

27th Regional Steering Committee Meeting

15 May 2025, Belgrade

Minutes and Conclusions

Representatives from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia attended the meeting in person, while the Regional Steering Committee (RSC) members from Kosovo* participated online. Among the Observing Participants, Georgia was represented in person, and Ukraine joined the meeting virtually. The European Commission was represented by DG MOVE and DG ENEST, with several EU Member States attending as observers.

The meeting was formally opened by Ms Emeše Lalić Urban on behalf of the Serbian Presidency and was chaired by Ms Jasmina Radonjić. The European Commission was co-chairing, represented by Ms Mona Björklund.

In her opening remarks, Ms Björklund emphasised the strategic importance of the Regional Steering Committee, highlighting the opportunity to take stock of recent achievements and to shape the next phase through the upcoming Action Plans. She underscored the accelerating regional momentum, making the Transport Community's role even more significant in advancing alignment with the EU transport acquis.

Ms Lalić Urban welcomed participants to Belgrade and conveyed her best wishes for a productive meeting. She also expressed her appreciation for the fact that the Ministerial Council of the Transport Community will take place on Friday, 16 May.

The agenda for the 27th RSC meeting was adopted, with the inclusion of an additional item under Any Other Business, proposed by Bosnia and Herzegovina.

(*) 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.

	POLICY
1.	<p>Information on e-freight reform measure (Growth Plan)</p> <p>The Transport Community Permanent Secretariat presented the support provided thus far in advancing e-freight reforms, including technical assistance through a comprehensive study identifying barriers to the deployment of electronic Freight Transport Information (eFTI) in the Western Balkans. In addition, capacity-building initiatives—such as a study visit and a dedicated workshop on electronic freight information exchange—have been delivered.</p> <p>Looking ahead, Regional Partners are expected to begin implementing the recommendations outlined in the technical assistance report, in accordance with their respective Reform Agendas and the timelines set out in the Next Generation Action Plans for Waterborne and Multimodality, Rail, and Transport Facilitation. Regional Partners are also encouraged to engage actively in the EU4Digital project, funded by the European Commission.</p> <p>GIZ, as the lead implementing partner of the EU4Digital project and in close coordination with the administrations of Western Balkan Regional Partners, provided an update on the scope, objectives, and upcoming activities of the project. These include strategic, institutional, legal, technical, financial, and organisational prerequisites, as well as specific actions foreseen for the implementation phase.</p> <p>Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee took note of the information provided regarding the e-freight reform measure within the context of the Growth Plan. The Permanent Secretariat will circulate the GIZ presentation and contact details to all RSC members.</p>
2.	<p>Information on ITS reform measure (Growth Plan) and Digital Mobility and ITS Conference for Western Balkans and Observing Participants</p> <p>The Transport Community Permanent Secretariat presented the support provided to date in relation to the Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) reform measure. This includes technical assistance focused on assessing the establishment of National Access Points (NAPs) and the designation of National Bodies, as well as capacity-strengthening activities such as targeted training sessions on ITS. A study visit is also planned to further support Regional Partners in setting up NAPs and designating National Bodies.</p> <p>In collaboration with ERTICO – ITS Europe, a leading platform for ITS deployment, the Permanent Secretariat will organise the Digital Mobility Conference, to be held within the framework of the 16th ITS European Congress in Seville, from 19 to 21 May 2025.</p> <p>This high-level event is intended to foster dialogue, exchange best practices, and support strategic planning on digital transformation in the transport sector across the Western Balkans and Observing Participants (Ukraine, Georgia, and the Republic of Moldova). It aims to align regional efforts with the latest EU-level developments and emerging trends in digital mobility.</p> <p>Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee took note of the information regarding the technical assistance supporting the ITS reform measure under the Growth Plan, as well as the forthcoming Digital Mobility and ITS Conference for the Western Balkans and Observing Participants.</p>

3.	<p>Green Lanes: update on the Roadmap, progress since the EU-Western Balkans Summit in December 2024</p> <p>The Transport Community Permanent Secretariat presented the progress made since the EU–Western Balkans Summit, which provided the political momentum and financial framework for the modernisation of the 11-priority border and common crossing points. The next steps for the authorities of the Regional Partners involve advancing the identified investment projects—outlined in the technical fiches—from concept to design stage. In this context, Regional Partners are encouraged to seek support through the Safe and Sustainable Transport Programme, coordinated by the World Bank.</p> <p>The World Bank presented its plans for the upcoming Safe and Sustainable Transport Programme 2.0 (SSTP 2) and provided an update on the current implementation status of SSTP 1.</p> <p>Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee took note of the update on the Green Lanes initiative and recommended continued bilateral coordination between Regional Partners and neighbouring EU Member States on the measures identified in the Border/Common Crossing Point fiches.</p> <p>The Committee also welcomed the ongoing efforts of the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat to coordinate activities with all relevant stakeholders, including the European Commission and the World Bank.</p> <p>The Secretariat will share the World Bank’s presentation with all RSC members.</p>
4.	<p>Technical Assistance on Multimodality, Terminal Assessment, and Digitalisation final report presentation</p> <p>The Permanent Secretariat of the Transport Community presented the final report of the Technical Assistance on Multimodality, Terminal Assessment, and Digitalisation, outlining the scope of work, key deliverables, and proposed next steps.</p> <p>Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee endorsed the final reports of the Technical Assistance on Multimodality, Terminal Assessment, and Digitalisation, including the proposed list of priority terminals as presented in Deliverable 3: Market and Prospective Analysis and Action Plan for the Development of a Multimodal Freight Terminal Network.</p>
5.	<p>Clean Bus and Clean Fleet Platform- Modus Operandi</p> <p>The Transport Community Permanent Secretariat presented the Modus Operandi for the Clean Bus and Clean Fleet Platform for Southeast European Parties and Observing Participants. The presentation detailed the platform's conceptual framework, including its background, strategic objectives, and the operational architecture designed to support its phased deployment and implementation.</p> <p>Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee endorsed the Modus Operandi for the Clean Bus and Clean Fleet Platform, recognising it as a key technical tool to support the decarbonisation of regional public transport fleets in line with EU sustainability targets.</p>

6.	<p>Info Note on Technical Assistance- Setting up of Western Balkans Register of Road Undertakings – Phase 1</p> <p>The Transport Community Permanent Secretariat presented an update on the Technical Assistance for the Establishment of the Western Balkans Electronic Register of Road Undertakings – Phase I, which includes the preparation of the tender dossier and the development of detailed technical specifications. This initiative aims to support the establishment of a regional electronic platform to register and manage road transport undertakings in line with the requirements of Regulation (EC) No 1071/2009, a key component of the EU road transport acquis.</p> <p>The presentation outlined the background and rationale for the project, its scope of work, and the progress achieved to date. The development of a harmonised and interoperable register will not only strengthen institutional capacity across the region but will also enhance transparency, improve market access control, and contribute to the fight against illegal transport operations.</p> <p>The establishment of this regional platform is fully aligned with the objectives of the European Commission’s Growth Plan for the Western Balkans, which emphasises improved connectivity, the creation of a regional common market, and progressive integration into the EU single market. It also represents a concrete step towards achieving the Transport Community’s strategic goals of fostering technical convergence with EU transport standards and strengthening digitalisation in the road transport sector.</p> <p>Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee took note of the initiation of the Technical Assistance for the establishment of the Western Balkans Electronic Register of Road Undertakings. The Committee welcomed this important step towards regional harmonisation with the EU acquis and the objectives of the Growth Plan. RSC Members will be regularly informed of progress and final deliverables to ensure continued engagement and full support for the successful implementation and future operation of the platform.</p>
7.	<p>Adoption of the decision regarding the revision of Annex I of the TCT</p> <p>The European Commission presented the Decision on the revision of Annex I to the Transport Community Treaty. The revised Annex I provides an updated and consolidated list of EU legal acts applicable under the Treaty, ensuring greater legal clarity, transparency, and coherence. The update reflects recent changes in the EU transport acquis and supports the objective of continued alignment by the Regional Partners.</p> <p>During the discussion, the representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina raised a point regarding the TEN-T maps included in Annex I, specifically requesting a cross-check of the presentation of the core and comprehensive network in relation to the Port of Ploče, to ensure accuracy and consistency in the network’s geographic coverage.</p> <p>Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee adopted the Decision on the revision of Annex I of the Transport Community Treaty, recognising it as a key step towards maintaining alignment with the evolving EU acquis and facilitating further integration of the Regional Partners into the European transport framework.</p>

	<p>The Regional Steering Committee also agreed that the reporting methodology for assessing transposition of the EU acquis will remain consistent with that used in previous Progress Reports.</p>
8.	<p>Information on the 6th Social Forum and Conclusions</p> <p>The Transport Community Permanent Secretariat informed the Regional Steering Committee about the successful organisation of the 6th Social Forum, which represented a significant step towards the harmonised and effective enforcement of passenger rights across all transport modes in the Western Balkans. The Forum built upon the commitments set out in the Transport Community Treaty, in particular Article 6, which stresses the importance of gradually aligning transport policies and legislation with the EU acquis, including social dimension and users' rights.</p> <p>The Forum brought together a wide spectrum of stakeholders, including representatives from national authorities, enforcement bodies, civil society organisations, regional experts, and the European Commission. Discussions highlighted good practices, regulatory advances, and remaining challenges in the area of passenger rights, with the objective of fostering a more inclusive, accessible, and sustainable transport system in the region.</p> <p>The Secretariat emphasised the importance of alignment with EU passenger rights legislation, including Regulation (EU) No 261/2004 on air passenger rights, Regulation (EU) No 1371/2007 on rail, Regulation (EU) No 181/2011 on bus and coach transport, and Regulation (EU) No 1177/2010 for maritime and inland waterway transport.</p> <p>A key outcome of the Forum was the foundation laid for the forthcoming Next-Generation Action Plan on Social Issues and Passenger Rights (2026–2028). This strategic document will build on lessons learned and outline concrete regional actions to improve national legal frameworks, strengthen enforcement mechanisms, and promote public awareness. Special emphasis was placed on the rights of persons with reduced mobility (PRMs), the effective coordination of National Enforcement Bodies (NEBs), and the need to establish transparent and user-friendly redress mechanisms for passengers.</p> <p>Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee welcomed the update on the 6th Social Forum and acknowledged the continued commitment of the Transport Community and its Regional Partners to advancing passenger rights in full alignment with the EU acquis. The Committee reaffirmed the importance of robust enforcement, improved institutional coordination, and enhanced transparency to ensure tangible benefits for transport users.</p> <p>Furthermore, the RSC acknowledged the forthcoming Next-Generation Action Plan (2026–2028) as a strategic instrument to guide national and regional reforms, capacity-building activities, and cross-border cooperation in the field of social issues and passenger rights. Members emphasised the importance of timely implementation of national measures, active stakeholder engagement, and regular progress monitoring to ensure meaningful improvements in the passenger experience across all modes of transport in the Western Balkans.</p>
9.	<p>Information on the Seat belt road safety campaign</p> <p>The Transport Community Permanent Secretariat presented its plans to launch a public awareness campaign on seat belt use, aimed at improving road safety outcomes across the</p>

	<p>Western Balkans. This initiative forms part of the broader efforts to align with the EU Road Safety Policy Framework 2021–2030, which seeks to halve the number of road deaths and serious injuries by 2030 and contributes directly to the implementation of the Transport Community’s Regional Road Safety Action Plan.</p> <p>The campaign will focus on promoting consistent seat belt use among both drivers and passengers, addressing behavioural change through targeted messaging and evidence-based communication strategies. The initiative will be implemented in close cooperation with national authorities, road safety councils, police forces, and civil society, and will be supported by multimedia materials tailored to regional contexts.</p> <p>The Secretariat emphasised that the outcomes and materials developed under this campaign will be disseminated widely, both online and through traditional media channels, to maximise outreach and foster a culture of safety throughout the region. The campaign is also intended to support national enforcement efforts and awareness-raising activities, complementing existing programmes at both the regional and national levels.</p> <p>As part of the annual regular reporting on Road Safety Statistics for the Western Balkans and Observers, the Secretariat distributed the final version of the Statistics for 2024, which is in line with the EU reporting on Road Safety statistics. This information will be published on the TCT Website and made public during the week starting 19th May.</p> <p>Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee welcomed the initiative to launch the Seat Belt Road Safety public awareness campaign, recognising its potential to contribute meaningfully to the reduction of road fatalities and serious injuries in the Western Balkans. The Committee underlined the importance of collaborative and coordinated efforts across all stakeholders to ensure the campaign’s impact and success and expressed support for continued joint action in promoting safer road behaviour and aligning with EU best practices in road safety communication.</p> <p>At the suggestion of the Presidency, it was agreed that a list of all ongoing projects coordinated by the Permanent Secretariat will be shared with RSC members.</p>
	ADMINISTRATION
10.	<p>Selection of external auditor for 2024, 2025 and 2026 Financial Statements</p> <p>The Transport Community Permanent Secretariat informed the Regional Steering Committee about the ongoing procurement process for securing the services of an external auditor to review the Financial Statements of the Transport Community for the financial years 2024 and 2025, with an option to extend the contract to include 2026, subject to agreement and performance.</p> <p>This process is being conducted in accordance with the principles of transparency, competitiveness, and sound financial management and follows the provisions set out in the Transport Community’s Financial Rules, as endorsed by the Regional Steering Committee. The aim is to ensure the continued integrity, reliability, and accountability of the Transport Community’s financial reporting, in line with international auditing standards and good governance practices.</p> <p>Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee took note of the information regarding the procurement of external audit services for the Financial Statements for 2024 and 2025, with</p>

	<p>a possible extension to 2026. The Committee emphasised the importance of timely financial oversight and recommended that the Audit Report for the financial year 2024 be submitted no later than 31 August 2025, in line with established reporting timelines and to support the Secretariat's commitment to transparency and accountability.</p>
11.	<p>Budget Committee Report for 2024</p> <p>The Chair of the Budget Committee, Ms Cuadra García, presented the Budget Committee Report for the financial year 2024 to the Regional Steering Committee. In her presentation, Ms Cuadra García provided an overview of the key financial developments, budget implementation status, and compliance with the approved financial framework for 2024.</p> <p>She also briefed the RSC members on the outcomes of the first Budget Committee meeting held in 2025, highlighting initial discussions on budget planning, execution priorities, and considerations for the upcoming financial year. The Chair reaffirmed the Budget Committee's commitment to ensuring fiscal discipline, transparency, and the efficient use of resources in line with the Financial Rules of the Transport Community.</p> <p>Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee reviewed and endorsed the Budget Committee Report for 2024, recognising it as an important instrument for ensuring sound financial governance and accountability within the Transport Community framework.</p>
12.	<p>Endorsement of the Annual Operational Report for 2024</p> <p>The Transport Community Permanent Secretariat presented the Annual Operational Report for 2024 to the Regional Steering Committee, outlining in detail the activities, initiatives, and outcomes delivered throughout the past year. The Report reflects the Secretariat's continued efforts to implement the strategic priorities of the Transport Community and facilitate alignment with the EU transport acquis, while also supporting institutional capacity and regional cooperation.</p> <p>RSC members expressed their appreciation and satisfaction with the comprehensive nature of the report and acknowledged the Secretariat's active role in driving progress across all areas of work, including infrastructure development, soft measures, digitalisation, and sustainability.</p> <p>Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee endorsed the Annual Operational Report for 2024 and commended the efforts of the Permanent Secretariat and the regional technical experts for their commitment, professionalism, and active engagement in the implementation of the planned activities and projects throughout the year.</p> <p>Furthermore, the Committee welcomed the Secretariat's intention to include, as part of the Mid-Year Annual Operational Report, a dedicated section presenting the list of activities and deliverables undertaken in the interim period. This report will be presented at the next RSC meeting to ensure transparency and to support forward-looking decision-making.</p>
13.	<p>Initial Discussion on the 2026 Budget Outline</p> <p>The Transport Community Permanent Secretariat presented to the Regional Steering Committee (RSC) the preliminary outline of the 2026 Budget, formally launching the annual</p>

financial planning cycle. The proposed draft reflects a modest increase of 2% compared to the 2025 budget, responding to the Secretariat's evolving operational scope and the need to support the implementation of an expanding set of regional activities.

A central point raised during the discussion concerned salary indexation, introduced by the European Commission as a matter requiring urgent consideration. The Commission stressed that for any organisation it is essential to establish a mechanism for the periodic review and adjustment of staff remuneration, particularly in light of inflationary trends and to maintain competitiveness in attracting qualified professionals. It was noted that the proportion of staff from EU Contracting Parties has steadily declined, and that ensuring the Secretariat's ability to attract talent from across the region—including EU Member States—is essential to fulfilling its Treaty mandate.

The Chair of the Budget Committee, Ms Cuadra García, referred to the discussions held at the most recent Budget Committee meeting. She confirmed that no delegation had objected to the principle of salary indexation and that there was a shared recognition of the need to address this issue. She further noted that the Secretariat's salary grid has remained unchanged since 2019, as no adjustment mechanism had been foreseen when the Staff rules were laid out. This is an anomaly, as periodic salary adjustments are a common and necessary practice across international institutions to ensure fairness and operational continuity.

Bosnia and Herzegovina expressed support in principle for salary indexation and requested that the minutes of the Budget Committee meeting be shared with all RSC members to support transparency and informed decision-making. BiH also requested more information on how this salary indexation would happen in practice.

Kosovo requested that detailed discussion and any decisions relating to the 2026 Budget be postponed to the next RSC meeting, citing the ongoing electoral process and a temporary limitation on taking decisions with financial implications.

The representative of Serbia referred to the statement made by the representative of the European Commission that DG MOVE had sent a letter to all partners proposing that the issue of salary indexation be discussed at this meeting, and that no response had been received. The representative of Serbia emphasized that, in addition to this, the topic was mentioned and discussed at the meeting (EC's comment: the letter, as well the discussions during the RSC, meant to ask WB partners for their position, which was not provided before or during the RSC. At no point was there disrespect of the WB position).

The representative of Serbia claimed that the Western Balkan partners do not lack the experience and expertise of EU experts, as the activities of the Permanent Secretariat of the Transport Community, including trainings and workshops, are outsourced and carried out by EU experts. These activities come at a cost. It would be beneficial if the experts of the Permanent Secretariat themselves conducted some of the outsourced activities, particularly those related to legislative alignment. In this way, within the same budget, there is potential for salary increases.

Serbia and North Macedonia voiced strong reservations about proceeding with the salary indexation discussion at this stage and stressed the need for thorough deliberations before any commitments are considered.

The Commission took note of the views expressed by the Regional Partners while reiterating that failure to address the issue of salary indexation would undermine the long-term effectiveness of the Permanent Secretariat and the Transport Community, in a highly critical time for *acquis* alignment amongst partners. In this context, the European Commission noted that the matter will be further discussed with the Regional Partners on a bilateral basis with a

	<p>view to finding a solution in time for the adoption of the 2026 budget. To ensure that this is the case, a solution would need to be found by the end of June 2025.</p> <p>Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee welcomed the first discussion on the outline of the 2026 Budget, recognising this as the initial step in a broader consultation process. The budget ceiling for 2026, as presented by the Secretariat, was noted.</p> <p>The RSC reiterated the importance of transparent and inclusive dialogue on budgetary matters and requested that the minutes of the latest Budget Committee meeting be circulated to all members for review.</p> <p>It was agreed that the final decision on the 2026 Budget will be taken at the December 2025 RSC meeting, following continued consultations and once the key parameters have been further defined and agreed upon by all Parties.</p>
14.	<p>Update on the State of Play of Secondments to the TCT Secretariat</p> <p>The Transport Community Permanent Secretariat presented an update to the Regional Steering Committee (RSC) on the status of secondments to date. Following the successful completion of the secondment from Bosnia and Herzegovina, which concluded on 14 October 2024, no new secondees have joined the Secretariat since.</p> <p>In 2024, nomination procedures were initiated for secondees from Kosovo and, subsequently in November 2024, for candidates from Montenegro. In March 2025, the process was launched for a secondment from North Macedonia, with an indicative starting date set for September 2025.</p> <p>The Presidency and Co-Presidency reiterated their strong support for the TCT Secondment Programme, underlining its value in fostering regional ownership, professional development, and enhanced cooperation through the direct engagement of national experts in the work of the Secretariat.</p> <p>The representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina expressed appreciation for the collaboration and support provided by the Secretariat during their secondees' term and welcomed future opportunities to engage in the programme again.</p> <p>Montenegro informed the RSC of internal administrative challenges, particularly related to staff shortages in the Ministry, which have delayed the nomination process. Montenegro expressed its intention to overcome these obstacles in the coming weeks to ensure participation in the programme.</p> <p>Kosovo expressed concern regarding the lack of feedback and progress on its secondment nomination. In response, the TCT Secretariat provided assurances that all procedural steps had been properly followed. The Secretariat confirmed that the formal request for the issuance of a diplomatic identification card for the nominated secondees was submitted to the Serbian authorities in accordance with established protocol. However, as of the time of the meeting, the ID card had not yet been issued.</p> <p>The Secretariat stressed that Kosovo will not lose its opportunity to participate in the Secondment Programme. It reaffirmed that candidate from Kosovo will be able to join the Secretariat immediately upon the issuance of the required diplomatic documentation by the host authorities.</p>

	<p>Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee took note of the information provided regarding the current status of secondments to the TCT Secretariat and reaffirmed the importance of this mechanism as a tool for strengthening regional capacity, promoting institutional cooperation, and supporting knowledge exchange.</p> <p>The RSC encouraged all Parties to actively pursue secondment nominations, and called on the Secretariat to maintain regular, transparent communication with national authorities to ensure the timely resolution of administrative procedures and facilitate the smooth onboarding of secondees.</p>
15.	<p>Update on the Use and State of Play of Locally Contracted Experts</p> <p>The Transport Community Permanent Secretariat presented an update to the Regional Steering Committee (RSC) on the use and current status of locally contracted experts. These experts have been engaged to provide targeted technical assistance in areas requiring enhanced support, particularly in the transposition and implementation of the EU transport acquis and in the delivery of priority measures under the Next Generation Action Plans.</p> <p>The Secretariat emphasised that the contribution of locally contracted experts has proven to be a highly effective and flexible instrument in addressing identified capacity gaps among Regional Partners. Their expertise has been instrumental in supporting national administrations in advancing complex technical tasks, facilitating alignment with EU legislation, and improving the pace and quality of reform implementation.</p> <p>These engagements have also contributed to increased regional ownership, as experts often operate in close coordination with national institutions, ensuring that their work is context-sensitive and aligned with domestic priorities.</p> <p>Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee welcomed the update on the use of locally contracted experts by the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat, acknowledging their role as a strategic resource in supporting implementation efforts across the region.</p> <p>The RSC further recognised the added value of this support, particularly in addressing structural limitations in internal expertise and human resource constraints faced by several Regional Partners. Members expressed appreciation for this targeted and needs-based approach, which directly contributes to enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of technical and legal reforms across the Western Balkans.</p>
16.	<p>TCT Personal Data Protection Policy</p> <p>The Transport Community Permanent Secretariat informed the Regional Steering Committee (RSC) about the development of its Personal Data Protection Policy, outlining its purpose, scope, and relevance for the institution's operations. The Secretariat underlined that the policy aims to ensure full compliance with recognised principles of data protection, in line with best practices and applicable international standards.</p> <p>The RSC was informed that the Director of the Permanent Secretariat will adopt the Personal Data Protection Policy in the form of an Administrative Instruction, which will serve as an internal legal act governing all aspects of personal data processing within the Secretariat. This policy will provide a structured and transparent framework for the collection, handling,</p>

	<p>storage, and safeguarding of personal data processed in the course of the Secretariat's activities.</p> <p>Importantly, the Secretariat highlighted that, under the terms of the policy, the Regional Steering Committee will serve as the appellate body in cases where individuals wish to challenge decisions or raise concerns regarding the processing of their personal data by the Secretariat, thereby reinforcing accountability and oversight.</p> <p>Once formally adopted, the document will be made publicly available on the Secretariat's website to ensure transparency and to offer clear guidance to all stakeholders—both internal and external—on the Secretariat's obligations and procedures concerning personal data.</p> <p>Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee welcomed the information provided on the Personal Data Protection Policy of the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat. The Committee acknowledged the importance of adopting a clear, transparent, and accountable framework for the protection of personal data, and took note of its role as the appellate instance within the framework of the policy once adopted.</p>
	<p>Any Other Business (AOB)</p> <p>The Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina informed the Regional Steering Committee about the serious concerns affecting professional drivers from the Western Balkans, in light of the 90/180-day rule applied under the Schengen Border Code. Under the current interpretation of this rule, professional drivers holding passports from non-EU countries in the region—such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, and North Macedonia—are subject to the same entry limitations as tourists, thereby restricting their legal stay in Schengen territory to 90 days within any 180-day period, regardless of the nature of their work.</p> <p>This longstanding concern is becoming more pressing with the upcoming launch of the EU Entry/Exit System (EES), a new digital system designed to register entries and exits of third-country nationals at Schengen borders. Once operational, the EES will automatically enforce the 90/180 rule, removing the possibility of human discretion in interpreting individual travel records. This could have severe operational and economic consequences for international road freight operators based in the Western Balkans, potentially limiting market access and disrupting the regional supply chain.</p> <p>It was noted that a dedicated meeting on this issue recently took place in Brussels, involving representatives of Western Balkan Regional Partners and EU officials. However, as no systemic solution has yet been reached, the representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina proposed that this issue be formally discussed under Any Other Business (AOB) at the forthcoming Ministerial Council meeting of the Transport Community, with the aim of elevating the matter to the political level and seeking a regionally coordinated approach.</p> <p>The Regional Steering Committee agreed with the proposal and supported the inclusion of this topic under AOB at the upcoming Ministerial Council meeting, recognising the shared nature of the challenge across several Regional Partners.</p>

Chair of the Regional Steering Committee
Ms Emeše Lalić Urban

Co-Chair of the Regional Steering Committee
Ms Mona Björklund

