

23rd Regional Steering Committee meeting

03 April 2024, Brussels

Minutes and Conclusions

- The 23rd Regional Steering Committee (RSC) meeting was convened on April 03, 2024, in Brussels. The meeting saw attendance in person from all RSC members, representatives from the three Observing Participants, the Council of the European Union, as well as representatives from Ireland, Austria and the Netherlands.
- Presiding over the meeting were the Chair of the Regional Steering Committee, Ms. Jasminka Kirkova, and the Co-Chair, Ms. Mona Bjorklund. Ms. Kirkova, in her opening remarks welcomed all participants and expressed her satisfaction with the fact that all Regional Partners were present at the meeting. Ms Bjorklund pointed out to the importance of the Transport Community cooperation as a vehicle to support the European perspective of all participants. Recent positive enlargement dynamics make it vital to put acquis alignment on a much more solid basis.
- The agenda for the 23rd RSC meeting was unanimously approved as initially proposed.

POLICY

1	<p>Adoption of the decision regarding the revision of Annex I of the TCT (Article 20 of TCT, new legislation)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In accordance with Article 20(3), point (a), of the Treaty establishing the Transport Community ('TCT'), the TCT Regional Steering Committee discussed newly adopted and repealed EU legislation since the last update of Annex I TCT on 14 November 2022. • The European Commission presented the latest amendments and updates, including the revision of the indicative TEN-T maps, which are now included in the latest version of Annex I TCT. • Representative of Serbia expressed their support in principle on the proposal. However, final approval is pending the Governmental Decision in due time. <p><i>Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee agreed to adopt the Decision 01/2024 on the revision of Annex I of the TCT as per Article 20 of the Treaty once Serbia notifies TCT Secretariat on the adoption of the Governmental decision, in writing.</i></p>
2	<p>Information on the preparation of the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of indicative TEN-T extension of Comprehensive and Core Network in the Western Balkans Report 2024

	<p>- Action Plans and the EU Acquis Progress Report 2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TCT Secretariat informed that for the third edition of Development of indicative <u>TEN-T extension of Comprehensive and Core Network in the Western Balkans Report 2024</u>, TCT Secretariat will use revised TEN-T maps. There will be no change in the structure of <u>Action Plans and the EU Acquis Progress Report</u>, as it will be the final edition for the existing Action Plans. Data collection for both reports will be facilitated through Transport Observatory Database/Information System (TODIS), which became operational in early 2024. Endorsement of the reports by RSC is expected to take place in November, and endorsement by Ministerial Council in December 2024. • European Commission acknowledged the information presented by the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat. <p><i>Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee members welcomed information on the methodology and timeline for preparation of Development of indicative TEN-T extension of Comprehensive and Core Network in the Western Balkans Report and Action Plans and the EU Acquis Progress Report for 2024.</i></p>
3.	<p>Information on preparation of the Next Generation TCT Action Plans 2024 - 2027</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TCT Secretariat informed RSC about the structure and timeline for preparation of the Next Generation Action Plans for the period 2024-2027. • The European Commission acknowledged the information presented by the TCT Secretariat and underlined the importance of boosting acquis implementation within the new action plans. <p><i>Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee (RSC) welcomed information on content and timeframe of preparation of the Next Generation TCT Action Plans 2024-2027. Moreover, RSC members agreed on the proposal in regard to the monitoring horizontal measures and stressed the need for synergies and coordination with all regional partners.</i></p>
4.	<p>Information on the preparation of the biannual review of the Five-Year Rolling Work Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TCT Secretariat presented information on the second edition of the Five-Year Rolling Work Plan, which will serve as a comprehensive transport strategy for the Western Balkans. The 2024 edition will feature a dedicated section on investment gap needs, aligning non-compliant sections of the network with the latest Single Project Pipeline. The data collection will be facilitated through Transport Observatory Database/Information System (TODIS), which should also lead to qualitative improvement over the first edition of the work plan.

	<p>Endorsement by the RSC is envisaged in November, and Ministerial Council endorsement in December 2024.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The European Commission acknowledged the information presented by the Transport Community Secretariat and stressed the need to coordinate closely with the newly appointed Western Balkans-Eastern Mediterranean TEN-T Corridor Coordinator. <p><i>Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee welcomed information on the structure and timeline of the preparation of the second edition of the Five-Year Rolling Work Plan.</i></p>
5.	<p>Information by the Permanent Secretariat on the completed studies and the Technical Assistance in 2023/2024 - outcomes and follow-up:</p> <p>a) Final Report on Technical Assistance for collecting Road Safety KPIs on Seat Belt and Child Restraint Systems in the Western Balkans Region;</p> <p>b) Final report on Technical Assistance on Improving Climate Resilience and Adaptation Measures in the Indicative Extension of TEN-T Road and Rail Networks in the Western Balkans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TCT Secretariat updated RSC on the objectives, timelines, results and recommendations and way forward in relation to two completed technical assistances. The European Commission underlined the importance of providing technical assistance to the Regional Partners, acknowledged the information presented by the TCT Secretariat and thanked it for its efforts in supporting the Western Balkan Partners. <p><i>Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee welcomed information presented by TCT Secretariat on the completed technical assistances for collecting Road Safety KPIs on Seat Belt and Child Restraint Systems use in the Western Balkans region and on Improving Climate Resilience and Adaptation Measures in the Indicative Extension of TEN-T Road and Rail Networks in the Western Balkans. The RSC invited the TCT Secretariat to publish both reports in the TCT Secretariat’s official web site/page.</i></p>
6.	<p>Transport Community Treaty Review – presentation of the Working Group Progress Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The TCT Secretariat presented the report on Transport Community Treaty Review as well as planned activities related to final report and expected outcome. The European Commission acknowledged the information presented by the TCT Secretariat and invited the Regional Partners to make full use of this opportunity and share their analysis and possible requests as part of the TCT review. <p><i>Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee members welcomed presented Progress Report on TCT Review prepared by the TCT Secretariat in coordination with the members of the working group.</i></p>

	<p><i>Moreover, the RSC members are looking forward to the final report which is planned to be presented at the next RSC meeting in July 2024.</i></p>
7.	<p>Report on “Sustainable & Decarbonised Airports in Western Balkans”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TCT Secretariat presented the Report on the state of the airports and passenger traffic in Western Balkans region: TEN-T compliance, traffic trends, ownership structure and next steps to be taken, including preparation of the new rolling plan with the prioritisation of key regional projects and organising Conference on Sustainable and Decarbonized Airports. • The European Commission acknowledged the information presented by the TCT Secretariat. <p><i>Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee acknowledged the Report on “Sustainable & Decarbonised Airports in Western Balkans”.</i></p>
8.	<p>Information on Operationalisation of the Western Balkans – Eastern Mediterranean European Transport Corridor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Commission presented the timeframe and other important information related to the Western Balkans – Eastern Mediterranean European Transport Corridor and its coordinator expected to be appointed by the end of June 2024. • TCT Secretariat thanked the European Commission for the shared information and continued support on further developing of the Western Balkans - Eastern Mediterranean European Transport Corridor <p><i>Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee welcomed information on the operationalisation of the Western Balkans – Eastern Mediterranean European Transport Corridor. Moreover, agreed to have this point on the agenda of the upcoming RSC meeting (July 2024), as well as invite the corridor coordinator to attend the meeting.</i></p>
9.	<p>Cooperation with the Observing Participants (Information on the Establishment of the Project Implementation Unit for Observing Participants)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TCT Secretariat presented its continues engagement with the Observing Participants by offering technical support to all three Observing Participants. Moreover, presented the process that ensured smooth establishing of the Project Implementation Unit. • The European Commission welcomes the support offered by the TCT Secretariat and the engagement by the three observing participants. The Commission underlined the goal is full membership for the observing participants in the TCT.

	<p>Conclusion: <i>The Regional Steering Committee members welcomed information on the cooperation with the observing participants as well as the establishment of the Project Implementation Unit for Observing Participants.</i></p>
10.	<p>State of Play: Preparation of Summit on “Sustainable and Green Mobility” in Bosnia and Herzegovina</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TCT Secretariat presented the state of play regarding the ongoing activities related to upcoming Summit in Sarajevo, in coordination and cooperation with the hosting partner and the co-organisers. • The European Commission welcomed the efforts and the information shared by the TCT Secretariat in regard to the Sustainable and Green Mobility Summit, and invited for further information on the deliverables and next steps. <p>Conclusion: <i>The Regional Steering Committee acknowledged the information on current state of play with regard to the preparation of Summit on “Sustainable and Green Mobility” in Bosnia and Herzegovina.</i></p>

ADMINISTRATION

11.	<p>Endorsement of the Transport Community's Annual Operational Report for 2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TCT Secretariat presented Annual Operational Report for 2023. • The European Commission acknowledged the presentation by the TCT Secretariat of the 2023 Annual Operations Report. It thanked the TCT Permanent Secretariat for its efforts and the progress achieved in fulfilling the TCT objectives and goals. <p>Conclusion: <i>The Regional Steering Committee endorsed the Transport Community's Annual Operational Report for 2023.</i></p>
12.	<p>Presentation of the 2023 Budget Execution for the Transport Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TCT Secretariat presented the preliminary figures on the 2023 Budget Execution. The 2023 budget execution rate is 81.36%, or 83.57% excluding the reserve. For comparison the execution rates of 2022 budget were 83.26%, or 87.43% respectively. All parties to the Treaty have fulfilled their financial obligations towards the TCT Secretariat. • The European Commission welcomed the presented results by the TCT Secretariat and thanked it for its efforts to implement the TCT during 2023, as suggested by the 2023 budgetary execution rate. <p>Conclusion: <i>The Regional Steering Committee welcomed information on the Budget Execution 2023.</i></p>

13.	<p>Information on a proposal for changes to the Organigram of the Transport Community, including the New Position of IT Assistant/Database Manager Desk Officer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TCT Secretariat informed RSC that it is currently using two IT data base systems TODIS and Western Balkans Road Safety Observatory (WBRSO) and one additional is intended to be introduced, for road undertakings. Lacking sufficient IT skills and knowledge to manage the IT tools developed, TCT Secretariat proposes TCT Secretariat Organogram to be updated with including new position of IT expert. • TCT Secretariat informed RSC on the outcome of the selection process for the Legal and EU Acquis Desk Officer. • The Commission noted the importance that the addition of a new position to the TCT Secretariat organigramme be accommodated within the current TCT budget. <p><i>Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee endorsed the proposal, which should lead to updating of the TCT Organigram with including new position of IT expert (IT Assistant/Database Manager Desk Officer) at the next RSC meeting in mid-2024.</i></p> <p><i>The Regional Steering Committee acknowledged presented information on outcome of the selection process for the Legal and EU acquis desk officer.</i></p>
14.	<p>Designation of Auditor for 2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TCT Secretariat proposed to RSC to designate Ivalex d.o.o. as the external auditor for the year 2023, following the procurement procedure launched by the TCT Secretariat. <p><i>Conclusion: Transport Community’s Regional Steering Committee has designated the audit company Ivalex d.o.o. to audit the 2023 Annual Financial Statements of the Transport Community.</i></p>