observing Participant.

- On December 14-15 in Ljubljana, the TCT Secretariat organised a study visit to Slovenian Traffic Safety Agency. The participants had a chance to get insights on of the role and work of the Agency on specific areas: vehicle safety, driving licenses, prevention measures for road traffic deaths, international relations and awareness raising.



Figure 15. Technical Committee meetings in Poland and Slovenia

Technical Assistance:

- On 18 August 2023, the technical assistance for collecting Road Safety Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) on Seat Belt Use and Child Restraint Systems (CRS) use in the Western Balkans region commenced. During autumn, road surveys on Seat Belt Use and Child Restraint Use were carried out in all the region. The Technical Assistance has a direct link with the Road Safety Action Plan and uses the EU methodology. This Technical Assistance is financed from the TCT Secretariat budget and will be finalised by 17 March 2024.

4. TRANSPORT FACILITATION

Transport Facilitation measures of the Action Plan and the activities related to extension of Green Lanes between Western Balkans and the European Union MS, as well as the Connectivity Summit were the main topics and key focus of the agenda for improving the transport facilitation in the region.

Planned activities were delivered within agreed timeline as defined within the workplan 2023:

TRANSPORT FACILITATION MILESTONES	Time frame	Progress
Signed bilateral agreements for one-stop controls in road and rail sectors for most of the internal BCPs in the Western Balkans	Q4 2023	Completed. Signed agreement between KOS-MKD, operational one stop between ALB-MKD, common rail BCP Bijelo Polje underway (more info in the Action Plans and EU Acquis progress report 2023)

Introduction of the EU Galileo platform for monitoring BCP waiting times at the EU-WB6 BCPs	Q3 2023	Completed. The platform is available and ready, however it does not provide real-time waiting time.
EU-WB Green Lanes initiative implemented in its basic concept at as many as possible EU-WB BCPs, and, in parallel, focus on the other elements of the concept in line with the EU-WB Green Lanes roadmap	Q4 2023	Ongoing. The technical arrangements for functioning of the SEED between HR-BIH and HR-MNE are completed, the system is also functional between MKD-EL and ALB-IT, MNE-IT. Negotiations with the remaining parties are ongoing.
Implementation of the Transport Community Secretariat's supported Technical Assistance for capacity building of the management and operations of the EU-WB border crossing points	Q4 2023	Completed. The deliverables of the TA are being used in each concrete case concerning BCP agreements, protocols and manuals.
Finalisation of the CONNECTA supported Technical Assistance for capacity improvements on selected road border crossing points on the extended TEN-T Network	Q2 2023	Completed. The final TA deliverables are handed to the beneficiaries.
Agreed plan of joint TCT-CEFTA- CELBET supported activities and start of the implementation	Q1 2023	Completed. CELBET led the 12 training workshops organised in the vicinity of the major shared BCPs between Western Balkans and neighbouring EU Member States.

Transport Facilitation Technical Committee meetings and other main activities:

Three meetings of the Technical Committee on Transport Facilitation took place in 2023, with an average of 30 participants from all regional partners as well as observing participants. The meetings were held respectively in Mostar, Budva, and Trieste. Back to back with technical meetings we have organised study visits to the joint police centre for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Serbia in Trebinje, as well as to the Port of Trieste.

- On 21 February in Belgrade (TCT Secretariat HQ), organised a *trilateral meeting on transport facilitation* representatives from the relevant institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Serbia. The meeting provided an excellent exchange of views on the road and rail border-crossing measures, and the efforts which are done by the authorities to implement the actions from the transport facilitation action plan, also from the perspective of the businesses represented by the three Chambers of Commerce. World Bank/IFC also took part at the meeting.
- On 15-16 May in Budva, the TCT Secretariat organised its traditional yearly summit dedicated to the *"Year of Connectivity"*. As a follow up event the TCT Secretariat organised the **Summer**

School on Connectivity held on 3-7 July in Ohrid, followed with a series of training workshops for the EU-WB6 border crossings' officials.

The Connectivity Summit, named as” *Linking EU and Western Balkans/CEFTA Parties: Sustainable Links-Stronger Economy* brought the attention of the wider community of professionals and political stakeholders on the issues related to sustainable and efficient trade, transport and logistics, as prerequisites for attracting investments and enhancing economic growth within the region of Western Balkans, as well as for strengthening relations between the region and EU.

High level representation on the level of Minister/Deputy Minister/State Secretary for Transport and Directors/Deputy Directors of Custom Authorities from Western Balkans parties and Moldova was ensured at the plenary sessions, as well as from the European Commission and neighbouring EU Member States (Bulgaria, Hungary, Slovenia). Additionally, representatives from many national authorities and border agencies from the Western Balkans, Moldova, Georgia, and Ukraine, as well as from Italy, Greece and Croatia, international financial institutions, regional organisations, private sector and civil society, actively engaged in the discussions within three panel sessions, bilateral meetings and working lunch session.



Figure 16. Connectivity Summit, Budva, 15-16 May

More than **200 participants** followed the Summit in person and on-line across both days, enabling broad exchange of knowledge and best practices, and raising the awareness on development of efficient multimodal transport connections, corresponding modern infrastructure, digitalised services on the network, integrated/synchronised border controls, and facilitated trade related procedures.

The key deliverables from the Summit:

- **Signature of High-Level understanding** between the EU and TCT contracting parties on indicative maps of the Trans-European transport network (TEN-T) in the Western Balkans
- **Declaration “Taking forward the Green Lanes”** which paves the way for full extension of the EU-WB6 Green Lanes concept on all main BCPs between neighbouring EUMS and WB6 parties, as well as potentially with Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia; commencement of the second stage of extension of SEED+ and electronic exchange of certificates and for defining a roadmap for establishing one stop border controls at the main BCPs (intra-WB6, and between neighbouring EU member states and WB6/CEFTA along the TEN-T Network, including legal, institutional and technical measures (infrastructure, equipment and related investments).



Figure 17. Signing ceremony of the High-Level Understanding

- On 15 May in Bijelo Polje, day before the summit, TCT Secretariat together with the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Capital Investments of Montenegro, Delegation of the European Union in Montenegro, and CEFTA organised a visibility event of the Summit to mark the finalisation of the modernisation/construction works on the rail station to serve as a joint rail station for both Montenegro and Serbia. The authorities from both parties agreed to continue their bilateral discussions for completing the operational arrangements for actual commencement of the joint controls.



Figure 18. Marking the finalisation of the construction works of the rail station in Bijelo Polje

- On 14 December in Trieste, the TCT Secretariat together with CEI (Central European Initiative) organised an Expert Panel on “*Transport facilitation as powerful tool to boost connectivity of the CEI region*” under the Moldovan Presidency of CEI. The meeting was an opportunity to

wrap-up the results of the Year of Connectivity, as well as to consider the remaining obligations from the Action Plan on Transport facilitation, as well as the activities for 2024, while the Expert Panel provided insights of the transport facilitation activities and initiatives in the wider geographical area, focusing also on the efficiency of the logistic chains and the ports-hinterland connections. A visit to the Port of Trieste was organised for all TCTF members with the courtesy of CEI Secretariat.

Capacity Building Activities:

- In the period October-November 2023, Transport Community Secretariat organised **12 training workshops for the border officials** of all major road and some rail BCPs shared between Western Balkans and neighbouring EU Member States. The training programme focusing on efficient and effective border management, IBM, joint BCPs, and digitalisation of documents, was developed by the TCT Secretariat and delivered by CELBET (Customs Eastern and Southeastern Land Border Expert Team) experts, as well as independent transport and trade facilitation experts. More than 200 BCP officials, as well as representatives from the national administrations benefited from the trainings, and the BCPs from all pairs of WB6-EU were covered: Croatia-Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia-Montenegro, Croatia-Serbia; Bulgaria-Serbia, Bulgaria-North Macedonia; Greece-Albania, Greece-North Macedonia; Hungary-Serbia; Romania-Serbia.

The feedback from the participants, both from Western Balkans and the EU was overwhelmingly positive with a request to continue with such initiatives that bring together the parties and allow for direct peer-to-peer interaction, as well as building the confidence among the border agencies, as the workshops were held bilaterally, with the representatives from the two sides of the BCP.

Technical Assistances:

- The **CONNECTA sub-project** on design and procurement documentation for physical improvements on two BCPs: Blace (North Macedonia) and Hani i Hotit (Albania) are about to be completed, after which these two projects should be ready to obtain investment funds for implementation. The tail backs in this CONNECTA sub-project and the difficulties experienced in the course of its implementation on the side of the CONNECTA management should be regarded as lessons learned and appropriately addressed in the set-up for CONNECTA 2 programme.

5. WATERBORNE TRANSPORT AND MULTIMODALITY

The activities organised during 2023 were focussed on implementation of the Action Plan for Waterborne Transport and Multimodality with the main aim of increasing efficiency of transport operations and to achieve lower environmental impact, reduced congestion, and lower transport costs.

Planned activities were delivered within agreed timeline as defined within the workplan 2023:

WATERBORNE TRANSPORT AND MULTIMODALITY MILESTONES	Time frame	Progress
International Maritime Day 2023 in the Western Balkans region	Q2 2023	Completed
Workshop for Western Balkans inland waterway ports	Q2 2023	Completed

Waterborne and Multimodality Technical Committees and other main activities:

During 2023 were organised four Technical Committees for Waterborne Transport and Multimodality on “Improving the navigability in Inland Waterway”, in Belgrade, “The human element - Compliance Challenges and Opportunities for Seafarers” in Durres, “MARPOL at 50 – Our commitment goes on” in Tivat, and “Crafting the New Action Plan for Waterborne Transport and Multimodality”, in Brussels.



Figure 19. Technical Committee meeting

- On 28 September 2023, in Tivat, Montenegro TCT Secretariat organised **The International Maritime Day 2023 “MARPOL at 50, Our Commitment goes on”**. This event together with two panels on Integrated Maritime Policies and Governance - Towards Sustainable Maritime Transport and Digitalisation and Greening of Ports – Ports of the future, was about maintaining ships and the environment safer and cleaner, which is important for the Transport Community. Through comprehensive discussions, this event fostered awareness about key issues impacting waterborne transport and port infrastructure, including safety protocols, digitalisation, environmental sustainability, and regulatory compliance. The conference shared understanding among all participants regarding the importance of cooperative efforts in enhancing safety and security within the waterborne transport, laying a foundation for ongoing cooperation among all stakeholders. Furthermore, it served as a starting point for the development of strategies and initiatives aimed at addressing emerging challenges and opportunities in the maritime sector, advancing the Transport Community agenda of fostering sustainable and efficient transport networks.



Figure 20. The International Maritime Day 2023 “MARPOL”

- On 10 October 2023, in the premises of the International Cruise Terminal in Golubac, Serbia TCT Secretariat organised the Workshop on Inland Waterway **“Infrastructure Development and Opportunities for improving navigability of Sava and Danube River”**. The aim of this workshop was to implement the Transport Community's goals by promoting infrastructure development, facilitating stakeholder engagement, and fostering innovation in inland waterway transport. By addressing critical issues and identifying actionable strategies for improvement, the workshop opened discussions for implementing the full potential of the Sava and Danube Rivers as integral components of the regional transport network, ultimately enhancing connectivity, promoting economic growth, and fostering sustainable development across the Western Balkans.



Figure 21. The workshop on IWW, 10 October 2023, Golubac, Serbia

- On 6 March 2023, in Durres, the TCT Secretariat in cooperation with Centre of Excellence and Maritime Affairs (CEMA) organised the conference on **“Enhancing Centre of Excellence and Maritime Affairs regional footprint as maritime services provider”**. This conference was focused on raising awareness and promoting maritime connectivity and human capital, by bringing together decision-makers from national institutions, regional entities, the European Union, international financing institutions, academia, and other stakeholders involved in the connectivity sector, facilitating dialogue, collaboration, and knowledge-sharing on critical issues impacting maritime services provision and connectivity within the region.



Figure 22. The conference on “Enhancing Centre of Excellence and Maritime Affairs”

- On 21 March 2023, at the premises of the Polytechnic University of Tirana TCT Secretariat in cooperation with Cooperation and Development Institute (CDI), Durrës Port Authority and Polytechnic University of Tirana organised the conference on “Development of Port Infrastructure and TEN-T Compliance Indicators”. This conference provided a platform for stakeholders to discuss and exchange insights on the importance of port infrastructure in promoting economic growth, enhancing connectivity, and facilitating trade within the region. By highlighting the role of ports as vital nodes in the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T), the conference emphasised the importance of aligning infrastructure investments with TEN-T compliance indicators to ensure seamless integration into the broader European transport network.



Figure 23. Conference on “Development of Port Infrastructure and TEN-T Compliance Indicators”

- On 6 - 8 October 2023, the TCT Secretariat in cooperation with DG NEAR, facilitated the TAIEX Regional Workshop on the Adjustment of Procedures Applicable for the Implementation of the International Management of Dangerous Goods Code (IMDG Code). More than 50 participants from diverse institutions in Albania and Montenegro, responsible for the management of Dangerous Goods and implementing the IMDG Code in ports, actively participated. The aim of the workshop was to promote the harmonization of procedures and practices concerning the safe transportation of dangerous goods in alignment with the IMDG

Code and ensure compliance with the provisions of Directive 2008/68/EC, enhancing safety measures and protocols for the handling, storage, and transport of dangerous goods, with a specific emphasis on maritime operations. This collaborative effort aimed to strengthen regional coordination and standardization in the field of dangerous goods transport for increased safety and compliance.



Figure 24. Regional workshop on IMDG Code

- On 20-22 December in Durres, the TCT Secretariat organised the National seminar on facilitation of international maritime traffic. This seminar was organised under the program of International Maritime Organisation’s (IMO) Technical Assistance and hosted by the Durres Port Authority. The seminar provided advice on the latest amendments to the Annex to the Convention on the Facilitation of International Maritime Traffic (FAL Convention), a key treaty aimed at achieving the most efficient maritime transport possible, enabling smooth transit in ports of ships, cargo, and passengers.



Figure 25. The national seminar on “Facilitation of international maritime traffic”

Other meetings and events:

- On 6 July 2023 TCT Permanent Secretariat organised a meeting between national authorities for the implementation of the bilateral agreement between Albania and North Macedonia for international navigation in Ohrid Lake. The aim of this meeting was to identify challenges, understand regulatory or logistical impediments, and find collaborative solutions to facilitate

the effective implementation of the agreement, by engaging both Albanian and North Macedonian national and local authorities.



Figure 26. Meeting between authorities for international navigation - Ohrid

Technical Assistance and Capacity Building

- On 16 March 2023 Transport Community Permanent Secretariat organised a visit of the Technical Committee for Waterborne Transport and Multimodality in the TEN-T Core inland waterway port of Novi Sad. The participants had the possibility to visit different facilities of the terminal. A special attention was given to the port investments that encourages the environmentally friendly and sustainable operations in all formats of the ports and maritime industry, digital investments.



Figure 27. The study visit in the Port of Novi Sad

- On 21 June 2023 a delegation with representatives from TCT Permanent Secretariat, Transport Malta, Croatian Ministry the Sea, Transport and Infrastructure and Albania Maritime Administration visited one of the Albanian seafarers' training centre. This visit aimed to exchange insights and best practices related to the establishment and management of seafarers' training centres. Topics of discussion included regulatory frameworks, accreditation processes, curriculum development, training methodologies, and quality assurance measures. By sharing experiences and lessons learned, the delegation sought to promote collaboration and mutual learning among maritime authorities and training institutions.



Figure 28. Visit in the TSTS Training Centre, Durrës, Albania

- On 30 October – 3 November 2023 a group of representatives from Albanian maritime administration and Transport Community conducted a study visit at Transport Malta and several seafarers' training centres in Malta on the Recognition of Seafarers' Certificates from the EU. The objective of this study visit was to facilitate the mutual recognition of Albanian seafarers' certificates with EU. The focus of this mission was to impart insights into best practices, training methodologies, procedural aspects of training and the issuance of seafarers' certificates to seafarers. The overarching goal was to guide Albania in adopting practices necessary for obtaining recognition of training and certificates under the STCW Convention and Directive 2022/993 and to enhance understanding, promote alignment with international standards, and contribute to the harmonization of practices in the maritime sector.



Figure 29. Study Visits at Transport and seafarers' training centres, Malta

- On 2 November 2023 the Transport Community organised a visit to the International Maritime Law Institute in Malta (IMLI). The purpose of the meeting was to showcase the ongoing initiatives of the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat in collaboration with Regional Partners and Observer Participants in the field of waterborne transport. Additionally, the meeting aimed to foster discussions on potential areas of cooperation between the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat and maritime universities in the region. This visit served as a platform for sharing information, building partnerships, and exploring collaborative opportunities in the maritime sector.



Figure 30. Study Visit to IMLI, Malta

- On 7 November 2023, the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat organised a study visit to the Port of Durres with participation of representatives from several institutions in Albania and Montenegro, responsible for managing Dangerous Goods and implementing the International Management of Dangerous Goods Code (IMDG Code). The objective of the visit was to monitor the actions and measures implemented for the transportation of dangerous goods within the port. The visit concluded with a demonstration by the port authority and terminal operators, showcasing the protocols and measures in place to safely handle dangerous goods within the port environment. This initiative aimed to enhance collaboration, share best practices, and ensure the effective implementation of safety measures in the transport of hazardous materials.



Figure 31. Study visit to the Container Terminal in Port of Durres

6. TRANSPORT OF DANGEROUS GOODS

Activities concerning implementation of the transport of dangerous goods (TDG) legislation continued in 2024, according to the policy objectives set up in the Guidelines, namely:

TRANSPORT OF DANGEROUS GOODS MILESTONES	Time frame	Progress
Put in place the necessary legal framework to implement Directive 2008/68/EC.	Q1 2023	Ongoing
Transpose the Directive 2008/68/EC on the inland transport of dangerous goods as amended.	Q2 2023	Ongoing.
Translate the Annexes to ADR, RID and ADN (as applicable) into their domestic languages.	Q1-2 2023	Completed by Kosovo only.
Transpose the Directive 2008/68/EC will be transposed, Directive 95/50/EC will be transposed as well, as a package.	Q2 2023	Ongoing

The main milestone of the year were the translations of the annexes to Directive 2008/68/EC on inland transport of dangerous goods in the regional languages.

Annexes:

- Agreement concerning the International Transport of Dangerous Goods by Road – ADR,
- Regulations concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Rail – RID, and
- European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Inland Waterways.

In parallel, Directive (EU) 2022/1999 on uniform procedures for checks on the transport of dangerous goods by road should have been implemented by the Regional Partners by Q2 of 2023.

The TCT Secretariat recorded with satisfaction the success of Kosovo in the process of translation of ADR and RID (finalised end of 2023). Georgia announced having translated ADR and RID 2023 also.

All the other Regional Partners and Moldova did not report having translated the annexes of the agreements.

Transport of Dangerous Goods Committee meetings and other main activities:

The TCT Secretariat continued offering assistance aiming to complete the implementation of the above-mentioned Directives by means of the activities of the TDG Technical Committee, a dedicated Workshop on Directive (EU) 2002/1999, bilateral meetings with Regional Partners and Observing Participants, and capacity building programs supported by TAIEX.

- The Transport of Dangerous Goods Technical Committee continued its activities with 3 sessions held hybrid meetings (2 March, 7 June and 16 November) and several online

multilateral meetings (10 March, 28 March, and 7 April)², in order to nuance and enhance cooperation in the region, with the observing participants and with the EU Member States. The main aspect of the TDG Committee sessions was to highlight the fact that the Annexes to the international agreements are an integral part of the Directive 2008/68/EC and that the translation of the Annexes of ADR, RID and ADN is an essential condition for citizens to understand the applicable rules.

- A rolling plan for capacity building has been drafted view to planning of TCT activities in the future and to organise in an efficient manner support received via TAIEX.
- The results of the activities on TDG were compiled in the Second Progress Report on the implementation of the Guidelines³.

Capacity building:

- On 24-26 October in Tirana, the TCT Secretariat organised a workshop on enforcement of dangerous goods by road. Aim of the workshop was to further strengthen the implementation of the roadside checks directive as it is not applied yet. The experts from the the Human Environment and Transport Inspectorate of the Netherlands (ILT) indicated several recommendations for policy development, starting with the translation of ADR.

Technical assistances:

- Number of technical assistances supported by TAIEX and/or other supporting instruments were organised through the 2023:
 - Montenegro (TAIEX 81894) and Albania (TAIEX 84111), for emergency services to prepare for an eventual accident during transport of dangerous goods⁴. The general conclusion was that both regional partners are not prepared in terms of knowledge, procedures, intervention vehicles and protective equipment for immediate reaction to such events.
 - exchange of expertise concerning the implementation of IMDG Code (33346) started being deployed in Albania in presence of experts of Montenegro also, as these are the two main maritime countries in the Western Balkans. Several policy development recommendations were made, starting with the recommendation that ADR be translated and published in Albanian, as required by the law, and up to implementation of the IMDG Code and Container Safety Convention to which Albania is not a contracting party yet.
 - Within its project of “Technical assistance for capacity support to the transport sector and EU Acquis alignment in Montenegro”, a program dedicated to transposition and implementation of the EU Directives for transport of dangerous goods by road⁵ was set up. The conclusions of the experts working on this project indicated that there is a need for further strengthening of the administrative capacity within the key institutions and that there is insufficient institutional coordination between the different authorities in transport of dangerous goods.

Experts from several EU Member States – Germany, Poland, Finland, Sweden, the Netherlands, Spain, the United Nations, the Intergovernmental Organisation for International

² [Technical Committee - Transport Community \(transport-community.org\)](https://transport-community.org)

³ [Second-Progress-Report-on-Guidelines-on-Transport-of-Dangerous-Goods.pdf \(transport-community.org\)](#)

⁴ See page 7 of the Progress Report on the Guidelines for further explanation and detailed timelines.

⁵ PWA/MNE/IPAII/CAP17/SER/01-8132/1 Report Transposing/Implementing EU Directives/Regulations on Dangerous Goods Transport by Road, Spasoje Micic, SNKE 25.3 LEGRO/ADR (September–November 2023)

Carriage by Rail, the European Commission, the European Union Agency for Railways, the European Chemicals Agency were mobilised and offered assistance via TDG Committee meetings or TAIX projects dedicated to TDG during 2023.

7. SOCIAL ISSUES and PASSENGER RIGHTS

Social Issues and Passenger rights Technical Meetings and other main activities:

The activities carried out during 2023 were focused on supporting the adoption of the Action Plan for the Implementation of the EU Acquis in the Area of Social Issues and Passenger Rights in Transport, Technical Assistance provided by the Transport Community and thematic capacity building (study visits and awareness raising events).

Planned activities were delivered within agreed timeline as defined within the workplan 2023:

SOCIAL ISSUES AND PASSENGER RIGHTS MILESTONES	Time frame	Progress
Preparation and presentation of the Action Plan for the transposition of the social issues and passenger rights as per Annex I	Q3/4 2023	Completed.
Follow up actions of the Report on Passenger Rights in the Western Balkans – making transport accessible and inclusive	Q2 2023	Ongoing. Regional Partners have requested help and guidance for making transport accessible and inclusive. The TA will include actions for this in the Recommendations for each Regional Partner.

- On 8 March in Pristina, the TCT Secretariat organised its 4th Social Forum with the topic: “The Role of the Civil Society in Creating Sustainable, Smart and Inclusive Mobility”. Around fifty key stakeholders, representing NGOs, public institutions, and youth associations gathered to discuss how to make mobility in the Western Balkans more affordable, accessible, attractive, and inclusive by better engaging with the civil society. The Social Forum consisted of three parts (plenary session and two panel discussions): the plenary session that focused on the Action Plan for the Implementation of the EU Acquis in the Area of Social Issues and Passenger Rights in Transport drafted by the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat. The first panel focused on Inclusive Mobility – how to make Mobility Accessible for Everyone. The second panel focused on Sustainable Mobility – on the role of the Civil Society and the green agenda in the Western Balkans.
- Upcoming Social Forum, the 5th in the row will take place back-to-back with the Annual Summit at the end of May 2024 in Bosnia and Hercegovina. Theme of the 5th Social Forum will be **"Engaging Social and Civil Society for Sustainable and Green Mobility Transition"**.



Figure 32. 4th Social Forum

- On 28 March in Belgrade, the TCT Secretariat presented the Action plan for the Implementation of the EU Acquis in the area of Social Issues and Passenger Rights. The plan was presented to the Regional Steering Committee members. The action plan aims to improve the overall situation on the ground as well as at the legislation level. The endorsement of the action plan was followed with presentation and endorsement at the level of the Ministers at the Ministerial Council on 12 December in Skopje.

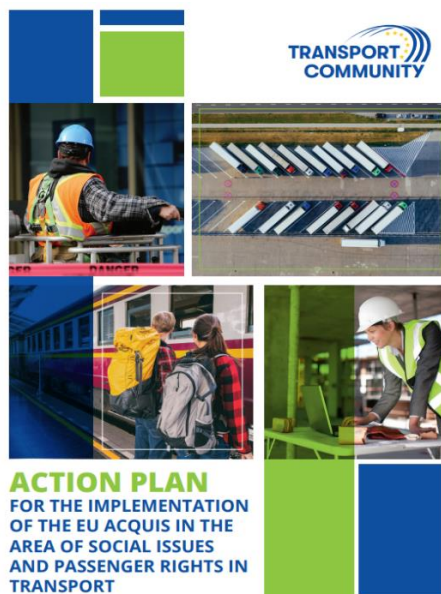


Figure 33. Action Plan in the Area of Social Issues and Passenger Rights in Transport

- On 12 April, the Informal Tachograph Group was set up and the 1st meeting took place. The regional partners clearly highlighted where help is needed regarding the transposition of tachograph legislation. Identified needs were followed with organising two study visits, to Ljubljana and to Bratislava.
- On 15 May, a meeting with the vloggers of the EU campaign, Made of Us took place in the Permanent Secretariat of the Transport Community. The vloggers, two young and talented content creators from EU and Western Balkans got to know the objectives, mission and projects lead by the Secretariat.



Figure 34. Meeting the vloggers

- On 6 June, the Informal Group on Passenger Rights was set up and the 1st meeting took place. The regional partners clearly highlighted where help is needed regarding the transposition of regulation in the area of bus and coach, rail and maritime. Identified needs will be incorporated into the Technical Assistance for development of a Study for Strengthening Regulatory Framework for Passenger Rights in the Western Balkans.

Technical Assistancess:

- Tender dossier for Technical Assistance for Strengthening Regulatory Framework for Passenger Rights in the Western Balkans has been finalised in December 2023. The objective of the study is twofold: first, to improve the transposition and implementation of passenger rights in the region, and second, to ensure that carriers and passengers have a clear understanding of these rights. The Study is a significant step towards achieving alignment with EU standards. The comprehensive reports produced over the 11-month study will not only enhance regional transposition and implementation but also foster a clearer understanding of passenger rights for carriers and travelers alike.

Capacity Building Activities:

- On 5 July in Ljubljana, the TCT Secretariat organised a study visit for its regional partners and the first one observing participants with the focus on the audit of tachograph systems. The visit included a trip to the Slovenian company CELTIS, where the participants were first greeted with a presentation by the company's employees. The study visits also involved observing the implementation of procedures and visiting the premises that were subject to the audit.



Figure 325. Visiting CETIS

- On 12-13 October in Bratislava, the second (2 days) study visit was organised. The Study visit brought together regional partners and observers to explore the work of the European Labor Authority (ELA) and witness roadside checks conducted by the Slovak National Labor Inspectorate. The visit aimed to promote cooperation and understanding on labour mobility, social security coordination, and road transport, with a special emphasis on Mobility Package I, a set of rules for the road transport sector applicable across the EU.



Figure 36. Visiting European Labor Authority (ELA)

- On 27 November in Belgrade, the Regional Dialogue on Advancing Skills in the Western Balkans Transport Sector took place. It was organised together with the Regional School of Public Administration (RESPA). Over 40 key stakeholders, including youth representatives, educational institutions such as the University of Belgrade and the University of Sarajevo, public institutions, and industry leaders, gathered to discuss the green transition. The focus was on the reskilling and upskilling of the workforce needed in the context of the shift to a modern, resource-efficient, circular, resilient, and competitive economy as outlined in the European Green Deal.



Figure 337. Regional Dialogue on Advancing Skills in the Western Balkans Transport Sector

8. TRANSPORT OBSERVATORY

Phase II (TODIS Operationalisation)

The activities pertaining to the setting-up of TODIS (Transport Observatory Phase 2) were completed in full. The TODIS release candidate was delivered in December 2022 and system testing consequently commenced, based on the agreed Acceptance Plan. Due to the system's complexity, the testing process got seriously prolonged as compared with the initial estimations. By June 2023, the trial period testing was completed. The final testing took place from June to November 2023 and included repeated iterations and intermediate remedial/fine-tuning work. On 7 December 2023, the last key requirements were deemed substantially completed and the system was consequently taken over, as confirmed by the Certificate no. 1033-05-2023 dated 18 December 2023

In parallel, TCT Secretariat ensured system operationalisation by collecting nominations for TODIS users from six line ministries and 53 key stakeholders, confirming a total of 126 users.

- From August to September 2023, before the completion of the final tests and the formal system commissioning, TCT Secretariat carried out a limited update of the TODIS 2022 base data for the scope of producing the 2023 TEN-T Annual Report.
- Users training also commenced in 2023, with 2 separate sessions being carried out for system administrators (November 2023) and regional coordinators (December 2023).
- The successful completion of TODIS was marked by a launching event and conference that was held in Tirana, Albania on the 23rd and 24th of November. Centred around the theme "*Transport data management: pioneering the way to enhanced decision-making and public policy*", the event brought together key TODIS stakeholders, representatives from the European Commission, Eurostat, UNECE, JASPERS, and others.

Phase III

- On 28 of March 2023, the RSC endorsed the revised concept for Transport Observatory Stage 3, as encompassing the following key actions:
 - carrying out several studies aimed at improving the quality and coherence of transport planning at the regional level and embedding their outcomes in the WBIF procedural framework.
 - postponing the decision regarding the development of a Regional Transport Model for 2025.
- The TCT secretariat has identified the list of concrete actions to be carried out under this topic (including draft budgets and potential funding sources) and started consultations with the

European Commission, the first discussions in this regard being held in September 2023. The effective start of the planned activities was delayed because of the late signature of JASPERS IPA III mandate and transition to the new CONNECTA II.

9. ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORTS: TEN-T, ACTION PLANS AND ACQUIS IMPLEMENTATION

- The 2023 TEN-T and Action Plans and the Acquis Implementation Progress Reports have been drafted in close cooperation and consultation with all regional partners from all levels (technical and higher level). Both progress reports were presented and discussed at the Regional Steering Committee meeting with all members, received final comments were incorporated within both reports and put forward for presentation/discussion and endorsement at the Ministerial Council meeting on 12 December 2023.

10. REVISION OF THE TRANS EUROPEAN TRANSPORT NETWORK REGULATION

The TCT Secretariat participated in the revision process of the TEN-T Network by:

- Facilitating the coordination of the entire process for the Western Balkans region;
- Assisting the European Commission and regional partners in identifying real needs for changes to the network;
- Providing technical support for network layout identification and drafting of the official TEN-T maps for the region.
- Organising the signing of the High-level Understanding between the EC and each regional partners in the margin of the Connectivity Summit that took place in Budva, Montenegro.

The formal adoption by the European Commission of the official maps for the region just before the December Ministerial Council in Skopje marked the formal conclusion of the process.

11. SAFE AND SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT PROGRAM

Following the adoption of European Green Deal, Green Agenda for Western Balkans, EU and WB Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy and identified need to invest in safe and sustainable projects, the European Commission decided in 2021 to step up its engagement and allocate € 80 million to a “Safe and Sustainable Transport Program”. This would be in the form of grant funding for co-financing which would be topped by a loan component. The aim of the program is to provide financial assistance to small scale projects that contribute to enhancing safety and sustainability, mostly in the road and railway sectors, in line with the objectives of the Green Agenda and EU and WB Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy.

As a result of the consultations between European Commission and IFIs (EIB, EBRD and World Bank), it was agreed that the World Bank Group will be a lead IFI for Safe and Sustainable Transport Program. This information was announced during WBIF Operation Board in December 2022 in Brussels. While the preparatory meeting for the Western Balkan Regional Partners was organised in March 2023. Grant application form was approved in June’s WBIF Strategic Board meeting.

Launching event on Safe and Sustainable Transport Program was held after the Ministerial Council meeting of the Transport Community on 12 December 2023 in Skopje. It is expected that the first project proposals will be officially nominated and agreed in the course of 2024.

12. SUSTAINABLE AND SMART MOBILITY

Measures defined under the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy have been among key topics at the various meetings organised by the TCT Secretariat. Moreover, these measures were also discussed at different events in the region as well as the EU.

Planned activities were delivered within agreed timeline as defined within the workplan 2023:

GREEN/MULTIMODAL/INOVATIVE TRANSPORT MILESTONES	Time frame	Progress
Capacity building on the Sustainable and Smart Mobility	Q4 2023	Completed
Study visit – best practice of e-freight deployment	Q4 2023	Completed
Deployment of Sustainable and Smart Mobility in the Western Balkans	Q4 2023	Completed
Improvement of the practices on climate resilience assessment and planning of interventions on the most vulnerable sections of the road/rail network	Q4 2023	Completed

Capacity Building Activities:

- On 18 to 20 October in Belgrade, the TCT Secretariat together with JASPERS, GIZ, and city of Belgrade organised a joint regional workshop **“Sustainable Urban Mobility in the Western Balkans”**. The workshop aimed to enhance sustainable urban mobility practices in the Western Balkans and Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine – workshop gathered over sixty participants.

During the three-day event, representatives from South-East European municipalities and associations of cities and municipalities, public officials, and observers from Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine discussed and shared knowledge and best practices on Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMP) and National Urban Mobility Policies (NUMPs) and interaction between urban and national planning. The workshop strengthened the capabilities of municipal associations in advising local authorities on SUMP development and implementation as well of representatives of Ministry of Transport.



Figure 348. Sustainable Urban Mobility in the Western Balkans-site visit

- On 31 October, the Western Balkan Green Parliamentary Groups came together in a gathering organised by the Transport Community and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH within the Open Regional Fund for South-East

Europe: Energy, Transport, and Climate Protection (ORF-ETC). The event discussed sustainable mobility and the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans.

The participants also got the opportunity to gain insights into the Transport Community's activities regarding sustainable mobility and the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans. Key discussions revolved around the Sustainable Smart Mobility Strategy for the Western Balkans and the EU, discussions on climate change, mitigation, and adaptation in the transport sector, as well as rail developments and connectivity in the region.



Figure 359. Western Balkan Green Parliamentary Groups visit to TCT Secretariat

The event was a unique opportunity for the parliamentarians and the Transport Community to join the conversation about sustainable mobility in the Western Balkans. By bringing together parliamentarians and experts, fostering meaningful discussions, and taking steps towards a greener and more sustainable future for the region went a step further.

- On 8 to 10 November, the TCT Secretariat conducted a study visit to the Baltic countries, Estonia and Lithuania, to explore cutting-edge digital solutions and logistics practices related to e-freight. The study visit delegation, comprising representatives from the Western Balkans regional partners, three observing participants (Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine), CEFTA, and the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat. The delegation engaged in discussions about the next steps in deploying e-FTI in the Western Balkans, leveraging the valuable experiences and practices witnessed during the exploratory tour.



Figure 36. Study visit to Baltic countries– e-freight

- On 20 – 22 in Vienna - the TCT Secretariat organised a Joint Workshop on Alternative Fuels and Sustainable Mobility, a collaborative effort between TCT and the Energy Community Secretariat was held. Participated by public sector and civil society representatives from the Western Balkans, Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia. The Joint Workshop organised by the Transport and Energy Communities focused on key themes related to alternative fuels and sustainable mobility.



Figure 37. Joint Workshop on Alternative Fuels and Sustainable Mobility

In the concluding discussions, participants reached consensus on areas of collaboration, ranging from policy formulation to on-the-ground implementation. Three spheres of cooperation among energy and transport sector emerged from the discussions: a) Aligning Policy (Laws and Strategies), b) alternative Fuel and Infrastructure, c) Fuel Quality.

Technical Assistances:

- March 2022 - October 2023 – on the Deployment of smart and sustainable mobility in the Western Balkans, financed through CONNECTA, started in. The result of the study will offer the insight how to practically start implementing sustainable and smart mobility in Western Balkans. Project had three main deliverables:
 - Baseline scenario and analysis of the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy for the Western Balkans roadmap.
 - Impact scenarios of the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy (SSMS) for the Western Balkans. This report explores the activities that need to be undertaken in two separate impact scenarios – a Do Something scenario which involves partial implementation of the SSMS and the Decarbonisation Scenario which involves full implementation and achievement of targets by 2050. In the upcoming third report which includes Action Plans for each of the RPs, year-on-year budgets will be presented as well as a timeline for implementation of the various Actions.
 - Action Plans and National Targets for each Regional Party of the Western Balkans. This report includes analysis for the prioritisation of the actions included on the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy (SSMS) for the Western Balkans and the subsequent action plan for each of the RPs to reach their national targets.

- **Improving climate resilience and adaptation measures in the indicative extension of TEN-T road and rail networks in Western Balkans.** The general objective of this assignment was to contribute to the reduction of climate change risks in transport infrastructure networks in the Western Balkan region while raising awareness on the climate proofing needs, strengthening capacities both in terms of technical and institutional capacities based on the European Commission technical guidance on climate-proofing of infrastructure projects for the period 2021-2027. To this purpose, the contractor was requested to:
 - Undertake the Vulnerability analysis based on the sensitivity and the exposure to climate hazards for Core/Comprehensive Road and rail network.
 - Undertake the Criticality assessment of the road and rail network.
 - Further, identify and select adaptation measures and strategies for mitigation of climate hazards on road and rail network.
 - Institutional capacity building on climate resilience.

Consultants successfully delivered all four deliverables and created list of most climate vulnerable priority sections for each Regional Participant.

16. WESTERN BALKAN INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK

The TCT Secretariat representatives attended as observers the meetings of the newly set managing structures for WBIF.

Additionally, the TCT Secretariat was involved in the screening process of the as following:

- applications submitted under Investments Round 8 and Technical Assistance Round 29 that took place between 16 March and 14 April 2023.
- Applications sent under Investment Round 9 –in second part of September and first week of October

17. COOPERATION WITH THE OBSERVING PARTICIPANTS

Following the Presidency Conclusions of the Ministerial Council of the Transport Community of 15 November 2022 and the endorsed Joint Statement from the Contracting Parties of the Transport Community Treaty and the Ministers in charge of Transport from Ukraine, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova on cooperation for the development of the transport sectors, Transport Community Permanent Secretariat took immediate actions to start facilitating closer cooperation with Ukraine, Georgia, and the Republic of Moldova as Observing Participants. The clear objective of these actions was to establish and regularly maintain a continuous working relationship with the Observing Participants at the technical and the political level.

In December 2022, a grant application was submitted by Transport Community Permanent Secretariat to the European Commission (DG NEAR) on conducting preparatory activities to support the progressive involvement of Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine in the activities of the Transport Community. On 23 December 2022 grant agreement was signed with the availability until 31 December 2023, financed under the Neighbourhood, Development, and International Cooperation Instrument-Global Europe. The purpose of this grant was to aim at increasing the Observing Participants' capacities and understanding of EU transport policies over the 2023.

In January 2023, online meetings were conducted with the appointed members of the Road Technical Committee of Georgia and the Republic of Moldova. These sessions aimed to enhance the understanding of the road technical committee's scope of work, introduce the five Action Plans and other strategic documents. During 2023 many different events/meetings/workshops were organised at all levels, both high (political level) as well as technical level – around 50 conducted events in which the Observing Participants attended in person and/or online: RSC meetings, ministerial council, technical committee meetings, connectivity summit, summer school, expert trainings/workshops with the active involvement of around 185 Observing Participants representatives.



Figure 42. Study Visit of Georgia's counterparts

Highlight of 2023 was the drafting of five action plans on Rail, Road, Road Safety, Transport Facilitation and Waterborne transport, including the Action Plan for Social Issues and Passenger Rights for the Observing Participants. This task was a joint initiative between the TCT Secretariat experts and the Observing Participants' representatives. In this regard the

TCT Secretariat, with the support of the EU Commission, organised workshops (April/May in Belgrade) to discuss identified measures as well as timelines. In addition to that, the participants were introduced to other strategic documents under the domain of the TCT Secretariat - presentations held by the TCT Secretariat experts.

The above-mentioned action plans were further discussed with the Observing Participants during technical meetings held throughout 2023. Due to good communication channels held between the TCT Secretariat and all three Observing Participants and based on the collected data, the TCT Secretariat managed to draft [first light version of the reports](#) for the Observing Participants. Reports were presented to the European Commission and to the Observing Participants during the Ministerial Council held in December 2023 in Skopje.

Moreover, a new grant application was presented to the European Commission in December 2023 and a new budget for 2024-2025 was approved to continue supporting further progressive involvement of the Observing Participants.

COMMUNICATION

In the past year, the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat has actively engaged in strategic communication initiatives to enhance outreach, stakeholder engagement, and community impact. The following is a concise overview of our communication activities and the notable results achieved.

The approach nurtured during 2023 consists of three major pillars, implemented throughout the year: (1) Stakeholder Engagement, (2) Communication Campaigns, and (3) Newsletter and Other Publications.

When it comes to the stakeholder engagement, the Secretariat organised various forums to facilitate dialogue between our organisation and key stakeholders, fostering collaboration and partnership. These include the Connectivity Forum, Social Forum, and Ministerial Council Meeting. The beginning of the year witnessed the finalisation of Transport Community Permanent Secretariat's major communication campaign "It's a Thin Line". On Facebook and Twitter, the campaign successfully reached the population between the ages of 30 and 70, increasing the organisation's overall outreach. The newsletter and other publications were regularly published on the various communication channels. The monthly newsletters were highlighting our achievements, projects, and upcoming initiatives, ensuring transparent communication with stakeholders and partners.

The above-mentioned resulted in an increase in the overall outreach of the Transport Community. The targeted communication efforts also resulted in improved understanding of our mission. During 2023, the social media accounts had the following rates of impressions and reach: (1) Twitter/X - 131,523 impressions, (2) LinkedIn - 136,627 impressions, (3) Facebook - 117,640 people reached, (4) Instagram (the profile created in October 2023) – over 1,300 accounts reached. Our official website attracted almost 27,000 people who created 92,868 views. The Secretariat received positive feedback from stakeholders, expressing satisfaction with our communication strategies and information dissemination.

In relation with the traditional media (newspapers and television), the Secretariat continued maintaining fruitful partnerships with various media outlets, providing relevant information on the topics related to the mandate of the Transport Community and promoting regional cooperation in the field of transport. In 2023, several interviews with TCT officials and articles about TCT were published in major media outlets in the Western Balkans.

Adapting communication strategies to the evolving landscape proved crucial in maintaining effective engagement, while actively incorporating feedback received from stakeholders has proven instrumental in refining our communication approaches.

Based on the insights gained, our focus for the upcoming year will include implementing more diverse and interactive content relevant to various audience preferences. It will also include capacity building, i.e. investing in training to enhance the communication skills of our team but also journalists covering transport issues, ensuring a more impactful delivery of our organisational messages.

ADMINISTRATION AND HUMAN CAPITAL

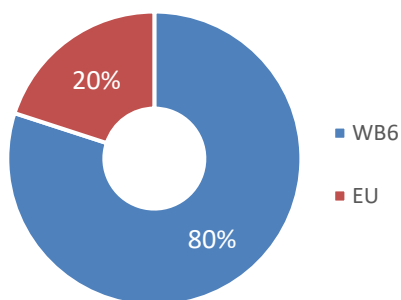
1. HUMAN CAPITAL

During 2023, renewal of 18 employment agreements has been signed whereas 17 are from 2020 expiring in 2023 and one is from 2021 expired on 31 December 2023. All employment agreements were extended for another period of three years. Out of these 18, two are Director and Deputy Director and 16 employment agreements of the TCT Staff. One contract with mutual agreement was extended only for a period of three months (Communication Officer) until end of May 2023.

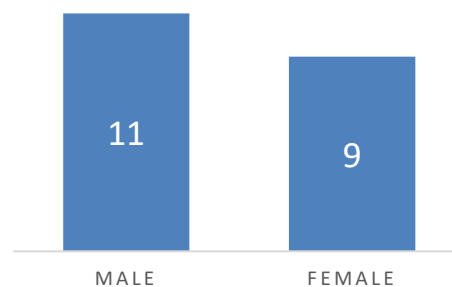
In April 2023, the Secretariat launched selection procedure for filling the position of Communication Officer, which after one unsuccessful attempt, finally was successfully completed in July 2023. The new Communication Officer started to work in the Secretariat as of 1st September 2023. Transport Acquis and Legal Desk Officer resigned in the second half of 2023 and by the end of the year, selection process was initiated. Within the deadline, 13 applications were received with selection process to be concluded in January 2024.

All staff changes during the year were regularly presented in the TCT Organigramme - <https://www.transport-community.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/TCT-organigram-2023.pdf>

At the end of 2023 the TCT Secretariat counted 20 Officials out of which:



Geographical Distribution



Gender Balance

Breakdown of TCT Officials as per Staff Regulations defined categories:

- Director 1
- Deputy Director 1
- Head of Division 2
- Experts 13
- Assistant to the Director and Deputy Director ...1
- Administrative Assistants 2

In addition to the TCT Officials, within the Grant Agreement for 2023 signed with the European Commission, with the purpose of supporting Observing Participants participation to the Transport Community activities, a Project Assistant was engaged for the period April 2023 to 31 December 2023.

Consequent Grant Agreement for the period 2024 - 2025 supporting the participation of the Observing Participants to the Transport Community activities was signed with the European Commission at the end of 2023. This would allow establishment of a Project Implementation Unit (PIU) and recruitment of appropriate experts in 2024, that will steer and support the cooperation with the Observing Participants.

Fire protection and emergency evacuation plan for the Transport Community Secretariat has been developed and approved by the national authorities in charge. The approved program was followed with an onsite practical training for all staff members in June 2023.

In October 2023, First Aid and emergency assistance training was organised for all staff members delivered by the Red Cross team and based on the training recommendations, adequate equipment was secured.

In December 2023 training on Cyber security training was organised for all team member as well as retreat / teambuilding with communication exercise aiming to enhance and improve internal and external communication skills.

2. ADMINISTRATION

The Regional Steering Committee at its 19th meeting adopted the Rules on Education Allowance as well as the Rules on Secondment and Locally Contracted Experts. Based on the adopted Rules on Secondments, Transport Community Secretariat drafted and shared with the Regional Steering Committee a Secondment selection procedure. Secondment procedure was launched as of 24 April 2023. As no eligible candidates were nominated, second round was initiated with expectation first secondee nominated from Bosnia and Herzegovina to start its secondment in March 2024.

The Transparency Register is updated on a regular basis (last update made in December 2023) and published on the website of the Transport Community: <https://www.transport-community.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Transparency-Register.pdf>

Necessary infrastructure at the Secretariat's premises for enabling hybrid events was improved with supply and installation of conference microphones.

Taking into account that 30 January 2024 is the five years anniversary since the TCT Headquarters Agreement was signed, in the last quarter of 2023 the Secretariat initiated procedure of the Headquarters Agreement update.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

1. AUDIT OF 2022 ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The external audit was performed starting 3rd week of April 2023. The independent auditor produced the report on 05 June 2023. The report, which was shared with members of the Regional Steering Committee and Budget Committee, and published on the official website states that the accompanying financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Organization as at 31 December 2022, and of its financial performance and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS). Full report is publicly available [online](#)⁶.

2. 2023 BUDGET FUNDING AND EXECUTION⁷

All parties to the Treaty fulfilled their financial obligations towards the TCT Secretariat. Contribution payments were received in full from the European Union, whereas the contributions by the South East European partners were adjusted by the allocated surplus from previous financial year 2022.

Budget Heading / SubHeading	Total budget	Budget transfers	Modified budget	Actual and committed expenditure	Execution rate	Remaining balance
I. PERMANENT SECRETARIAT	2,738,584	17,730	2,756,314	2,310,785	83.84%	445,529
1. Personnel Costs	1,502,097		1,502,097	1,327,279	88.36%	174,818
2. Travel costs	119,220		119,220	117,555	98.60%	1,665
3. Office costs	64,150	95,500	159,650	37,609	23.56%	122,041
4. Other costs and services	543,117	(77,770)	465,347	335,642	72.13%	129,705
5. STUDIES, Technical Assistance	510,000		510,000	492,700	96.61%	17,300
II. MINISTERIAL COUNCIL	28,000		28,000	22,699	81.07%	5,301
III. REGIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE	18,560		18,560	9,817	52.89%	8,743
IV. TECHNICAL COMMITTEES	177,300	(17,730)	159,570	133,829	83.87%	25,741
V. SOCIAL FORUM	10,800		10,800	9,279	85.92%	1,521
VI. Budget Committee	5,720		5,720	3,116	54.48%	2,604
Sub Total	2,978,964		2,978,964	2,489,525	83.57%	489,439
Budget Reserve (approx. 3%)	81,036		81,036	-	0.00%	81,036
						-
GRAND TOTAL	3,060,000.00		3,060,000	2,489,525	81.36%	570,475

Table 1 Preliminary budget execution report for 2023 in EUR

3. THE BUDGET COMMITTEE

The Budget Committee met twice during 2023. On 19 April 2023 and 02 November, both times in Belgrade. In the first meeting, all the members of the Budget Committee took part physically, including high officials from the European Commission (DG MOVE).

Topics of discussions included the 2022 financial statements, the state of play on 2023 budget execution and funding, the preparations and drafts of the 2024 Budget, the proposed

⁶ https://www.transport-community.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/ATT-XI_TCT-2022-FS-and-Independent-Auditors-Report.pdf

⁷ The figures shall be shared by end of February 2024 as the work on finalization of the 2023 accounts is ongoing.

modifications to the rules on reimbursement of travel and accommodation costs for event and meeting participants. The Budget Committee endorsed its 2022 Annual Report.



Figure 38. Budget Committee meeting on 19 April 2023 at the TCT Secretariat premises

4. 2024 BUDGET OF THE TRANSPORT COMMUNITY

As per Article 35 of the Treaty, the Regional Steering Committee shall adopt the budget of the Transport Community every year. The budget shall cover the operational expenses of the Transport Community necessary for the functioning of its bodies. The expenditure of each body shall be set out in a different part of the budget. The 2024 Budget was adopted by the Regional Steering Committee during its 22nd meeting on 12th December 2023. The decision is publicly available on the [TCT website](#)⁸.

The proposed Budget for 2024 includes a modest 2% increase. Compared to 2023, there are no significant alterations to the staff costs and there is a decreased need for purchase of equipment.

In response to the requests from the Transport Community Regional Partners, the focus in 2024 remains on the capacity building activities. This will be achieved with indicatively nineteen planned activities with topics centred around the objectives of the Transport Community Treaty, including regular summer school, training sessions, and workshops, all geared towards supporting the transport priorities of the Transport Community regional partners.

The budget lines I through VI represent the costs allocated for the TCT Bodies other than the Permanent Secretariat. Notably, the highest budgetary allocation is made for the Technical Committees (budget line IV) which throughout the year are planned to meet 18 times in various locations across the Western Balkans. The Ministerial Council is planned to take place once during the year, the Regional Steering Committee to meet four times, the Budget Committee shall meet at least twice, and the Social Forum to take place one time during the Year.

Budget Heading / SubHeading	2024 Budget	2023 Budget	(Decrease)/Increase	% (Decrease)/Increase
I. PERMANENT SECRETARIAT	2,799,383	2,738,584	60,799	2.22%
1. Personnel Costs	1,442,670	1,502,096	(59,426)	(3.96%)
2. Travel costs	138,836	119,220	19,616	16.45%
3. Office costs	48,020	64,150	(16,130)	(25.14%)
4. Other costs and services	799,857	543,117	256,740	47.27%
5. Studies, Technical Assistance	370,000	510,000	(140,000)	(27.45%)
II. MINISTERIAL COUNCIL	15,000	28,000	(13,000)	(46.43%)
III. REGIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE	12,353	18,560	(6,207)	(33.44%)
IV. TECHNICAL COMMITTEES	218,084	177,300	40,784	23.00%
V. SOCIAL FORUM	9,808	10,800	(992)	(9.19%)
VI. BUDGET COMMITTEE	5,286	5,720	(434)	(7.58%)
SUB TOTAL	3,059,914	2,978,964	80,950	2.72%
Budget Reserve (approx. 2% for 2024 and 3% for 2023)	61,286	81,036	(19,750)	(24.37%)
GRAND TOTAL:	3,121,200	3,060,000	61,200	2.00%

Table 2 Adopted 2024 Budget

⁸ https://www.transport-community.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/rsc-dec-6-2023_00000.pdf

5. GRANT CONTRACT FOR OBSERVING MEMBERS

During 2023, the TCT Secretariat has implemented a one-year grant agreement financed by the European Commission (DG Near) which was signed on 23 December 2022. The purpose of the grant was to conduct preparatory activities to support the progressive involvement of Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine in the activities of the Transport Community. The budget of this grant was EUR167,274.57 and it was managed separately from the TC budget.

6. AMENDMENT TO REIMBURSEMENT RULES

Following an initial request by the members of the Regional Steering Committee in June 2022, and after an extensive elaboration of amendment proposals and draft discussions, on its 22nd, the Regional Steering Committee adopted the new Rules on the Reimbursement of Expenses incurred by persons from outside the Permanent Secretariat of the Transport Community who are invited to participate in meetings of the Transport Community.

7. DEROGATION FROM RULES

Looking at the overview of internal documentation, namely the Approvals and Decisions adopted for the year 2023, approving derogation from respective TCT Rules and Procedures due to exceptional circumstances, we can conclude the following:

1. There have been 13 Decisions approved by the Director of the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat. These Decisions were made in relation to the following:
 - Increase of the number of participants envisaged for training/capacity building;
 - Increase of DSA rates due to exceptional circumstances;
 - Increase of allowed rates for hotel accommodation for participants of TCT events due to exceptional circumstances.

Please find a more detailed overview of the aforementioned Decisions attached to this document.

2. Although the official TCT vehicle is in use for business travel purposes, there were cases when the official vehicle was already in use, while the need for business travel by car of another staff member came up. In these cases, the approval for use of a private vehicle was granted. During 2023 there had been a total of 7 approvals granted for the use of private vehicles.

A detailed list of Approvals of Use of Private Vehicle can be found attached to this document.

Description of Adopted Decisions in 2023

Doc. Date	Doc. Type	Unit	Reference No.	Description
11.04.2023	Decision	FIN	INT 16-04-2023	Decision No.10 on Derrogation from the Rules - Rules on the reimbursement of event participation expenses incurred by persons from outside the Permanent secretariat of the Transport Community; 10th International Conference on Railway Operations Modelling and Analysis (ICROMA)
06.09.2023	Decision	FIN	INT 52-04-2023	Decision No.11 on Derrogation from the Rules - Existing Rule that limits the number of participants entitled to reimbursement from one (1) to three (3) for this specific workshop; Technical workshop: Sustainable and Smart Mobility- Improving connection between urban nodes and TEN-T Network
25.09.2023	Decision	FIN	INT 57-04-2023	Decision No. 12 - Request for Derrogation from 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 meetings of the Transport Community – RSC Decision 2021/02; Article 3.1 - RSC meeting in Vienna, 18 Oct 2023 - Increase on ceiling for hotel accommodation rates
04.10.2023	Decision	FIN	INT 59-04-2023	Decision No. 13 - Request for Derrogation from the Rules - Study visit on e-freight in the Baltic States
05.10.2023	Decision	FIN	INT 60-04-2023	Decision No. 14 - Request for derogation from rules - Capacity Building: Road Maintenance and Asset Management
05.10.2023	Decision	FIN	INT 61-04-2023	Decision No. 15 - Derogation on the Increase of DSA for Brussels on a specific occasion 10-11 Oct COWEB and Meeting with DG Move
12.10.2023	Decision	FIN	INT 64-04-2023	Addendum to Decision No. 14 - Request for derogation from rules - Capacity Building: Road Maintenance and Asset Management
31.10.2023	Decision	ADM	INT 71-02-2023	Decision No. 17 Derogation for the TC meeting accommodation rates in Brussels

31.10.2023	Decision	FIN	INT 72-04-2023	Decision No. 18 - Derogation from the Rules on the Reimbursement of expenses incurred by persons from outside TCT
02.11.2023	Decision	ADM	INT 74-02-2023	Decision no 19 Derogation for the TC meeting accommodation rates in Vienna
09.11.2023	Decision	FIN	INT 79-04-2023	Decision No. 20 - Derogation from the Rules on reimbursement – Decision 2020/05 of RSC; Article 1.3 (Reimbursement of 2 participants per institution) – TODIS Launch event
14.11.2023	Decision	FIN	INT 82-04-2023	Decision No. 21 - Derogation from the Rules on reimbursement – Decision 2020/05 of RSC; Article 1.3 (Reimbursement of 3 participants per institution) – ITS Conference
19.12.2023	Decision	FIN	INT 107-04-2023	Decision No. 23 - Request for Derogation - Joint Workshop on Sustainable and Green mobility

Description of Approvals for Use of Private Vehicle in 2023

20.01.2023	Note for File	FIN	INT 001-04-2023	Approval for use of private vehicle_Pristina 24-26.01.2023
20.02.2023	Note for File	FIN	INT 003-04-2023	Approval for use of private vehicle_Pristina 20-21.02.2023
07.03.2023	Note for File	FIN	INT 005-04-2023	Approval for use of private vehicle_Pristina 07-08.03.2023
27.03.2023	Note for File	FIN	INT 010-04-2023	Approval for use of private vehicle_Skopje 29-30.03.2023
09.06.2023	Note for File	FIN	INT 28-04-2023	Approval for use of private vehicle_Budva 16-17.05.2023
22.06.2023	Note for File	FIN	INT 30-04-2023	Approval for use of private vehicle_Ohrid 03-07.07.2023
21.11.2023	Note for File	FIN	INT 88-04-2023	Approval for use of private vehicle_Banja Luka and Modrica 23-24.11.2023



NEWSLETTER

January 2023



In the last eight years, 47 persons lost their lives and 131 were seriously injured on intersections of railways and roads in Serbia. To raise awareness about the dangers and proper ways to behave at level crossings, Transport Community initiated a **regional campaign “It’s a Thin Line”**, which in Serbia was officially launched on 18 January 2023 at the Faculty of Transport and Traffic Engineering together with the Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure. Minister Vesić stated that out of more than 2100 level crossings in the country, just around 400 are equipped with “active” protection consisting of sounds, lights or barriers. Together with the World Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the process to upgrade 400 more level crossings has already begun. “Transport Community public awareness campaign goes hand in hand with infrastructure improvements and will

contribute to Vision Zero - no more deaths or serious injuries on level crossings in the near future,” Director Zakonjšek said. Serbia has an ambitious plan for the renewal of rail infrastructure with a number of projects that will be implemented in the coming period. Nis-Dimitrovgrad, Subotica – Horgoš, Belgrade – Šid and Belgrade – Tabanovce sections will be completed in the near future and will include upgrading or removal of level crossings.

Minister of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure of Kosovo* Liburn Aliu hosted this year’s first **high level meeting** with representatives of the Secretariat on 13 to discuss plans for 2023, with special focus on **EU Acquis transposition in the area of road safety and rail**. Transport Community stressed again its support to the application of the safe system approach to pave the way to Vision Zero, as well as developing policies designed to reduce road traffic crashes and social economic costs of fatalities and serious injuries during the **9th International Road Safety Conference in Pristina** on 25 January 2023.



* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.



On 19 January 2023, Transport Community representatives met with the Director of the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA) Emir Djikic to discuss the upcoming **Connectivity Summit**. The Summit, which will take place in May 2023 in Montenegro, will gather high officials and relevant stakeholders from the region and neighboring EU Member States, to discuss how to enhance the connectivity within the region and with the EU. By opening the joint rail station in Bijelo Polje, Montenegro and Serbia will showcase a perfect example of a cross-border project which will improve connectivity along the entire rail

corridor, increase the efficiency of the rail and logistic operations, and further boost the attractiveness of the railway transport.

As part of strategic planning for the year, Transport Community and Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung representatives met on 17 January to discuss the Connectivity Agenda in the Western Balkans and potential for future cooperation.



Rail directors of Croatia, Serbia and Slovenia met in Zagreb on 25 January to discuss the **possibilities for restoring the passenger train connection Ljubljana - Zagreb - Belgrade**. All sides expressed readiness to work towards making this goal reality.



Hosted by the Swedish Presidency, Transport Community Permanent Secretariat Director Matej Zakonjšek **presented the numerous activities that the Transport Community finalised in 2022**, as well as **outlined the priorities for 2023 to the EU Member States' representatives in the European Council**. Zakonjšek highlighted the positive developments on the infrastructure side, which resulted in the improvement of projects and TEN-T compliance. Following the addition of new observing participants to the Transport Community, the Secretariat will continue delivering on their closer association.

The first **meetings with Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine** already took place and their representatives joined as observing participants during the December Regional Steering Committee meeting. In the coming weeks, the Secretariat of the Transport Community will finalise a more detailed outline of the elements under the structured cooperation between the Secretariat and the observing participants.



On 4 April 2023 in Skopje, the Secretariat organised the **11th Road technical committee**. The meeting was a good opportunity to take stock of 2022 accomplishments, discuss progress on implementation of Transport Community Road Action Plan, regional partners' ITS strategies and to welcome to the committee the observers from Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

Transport Community delegation took part in celebrations of the **150th anniversary of the railways of North**



Macedonia in Skopje on 7 April 2023. The ceremony served as a reminder that railways of North Macedonia connected nations and people and spurred economic growth and prosperity since 1873, when the first railway connected Skopje with the port of Thessaloniki. A century and a half later, Transport Community is assisting North Macedonia to remain on the same track – improving connectivity. With EU support and rail corridor VIII, North Macedonia will become a connector between Adriatic and Black Seas.



On 13 April 2023, **Director Zakonjšek met with the Minister of European Integration Ms Tanja Mišćević**, to review progress in EU accession negotiations with Serbia. The interlocutors discussed developments on chapters 14 and 21 - Transport policy and Trans-European networks, highlighting that progress on connectivity projects needs to go hand in hand with policy reforms.

On 18 April, the Transport Community delegation **took part in the 8th Meeting on the Common Regional Market (CRM) and the Green Agenda for Western Balkans in Brussels**. During the session on CRM, priority actions for 2023 and potential deliverables for the Berlin Process Summit were discussed with PM Sherpas. Traditional **informal breakfast of ambassadors from the Western Balkans** was hosted on 19 April 2023 by Ambassador Suela Janina from the Albanian mission to the EU. Representatives of DG NEAR and DG MOVE joined the meeting to discuss EU prospects of the region. |

The **Budget Committee** met on 19 April 2023 to reflect on the operational achievements in 2022, review the Annual Operational report 2022, discuss the financial performance of the Secretariat and to agree on the operational and budgetary matters, which will further streamline the work of the Transport Community.

The **10th anniversary of Serbia's Port Governance Agency** was marked on 21 April 2023. The Agency was established with a goal to provide governance and management services for ports and inland waterways in Serbia, and in those ten years, it has more than lived up to its mission. The event marked a decade of work of building a sustainable and environmentally friendly inland waterways transport system in the Western Balkans. Transport Community will continue

working with the agency on development of Serbia's port terminals, promoting waterway traffic and investing in port infrastructure.

In April 2023, two joint **activities with the European Railway Agency** took place. One in Luxembourg, where, with the support of the Luxembourg Railways, a training on ERTMS for rail professionals occurred, and the second one in Belgrade, where a European Vehicle Register training allowed colleagues from Serbia and Montenegro to master EVR. In Luxembourg, around 20 rail professionals gathered to deepen their understanding of ERTMS and to exchange best practices with peers from other countries. Luxembourg is a perfect example for the experts from West Balkans, Georgia and Turkey as Luxembourg Railways CFL has already rolled out 100% ERTMS on its national rail network. In Belgrade, colleagues from Serbia and Montenegro learned about the web-based management of the allocation of trains, recording vehicle registration and their updates.

On 21 April 2023, Transport Community continued its **fruitful cooperation with observing member Moldova**. Meeting with the State Secretary of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Rural Development Mr Ghenadie Marian was a chance to discuss the alignment of transport laws with EU standards and connectivity infrastructure projects that will bring Moldova closer to the EU.

The **meeting with Steve Philips, Secretary-General of Conference of European Road Directors**, on 24 April 2023 offered an opportunity to share the best practices on climate resilience, asset management, road safety and fostering neighbourly relations between road directors from Western Balkans and EU Member States.



The Transport Community delegation took part in the **10th International Conference on Railway Operations Modelling and Analysis (ICROMA)** on 26 April 2023 in Belgrade. Director Zakonjšek's keynote address focused TCT's work on building sustainable rail systems in the Western Balkans. The Secretariat also supported participation of 15 experts from regional partners and one from observing participant Georgia.

Deputy Prime Minister Ervin Ibrahimovic and Director Zakonjšek met in Podgorica on 27 April to discuss preparations for the Connectivity Summit which will be organised on 15-16 May.



On 28 April, Transport Community organised a **meeting for experts from Serbia's Ministry for European Integration to share their experiences** on the EU accession negotiations screening for chapters 14 Transport Policy and 21 TEN-T policy with colleagues from Albania and North Macedonia.

On 23 April 2023, the Transport Community team joined the teams of EU Delegation, Cyprus, Greece and Slovenia, and successfully finished the relay race at **Belgrade Marathon**. Congratulations to all runners!



Efficient transportation of people and goods ensures access to jobs and services and enables trade and economic growth in the economies. This was a key message delivered at the **Connectivity Summit**, organised by the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat and the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA) Secretariat on 15-16 May, under the auspices of the Ministry of Capital Investments of Montenegro. Deputy Prime Minister Ervin Ibrahimović and Director General for Neighborhood and Enlargement Negotiations Mr Gert-Jan Koopman opened the Summit which gathered Transport Ministers, Customs Directors, International Financial Institutions, and other high-level representatives, experts, and stakeholders from the Western Balkans to discuss and agree on moving forward the issues related to sustainable and efficient trade, transport and logistics.

“Connectivity Summit focuses on investments in transport infrastructure and reforms of policies that will facilitate transition to more efficient mobility in the Western Balkans in line with the strategic documents of the Transport Community. Actions targeting the main road and rail border crossings on the indicative extension of the TEN-T Network in the Western Balkans, including with the neighbouring EU Member States, will address inefficiencies and delays at those points and modernise the operations.



The Transport Community is working with its partners to improve the interactions of different transport modes along the Network to enable smoother, more efficient, and less costly logistic chains,” Transport Community Permanent Secretariat Director Zakonjšek said.

The high-level **Understanding on Indicative TEN-T Maps in the Western Balkans** was agreed on 16 May by the EU and the Transport Community Treaty contracting parties. The establishment of the new Western Balkans-Eastern Mediterranean Corridor aims to strengthen the region’s economic, social, and territorial cohesion and create seamless transport systems across borders, without physical gaps, bottlenecks or missing links.



The Joint CEFTA-TCT Declaration “Taking Forward the Green Lanes”, committing to further facilitate transport and trade with the aim to reduce waiting times and improve the efficiency of the EU logistic and value chains, has also been endorsed. It will give further impetus to all relevant authorities to work on full extension of the Green Lanes and establishing one-stop and synchronised border controls.

A working lunch organised during the Connectivity Summit highlighted the **importance of the EU-Ukraine Solidarity Lanes**. The extension of the Green Lanes to the Western Balkans region, as an Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, were both cited as good



examples that addressed transport and trade blockages and highlighted the importance of long-term transport and trade facilitation measures, such as multimodal infrastructure, international transit agreements, digitalisation of procedures, and sharing pre-arrival information for the movement of goods. Given these developments, **the Western Balkans parties and Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova share a common denominator when it comes to the development of their transport policy and network: the need to work together with the European Commission on setting the same standards and quality of service along a truly interconnected TEN-T Network that will link Europe with Central Asia, opening up the possibilities for new trade routes or strengthening the existing ones.**

On 15 May, the TCT delegation joined Deputy Prime Minister Ervin Ibrahimović, the EU Delegation, and municipality representatives in a **visit to the final works at the joint rail border crossing in Bijelo Polje**. The EU-funded station will house authorities of Montenegro and Serbia under the same roof and speed up the procedures without the need for trains to stop at two borders. The new facilities will, once operational, become a symbol of good regional cooperation.

The Secretariat **marked 9 May (Europe Day)** by welcoming, for the first time, to our Belgrade HQ representatives of the **observing participant Georgia**. The goal of the visit was to gain new perspectives and share information regarding the state of play of legal approximation and network development in their countries. Together, we reviewed the proposed action plans, identified technical assistance needs and introduced the TCT strategic documents.



On 15 May, the Transport Community, in cooperation with Regional Partners from the Western Balkans, **launched an online platform** that would help us make better, more informed decisions that would save lives. The launch coincided with the start of the 7th UN Road Safety Week. The collection of timely and objective information that effectively contributes to reducing road traffic casualties is the primary goal of the Western Balkans Road

Safety Observatory. The launch of the TCT road safety online [platform](#) marks the first time that yearly road safety indicators for the Western Balkans are accessible in one place. It offers dynamic and aggregated road safety information that is easily understandable and accessible to stakeholders. Users can receive tailored solutions to set and monitor regional road safety targets and contribute to improving and harmonising data.



At the start of the UN Road Safety Week, together with the Road Traffic Safety Agency of Serbia and the International Road Federation (IRF), we **co-organised a conference dedicated to achieving "Vision Zero" in the Western Balkans**, taking place in Belgrade. Meetings were organised with Mr Dmitry Mariyasin, Deputy Executive Secretary of UNECE and with the Vice-President of the European Investment Bank (EIB) Mr Kris Peeters to discuss the future of

On 6 June 2023, the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat hosted the **1st Workshop on Improving Climate Resilience in TEN-T Road and Rail Networks** in the Western Balkans. To pave the way for climate resilience in the region we strive towards resilient networks, stronger economy, enhance technical and institutional capacities.



The Transport of Dangerous Goods Committee held its 11th session on 7 June 2023, with the main conclusion that further work will be dedicated to supporting implementation of the 112-emergency number and eCall as reaction times of authorities in case of dangerous goods accidents are of outmost importance. When flammable solids or gases that can explode are involved in an incident, the carrier—regardless of mode – needs to have a single reliable reference point to address to save his life, citizens in vicinity, property, and the environment. The Transport Community will be further supporting implementation of 112 and eCall via its Road Safety Committee as well.

On 8 June 2023, in Tirana, Transport Community Permanent Secretariat was part of the **Leaders' Dialogue on Implementing Green Agenda** for the Western Balkans in transport. **Green** means: more rail (urban | intercity); more charging network for cars; more multimodal networks; more public transport and more climate adaptation of infrastructure.



On 8 June 2023, together with the EU Agency for Railways (ERA), the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat organised a **training session on European Vehicle Register (EVR)** for



Bosnia and Herzegovina in Dobož. The training session provided participants with valuable insights into the latest developments in the railway sector, giving them an opportunity to exchange knowledge, learn about best practices, and build new partnerships and networks. The main topics included web-based management of train allocation, recording vehicle registration, and updates. During the training session, ERA experts and practitioners shared their invaluable insights and experiences. Their expertise will further enrich their understanding of the railway sector and contribute to their ongoing efforts to enhance its efficiency and effectiveness.



On 14 June 2023, in Portorož, Slovenia, Transport Community Permanent Secretariat took part in the Conference organized by the Association of Slovenian Traffic Engineers, which highlighted that the Western Balkans would experience exponential traffic growth. One of the key messages from the conference is that in order to transform challenge to opportunity, experts need to work with governments, businesses and academia for sustainable solutions that would benefit the environment, the economy and society.

On 21 June 2023 in Doboj, Bosnia and Herzegovina, new stakeholders from the Western Balkan region but as well from the Observing participants signed the **Memorandum of Cooperation of Rail Excellence**. The establishment of a Regional Railway Centre of Excellence will provide additional education, training, and career advancement opportunities, contributing to the development of a highly capable rail workforce. The next step is to define the framework of institutional establishment of the Rail Centre of Excellence. The presence of Minister Forto during the signing ceremony emphasise the importance of rail for the economy end environment. The Rail sector needs skilled experts and the Memorandum is a one step closer to the Rail Centre of Excellence. At the same time, the **16th Technical Committee on Rail** took place in Doboj to discuss rail investments, rail network development and the state of play of the alignment of legislation with the EU Acquis.



On 21 June 2023, The Transport Community Permanent Secretariat was part of the TAIEX Expert Mission in Durres, focusing on mutual recognition of Albanian seafarers' certificates within the EU. The Expert mission aimed at providing knowledge sharing on best practice, training, procedures, and certificate issuing to seafarers with

particular attention to the procedures that Albania needs to follow to obtain recognition under the International Convention for Standards, Watchkeeping and Seafarers and the respective EU Directive 2022/99. On 22 June 2023, the **6th Technical Committee meeting for Waterborne Transport and Multimodality** took place in Durres. The meeting focused on the human element - Compliance Challenges and Opportunities for Seafarers. The participants from 24 institutions (DG MOVE, IMO, EMSA, ministries and maritime agencies of the Regional Partners and observer participants, training universities and centres, technical assistance, NGO-s etc.) related to waterborne transport shared views regarding the human element in waterborne transport when it comes to skilled and sustainable workforce.





Transport Community Permanent Secretariat on 21 June 2023 was part of the **EU opportunity week**, discussing the importance of transport connectivity in the region and with the EU. Deputy-Director Siljanoska, in the panel on Connecting and energising Europe, highlighted that, transport connectivity is a crucial factor for the European integration of any country, aligning with EU transport standards and regulations is key to strengthening ties with the EU and preparing for future membership, and that in addition to investing in "hard" infrastructure, policy reforms that promote efficient mobility are needed, to contribute to a smoother flow of goods and people, fostering economic growth and regional integration.

On 27 June, a study visit on the **Italian Experience with European Electronic Toll Service (EETS)** was organized by the Transport Community Secretariat in Italy.

Italy stands out as the only EU member state that has implemented EETS for all modes of transport, not limited to freight. The study visit aimed to provide participants with insights into various aspects of EETS implementation in Italy, including infrastructure, legal and regulatory frameworks, technological aspects, and lessons learned. The study visit on the Italian Experience with EETS was a highly informative and enriching experience for all participants. It provided a comprehensive understanding of the complexities associated with EETS implementation in Italy, considering the involvement of 27 road concessionaires. The site visit, combined with sessions on the regulatory framework, technological infrastructure, and lessons learned, contributed to knowledge sharing and networking among professionals in the field of transport and interoperability.



The 20th Regional Steering Committee meeting of the Transport Community was held on 27 June 2023 in Belgrade. The Permanent Secretariat delivered an update on the activities, studies and actions taken in the first half of 2023. Following the positive opinion of the Ministerial Council of Transport Community, the Regional Steering Committee also adopted the decision on the renewal of mandates of the Director and Deputy Director of the Permanent Secretariat of the Transport Community. On this occasion, Director Zakonjšek highlighted that in next three years, the work of the Transport Community will be focused on further integration of the Western Balkans transport market into the European Union with the next Generation Action Plans, achieving market integration of rail transport, operationalising Western Balkans – Eastern Mediterranean European Transport Corridor and with Secretariat's assistance establishing stronger connections among policy reforms and connectivity projects.



An online workshop focused on **Cycling as a Sustainable Mode of Transport**, was successfully held on 3 July 2023. The event brought together 27 participants from Ministries of transport, municipalities, and non-governmental sectors to discuss the benefits and potential of cycling as a sustainable transportation solution. The workshop commenced with opening remarks by Director Matej Zakonjšek and Mr Piotr Rapacz, Policy Coordinator – Urban Mobility from the Directorate-General for Mobility & Transport. Their insights set the stage for a fruitful discussions that followed. The workshop was an opportunity for knowledge sharing, networking, and collaboration among stakeholders committed to promoting cycling as a sustainable and environmentally friendly transportation option.



The **12th Road Technical Committee Meeting** took place on 4 July 2023 in Ljubljana, Slovenia. This meeting brought together experts and stakeholders from the transport sector of the Western Balkans, as well as Georgia and Moldova, to engage in fruitful discussions and exchange best practices regarding road infrastructure development and the implementation of Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS). The main topic of the meeting was presentation of the Road Action Plan - Annual Monitoring Report, showcasing the progress made in this regard. The Social Acquis Action Plan was also addressed, shedding light on its current status. As a follow-up, the participants visited the premises of DARS (Motorway Company of the Republic of Slovenia) where they were offered valuable insights into the national regulatory framework governing the deployment of ITS in Slovenia. Discussion also focused on alignment with the EU legislation and relevant

directives, highlighting successful examples of ITS implementation in compliance with EU regulations.

On 6 July 2023, the Faculty of Technical Sciences Novi Sad and the Academy of Technical and Art Applied Studies Belgrade joined the **Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) for Rail Excellence** whereby they reaffirmed their dedication to fostering collaboration between the academia and the industry. The institutions' expertise in areas such as railway systems, infrastructure design, and transport planning would greatly contribute to the advancement of rail technology, safety, and sustainability. These two esteemed educational institutions demonstrated their commitment to advancing rail industry knowledge and expertise, and their inclusion in this exclusive community would undoubtedly contribute to the collective progress of the rail sector.





On 7 July 2023, Director Zakonjšek attended a pivotal **conference on the transport infrastructure** of Brčko district, marking a significant milestone in Bosnia and Herzegovina's integration into the Trans-European Transport Network. The conference brought together Minister Forto, representing the Council of Ministers of BiH, Ms Katic, Minister of Transport and Communication of Federation of BiH, Mr Stanimirovic, State Secretary in the Ministry of Transport of Republika Srpska, Mr Nišić, the Mayor of Brcko and road and rail authorities of both entities. An emphasis was placed on core transport infrastructure such as roads, rail and ports in Bosnia and Herzegovina with a focus on projects that qualify for financing support from the EU. It was underlined that meticulous planning and thorough preparation of project documentation were essential prerequisites for securing funding and ensuring the efficient implementation of projects, both at the state level and within Brčko district.



From 3 to 7 July 2023, Ohrid hosted a five-day **Summer School on Connectivity**, a capacity-building programme that did not only enhance knowledge and capacity-building in policy and project areas but also served as a platform for regional partners to come together, discuss shared challenges, and find collaborative solutions. The Summer School brought together 22 representatives from Transport Ministries, Customs Administrations, and Border Police to learn from peers in the Border Crossing Point organisations, free movement and Schengen area, joint border controls, and integrated border management. The Summer School was organised in collaboration with the Regional School of Public Administration (RESPA).

Following the conclusion of the Summer School, the Official Presidency Handover of the Regional Steering Committee from Montenegro to North Macedonia took place, with Deputy Prime Minister Ibrahimović and Transport Minister Bochvarski in attendance. During the ceremony, DMP Ibrahimović recapitulated all the results achieved during the Montenegrin Presidency. At the same time, Minister Bocvarski presented their plans and goals that are to be met during the Macedonian Presidency.



12 July marked the 6th anniversary of the signature of the Transport Community Treaty. The Treaty unites the European Union and the Western Balkan Parties, forging bonds and cooperation through shared transportation goals. Signed in Trieste, Italy, it brings us closer, connecting roads, rail & waterways across borders.



On 24 July 2023 in Ljubljana, Director Zakonjšek met with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Slovenia, Ms Tanja Fajon, to discuss challenges and opportunities for the Western Balkans. One of the meeting conclusions is that enhanced connectivity is a vehicle for economic development and good neighbourly relations and that Slovenia's support for the European integration of the Western Balkans is crucial, both for reforms and connectivity projects.

On 26 July 2023, the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat was part of the ceremony that marked the opening of the first segment of the **"Peace Highway"** that will link Niš and Pristina and connect Serbia with the Adriatic coast and the port of Durres.



Welcome to the August edition of our newsletter! As the summer is slowly ending, here are the highlights of the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat's work during the first half of the year.

In January, upon the invitation by the Swedish Presidency of the Council of the European Union (EU), the Transport Community presented its activities finalised in 2022 and outlined the priorities for 2023 to the EU Member States' representatives in the Council. Transport Community Direct, Mr Matej Zakonjšek, highlighted positive infrastructure developments, resulting in improved projects and TEN-T compliance. The Secretariat continued delivering on their closer association after adding new observing participants, the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia, to the Transport Community.



In February, we organised three back-to-back events dedicated to building a user-friendly, efficient, sustainable rail system in the Western Balkans. The most important of these events was the **Rail Excellence Summit**, which highlighted the need to create job opportunities and attract young people to railway companies and administrations. By bringing rail experts, universities, and government representatives to discuss these issues, we want to keep the talent in the region and spur innovation and technological development in the rail sector. The next step is establishing the Regional Centre of Rail Excellence with universities, rail companies and administrations. This initiative was set in motion by signing the Memorandum of Cooperation by the educational institutions and railway companies from South East Europe.

The **4th Transport Community Social Forum** took place in Pristina on 8 March. It focused on the role of civil society organisations in creating sustainable, smart and inclusive mobility in the Western Balkans. Participants discussed the implementation of the EU acquis in the area of social issues and passenger rights, inclusive and accessible mobility for all, and the role of civil society in shaping the Green Agenda in the region.



Together with the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA) Secretariat, we organised the **Connectivity Summit** on 15-16 May, under the auspices of the Ministry of Capital Investments of Montenegro. The Summit gathered high-level participants such as Deputy Prime Minister of Montenegro Mr. Ervin Ibrahimović, and Director General for Neighborhood and Enlargement Negotiations Mr Gert-Jan Koopman, but also Transport Ministers, Customs Directors, International Financial Institutions, and other high-level representatives, experts, and stakeholders from the Western Balkans to discuss and agree on moving forward the issues related to sustainable and efficient trade, transport and logistics.

The Summit culminated with the **High-Level Understanding on Indicative TEN-T Maps in the Western Balkans** agreed between the EU and the Transport Community Treaty South East European Parties.



From 3 to 7 July, Ohrid hosted a five-day **Summer School on Connectivity**. This capacity-building programme enhanced knowledge and capacity-building in policy and project areas and served as a platform for regional partners to come together, discuss shared challenges, and find collaborative solutions. The Summer School brought together 26 representatives from Transport Ministries, Customs Administrations, and Border Police to learn from peers in the Border Crossing Point organisations, free movement and Schengen area, joint border controls, and integrated border management. The programme was organised in collaboration with the Regional School of Public Administration (RESPA).

Following the conclusion of the Summer School, the Official Presidency of the Regional Steering Committee was handed over from Montenegro to North Macedonia. Deputy Prime Minister of Montenegro, Mr Ibrahimović and Transport Minister of North Macedonia, Mr Blagoj Bochvarski, attended the handover ceremony. Mr. Ibrahimović recapitulated all the results achieved during the Montenegrin Presidency, while Mr. Bochvarski presented the plans and goals of the Macedonian Presidency.



From 28 to 29 August, Transport Community Director Mr Zakonjšek participated in the **Bled Strategic Forum 2023** when he moderated the panel on transport decarbonisation. Globally, transport emissions represent 24% of greenhouse gas emissions, while this rate is 25% in the EU. The panel discussed a generational and technological shift towards clean, multimodal, and affordable mobility solutions.

In the margins of the Forum, Mr Zakonjšek met with the Minister of Communications and Transport of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr Edin Forto, to discuss the modernisation of railways and reforming rail legislation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. He also met with the EU Special Representative for the Belgrade-

Pristina Dialogue and other Western Balkan regional issues, Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, to exchange views on the situation in the region, as well as the latest developments and prospects.

If you have patiently been reading about our main activities in the first two-thirds of 2023, you deserve to know what will happen September's highlight:

On 14 September, the Digital Automatic Coupler Demonstration for South East Europe will occur in Belgrade. The event builds upon the success of the Rail Innovation Workshop in Niš last year. This groundbreaking demonstration will focus on the Digital Automatic Coupler, bringing together cargo operators, wagon keepers, industry experts, researchers, and innovators in the rail sector to explore the latest advancements in this cutting-edge technology. Digital Automatic Coupling (DAC) is a standardised system revolutionizing the rail industry by enabling automatic and efficient connections between rail vehicles (more info at: <https://www.dac4.eu/en/media-section/>).

Plenty to follow, so stay tuned!

It is already autumn, and the Transport Community brings you the selected news on enhancing connectivity in the Western Balkans just for you. Below are our key September highlights. Enjoy the read!

Government officials, railway companies, railway industry leaders and stakeholders from the Western Balkans have gathered in Belgrade, Serbia, for a landmark event introducing the cutting-edge **Digital Automatic Coupling (DAC)** technology. Digital Automatic Coupling is a game-changer in the evolution of rail freight and is set to transform the way rail freight operates, with its innovative approach to coupling and uncoupling rail vehicles. It enhances the safety, efficiency, and sustainability of the railway system. Read more [here](#).



On **World Maritime Day**, celebrated on 28 September, in collaboration with the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), the EU Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport, and the Ministry of Capital Investments of Montenegro, we hosted a conference on green and sustainable maritime transport. The conference was followed by the **7th Meeting of Transport Community's Technical Committee for Waterborne Transport and Multimodality**. Learn more details [here](#).



We also joined the celebration of the **European Mobility Week** by actively promoting cycling as an alternative mode of transportation to raise awareness on the importance of saving energy and of environmental protection. Together with Minister of Transport and Communications of North Macedonia, Mr Blagoj Bocharovski, Mayor of the Municipality of Dojran, Mr Anjo Angov, and young people, Transport Community Director, Mr Matej Zakonjšek, joined the promotional bike ride in the city on Thursday, 21 September. Find out more [here](#).



As part of Albania's presidency of the Berlin Process, the Ministry of Finance and Economy of Albania organised the **meeting of the Berlin Process participants' economic ministers** in Tirana on 26 September 2023. These efforts are in preparation for the upcoming Summit of Western Balkan Leaders in Tirana, where further progress is expected to be discussed and acknowledged. Read more about our participation in the meeting [here](#).





Members of the **Technical Committees on Road and Road Safety** of the TCT Secretariat, representatives of Ministries of Transport and Road Authorities in Western Balkans in charge of road and road safety gathered in Warsaw, Poland, for a two-day **study visit** focused on knowledge-sharing of enforcement and implementation of European Union's (EU) road transport legislation. Following the visit, further discussions concluded the Road and Road Safety Technical Committees. More details about the study visit could be found [here](#).



The European Union Agency for Railways (ERA) is organising the **IPA Rail Freight Seminar** in Belgrade, Serbia, on 12-13 September, targeting railway experts from South East Europe. As ERA's strategic partner, we hosted the seminar at our premises in Belgrade. The seminar addresses two critical topics – transport of dangerous goods and risk management as well as multimodality in rail. Read more [here](#).



In cooperation with the Technical Assistance and Information Exchange Instrument of the European Commission (TAIEX), we have organised an **expert mission to enhance Albania's and its firefighters' capacity for emergency intervention during the transport of dangerous goods**. This expert mission, which ran in Tirana and Durrës from 18 to 20 September, saw cooperation between Albania and two Nordic nations, Sweden, and Finland. More details are available [here](#).

During September, we also met stakeholders, young people, and our partners and friends, discussing our cooperation for a shared goal – better, safer, and more sustainable transport across the Western Balkans. Among our counterparts were [Minister Momirović](#), [Minister Aliu](#), [UNECE](#), [United Nations Road Safety Fund](#), [German Federal Government](#), [ambassadors participants in the Berlin Process](#), [civil society organisations](#), [young people of North Macedonia](#), and a [high-level delegation from the Republic of Moldova](#).

Don't miss the opportunity to work with us. We launched two open calls for tenderers - [Technical Assistance on Strengthening Regulatory Framework for Passenger Rights in the Western Balkans](#) and [Technical Assistance on Multimodality, Terminal Assessment, and Digitalisation](#). Click on the links to learn more details and apply.

October is already running, and it brings more events and activities. Stay tuned for the next recap – the next edition of our newsletter!

#TogetherConnected

The October selection of news about enhancing connectivity in the Western Balkans is below, just for you. Here is our October recap. Enjoy the read!

Tirana hosted the **Berlin Process Leaders' Summit** which was a success on 16 October 2023. We used this opportunity to stress that for the Western Balkans to use new global connectivity opportunities, it needs to, together with the EU support, work on upgrading ports in Albania and Montenegro, modernise rails across the region, work on enhancing border crossing and adopt EU legislation and standards. By focusing on these four points, we can make the region grow economically and prosper.



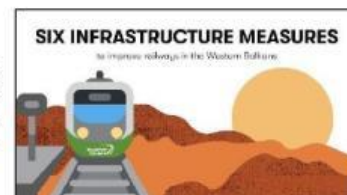
The regular 21st meeting of the **Regional Steering Committee of the Transport Community**, a body that ensures proper implementation of the Transport Community Treaty, gathered in Vienna on 18 October. The meeting endorsed the Action Plans and the EU Acquis Progress Report for 2023, discussed the main conclusions from the 2023 report on the development of indicative TEN-T extensions of the comprehensive and core network in the Western Balkans. This was also the first meeting chaired by North Macedonia within its presidency over the Transport Community. Learn more details [here](#).



The **Global Gateway Forum** brought together representatives of governments from the European Union and from around the world with the private sector, civil society, leading thinkers, financing institutions, and international organisations in Brussels on 25 and 26 October 2023. We moderated a high-level session on transport corridors at the event and discussed challenges, implications, and implementation issues of key corridors. Find out more [here](#).



At the Regional Steering Committee meeting, the regional partners committed to work on the recommendations from a study conducted by the Transport Community and put rails back on track(s). Find out what are the six concrete infrastructure measures to improve the railways across the Western Balkans [here](#).





With Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit's (GIZ) Open Regional Fund for South-East Europe: Energy, Transport, and Climate Protection (ORF-ETC), we organised two events on enhancing sustainable transport across the region. A [regional workshop in Belgrade promoted sustainable urban mobility plans](#) among municipalities and associations of cities and municipalities, and government officials from across the region, while the [Western Balkan green parliamentary groups visited our headquarters for sustainable mobility discussions](#).



We launched a comprehensive series of training programme aimed at facilitating smoother border crossings on the EU-Western Balkans borders. It includes all pairs of EU-Western Balkans partners, and the first training sessions took place beginning of October.

More details about the series are available [here](#).

There are two upcoming conferences we are organising, and you should not miss the chance to register and take part in.
Click on the photos to learn more and register.



To continue work of progressing towards safer transportation practices in the Western Balkans, the **2nd regional workshop on improving the safety of transporting dangerous goods** was held from 24 to 26 October 2023. Hosted in Tirana, this event gathered relevant stakeholders and authorities from across the region and saw fruitful cooperation between the Human Environment and Transport Inspectorate (ILT) from the Netherlands and the Road Transport Task Force in Albania. More details are available [here](#).

In partnership with the European Union Agency for Railways (ERA) and the Association of the European Rail Supply Industry – UNIFE, we organised a **study visit for railway experts** from the Western Balkans, the Republic of Moldova, and Türkiye, in Germany from 10 to 12 October, focusing on alternative fuels for railways, with a specific emphasis on **hydrogen fuel cells and battery electric technologies**.

Find out more [here](#).



The picturesque shores of the Danube River in Golubac, Serbia, have set the stage for a gathering of key inland waterway transportation stakeholders. On 10 October, we hosted the **workshop on infrastructure development and opportunities for improving navigability of the Sava and Danube rivers** to discuss the pursuit of a sustainable and efficient inland waterway network.

Learn more about the workshop [here](#).



The **Technical Committee on Railways** of the Transport Community successfully concluded its 17th meeting held in Zagreb, Croatia, on 5 to 6 October 2023. The meeting brought together a diverse group of representatives from South East European Parties, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine, European Commission's Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport, European Union Agency for Railways, and private sector stakeholders, marking a milestone in shaping the future of rail transportation in the region.

Read more [here](#).



During the month, we also met stakeholders, and our partners and friends, discussing our cooperation for a shared goal – better, safer, and more sustainable transport across the Western Balkans. Among our counterparts were [Minister Vesić of Serbia](#), [Minister Staikouras of Greece](#), [European Commission's Director-General for Mobility and Transport Kopczyńska](#), [Former European Commissioner for Transport Bulc](#), [European Labour Authority](#), colleagues from the [Energy Community](#). Our [Budget Committee](#) met, we took part in the [9th Western Balkans Civil Society Forum in Thessaloniki](#), and we celebrated [60th anniversary of the Plovput](#). Finally, a [TAIEX study visit on recognition of seafarers' certificates](#) took place in Malta.

Don't miss the opportunity to work with us. We launched two open calls for tenderers - [Technical Assistance on Strengthening Regulatory Framework for Passenger Rights in the Western Balkans](#) and [Technical Assistance on Multimodality, Terminal Assessment, and Digitalisation](#). Click on the links to learn more details and apply.

That's all for now. Stay tuned for the next recap – the next edition of our newsletter which will be out by early December 2023!

#TogetherConnected

Throughout November 2023, the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat continued supporting the regional partners and observers in getting #TogetherConnected. Our November newsletter brings to you the selected news on enhancing connectivity in the Western Balkans and beyond. We wish you a nice read!

The flagship project of the Transport Community, the **Transport Observatory Database/Information System (TODIS)**, has been officially launched for the key stakeholders' use. The official launch occurred at the "Transport Data Management: Pioneering the Way to Enhanced Decision-Making and Public Policy" event, held in Tirana on 23 November which also gathered key stakeholders, including the European Commission, Eurostat, EU Member States, European Investment Bank, UNECE, and CEFTA, alongside representatives from all six Regional Partners of the Transport Community. Learn more [here](#).



North Macedonia made an important step forward in its transportation sector with the **successful passage of amendments to the Railway System Law**. This legislative move brings North Macedonia towards the rail market opening, aligning it with the goals set forth in the Transport Community Treaty and advancing harmonisation with the EU Acquis. The Transport Community Treaty outlines commitments for its signatories to open and integrate their transport markets. North Macedonia's recent amendments to the Railway System Law are a tangible demonstration of its dedication to fulfilling its commitments under the Treaty. Learn more details [here](#).



The Western Balkans transport sector needs its workers skilled for a green and digital transition. Together with the Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA), we gathered regional stakeholders and students for a **regional dialogue on advancing skills**. The Regional Dialogue fostered a comprehensive discussion on the future landscape of the transport industry in the region. Through insightful panels and expert engagement, the event identified emerging opportunities in the sector, particularly focusing on future jobs and professions, marking the European Year of Skills.



We completed our **training series aimed at facilitating border crossings between the EU and the Western Balkans**. Two final workshops were held in Bosnia and Herzegovina where authorities worked with their colleagues from Croatia to enhance border crossing points management. The program featured expert presentations, notably from the expert network of CELBET (Customs Eastern and South Eastern Land Border Expert Team), participatory discussions, and visits to BCPs to provide hands-on insights. Find more details about this training series [here](#).





We joined forces with the World Bank for a two-day **Road Maintenance and Asset Management Workshop in Tirana** on 21-22 November 2023. To excel sustainable road development in the Western Balkans, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine, the participants focused on road asset management, service level agreements, and data collection. Read more [here](#).



At the RailLive! in Madrid, an event that brings together technology, innovation, and strategy stakeholders from the entire rail supply chain, we met the **Western Balkans Rail Infrastructure Managers Network** but also other stakeholders, including Europe's Rail Joint Undertaking Director, a.i. Moreover, we discussed the future of rail infrastructure, including railway systems development ideas.



The 12th meeting of the Transport Community's Technical Committee for Transport of Dangerous Goods gathered its members in Pristina on 16 November. The meeting discussed the ongoing efforts to enhance the implementation of relevant standards related to the transport of dangerous goods in the Western Balkans. More details are available [here](#).



From 8 to 10 November, the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat conducted a **study visit to the Baltic countries**, Estonia and Lithuania, to explore cutting-edge **digital solutions and logistics practices related to e-freight**. The study visit delegation visited prominent institutions gaining insights into the advancements shaping the future of freight transport. More details are available [here](#).



For the three days, from 6 to 8 November, we were in Durrës for a **TAIEX workshop**, joining forces with colleagues from Albania, Germany, Montenegro, and Spain in our efforts to ensure the **safe maritime transport of dangerous goods**. The workshop involved an insightful visit to the Container Terminal, where we discussed the handling of dangerous goods containers and the vital role of the port community system.



We took part in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe's (UNECE) 77th session of the **Working Party on Railway Transport** (Inland Transport Committee) where its representative contributed to discussions centred around the future of international rail traffic. At the session's workshop "The Future of International Rail Passenger Transport", which took place in the Palace of Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, on 16 November, Transport Community's Rail Policy Coordinator, Mr Dejan Lasica, spoke about policy reforms and development of TEN-T rail network in the Western Balkans. Find out more about this event [here](#).

During the month, we also met other stakeholders, and partners, discussing our cooperation for a shared goal – better, safer, and more sustainable transport across the Western Balkans. Among our counterparts were newly elected [Prime Minister Spajić of Montenegro](#) and [Minister Radulović of Montenegro](#), [Minister Bochvarski of North Macedonia](#), [Minister Forto of Bosnia and Herzegovina](#), [Minister Ivanović of Montenegro](#), [Director-General of the Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations Koopman of the European Commission](#), [Ambassador of Slovenia to Serbia, H.E. Mr Bergant](#), [Belgrade Airport CEO Berisot](#), [Executive Director of the EU Agency for Cybersecurity Lepassaar](#).

We participated in the [Thessaloniki Summit](#), the [Belgrade Economic Forum](#), the meeting of regional initiatives where we [met young people](#), and in the [RailLive! in Spain](#).

Don't miss the opportunity to work with us.

We are looking for a [Transport Acquis and Legal Desk Officer](#) to join our team. If you are a civil servant from the Western Balkans, you can also join the [Regional Mobility Programme](#).

#TogetherConnected