

28th Regional Steering Committee Meeting

28 October 2025, Tirana

Draft Minutes and Conclusions

Representatives from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia attended the meeting, together with representatives of the European Commission. Observing Participants (Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine), representatives of EU Member States, the European Council, and DG ENEST also participated online.

Before the official opening of the meeting, a Presidency handover ceremony between Serbia and Albania took place, marked by the symbolic transfer of the TCT flag.

Serbia expressed its sincere appreciation for the opportunity to chair the TCT Regional Steering Committee (RSC), highlighting the strengthened partnership between the Regional Partners, the EU, the Committee members, and the TCT Secretariat. In transferring the TCT Presidency to the Albanian colleagues, Ms Lalić Urban extended best wishes for a successful and productive year ahead.

Ms Muka, representing Albania, formally assumed the Presidency, expressing heartfelt gratitude to all colleagues for their trust and cooperation. She underlined that Albania would undertake this new role with a strong sense of responsibility and commitment.

Mr Zakonjšek thanked both Albania and Serbia, noting the historical significance of this transition, which marks the beginning of a new TCT Presidency cycle and Albania's second term in this role after six years.

Ms Björklund expressed appreciation to Serbia for its successful tenure and extended best wishes to Albania for a fruitful Presidency.

The meeting was chaired by Ms Erjola Muka, Regional Steering Committee member representing Albania in its current role as RSC Presidency, and co-chaired by Ms Mona Björklund from the European Commission.

In her opening remarks, Ms Muka emphasised dialogue, cooperation, and the exchange of experience as key priorities of her address to the RSC members. She thanked the European Commission and the TCT Secretariat for their dedication, productive collaboration, and continued commitment to regional cooperation.

In her opening statement, Ms Björklund, Director of the Policy Coordination Directorate at the European Commission, expressed her gratitude to the TCT Secretariat for its collaboration and to the Regional Partners for their constructive engagement. She underlined that the enlargement momentum continued, particularly in terms of alignment with the EU acquis, and confirmed that the European Commission and DG MOVE would remain fully supportive. She also noted that relevant reports would be discussed during the meeting.

Finally, the agenda for the 28th RSC meeting was adopted.

*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.	A) Endorsement of the 2025 Progress Report on the implementation of the TCT Action Plans and EU Acquis transposition (Annex I of TCT) for the Western Balkans B) Presentation of the 2025 Progress Report on the implementation of the TCT Action Plans and status of TCT Annex I transposition for Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine The Transport Community Permanent Secretariat presented the 2025 Progress Report on the Implementation of the Transport Community Next Generation Action Plans and the Transposition of the EU Acquis (Annex I of the TCT) for the Western Balkans and the Observing Participants. The Secretariat emphasised the importance of sustaining momentum and intensifying efforts in the coming period to achieve more tangible and lasting results. All Regional Steering Committee members from the Western Balkans and the Observing Participants took the floor to outline their respective progress in implementing the Action Plans and aligning national legislation with the EU acquis. They reaffirmed their strong commitment to continuing reforms, acknowledged the progress already achieved, and agreed that further efforts will be required to overcome remaining challenges and ensure full and effective implementation of the agreed priorities. Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee formally endorsed the 2025 Progress Report on the Implementation of the Transport Community Next Generation Action Plans and the EU Acquis (Annexe I of the TCT) for the Western Balkans Partners. It acknowledged the status of the report for the Observing Participants (Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine). Furthermore, the Committee recommended that the Progress Report be presented and formally acknowledged by the Ministerial Council of the Transport Community at its forthcoming meeting on 5 December in Brussels.
2.	Endorsement of the Next Generation Action Plan for Social Issues and Passenger Rights 2026 – 2028 The Transport Community Permanent Secretariat presented the Next Generation Action Plan for Social Issues and Passenger Rights 2026–2028, which serves as a strategic roadmap for improving working conditions in the transport sector and strengthening the enforcement of passenger rights across the Western Balkans. The Action Plan builds upon the first-generation plan (2023–2025) and introduces more concrete, measurable, and time-bound actions in the fields of social issues, passenger rights, and gender equality. The Secretariat underlined that the plan aligns regional efforts with EU standards and supports the implementation of Annexes I.2 and I.3 of the Transport Community Treaty, as well as the objectives of the EU Growth Plan for the Western Balkans. Ms Mona Björklund stressed that the European Commission attaches great importance to social issues and reaffirmed its commitment to supporting all three pillars covered by the Action Plan. Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee endorsed the Next Generation Action Plan for Social Issues and Passenger Rights 2026–2028 and welcomed its forward-looking approach aimed at achieving full alignment with the EU acquis. Members commended the inclusive preparation process and underlined the importance of maintaining strong regional coordination to ensure effective implementation and monitoring of the plan.

3.	Information on the Concept Proposal for Transport Investment Summit 2026 The Transport Community Permanent Secretariat presented information regarding the Transport Investment Summit 2026, which aims to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and best practices and to address the challenges faced by the Transport Community Contracting Parties and Observing Participants in the development of transport infrastructure. The Presidency acknowledged the importance of the forthcoming Summit and expressed full support for the proposed thematic focus. The European Commission also strongly endorsed the initiative and underlined that the Summit is timely in light of the new TEN-T regulation and the implementation of the European Transport Corridors, while it also represents an excellent opportunity to engage the private sector, regional, and EU-based investors and bidders in advancing sustainable transport infrastructure development. All other Regional Steering Committee members expressed their support for the organisation of the Transport Investment Summit and proposed that its outcomes and conclusions be presented at the other high-level meetings in the region. Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee acknowledged the information on the Concept Proposal for the Transport Investment Summit 2026, to be held in Greece next year.
4.	Presentation of the Outcome of the Feasibility Study on Establishing a Regional Rail Centre of Excellence for the Western Balkans The Transport Community Permanent Secretariat presented the Feasibility Study on the Establishment of a Regional Rail Centre of Excellence for the Western Balkans, which confirmed that creating such a Centre is both necessary and achievable. The study outlines a strategic pathway to modernise railway training, harmonise regional standards with the EU acquis, and strengthen institutional capacity through phased implementation and robust regional cooperation. The Secretariat also presented several development options and scenarios, ranging from a gradual policy-driven approach to the establishment of a fully operational institutional centre. Ms Erjola Muka, representing Albania, expressed strong support for the initiative and offered Albania as a potential host country. Mr Gjynejt Mustafa, representing Kosovo, supported the idea and proposed that the Centre's headquarters be located in Kosovo, noting that other regional institutions are already hosted by neighbouring partners (RESPA in Montenegro, the TCT Secretariat in Serbia, and the RCC in Bosnia and Herzegovina). Mr Zoran Andrić, representing Bosnia and Herzegovina, endorsed the proposal and noted that the RESPA model could serve as a useful reference, given its proven governance and regional cooperation framework. The European Commission (DG MOVE) welcomed the initiative and expressed interest in receiving further information regarding the costs and benefits of the proposal. The Commission underlined that the development of a fully-fledged Regional Rail Centre would require financial contributions from the Region and a clear commitment to shared ownership.

	Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee welcomed the Feasibility Study presentation and expressed broad support to continue exploring the potential establishment of a Regional Rail Centre of Excellence for the Western Balkans. Members agreed to initiate work under Policy Option 1, which allows for the launch of preparatory and coordination activities without immediate financial implications, while requesting the Secretariat to prepare a comprehensive overview of the financial needs, potential funding sources, and development scenarios for consideration in the forthcoming period.
5.	Report on the Pilot Project on Civil Society Organisations’ Engagement in Infrastructure Projects and Policy Reform The Transport Community Permanent Secretariat presented the outcomes of the Pilot Project on Civil Society Organisations’ (CSOs) Engagement in Infrastructure Projects and Policy Reform, held in Brussels on 17–18 September 2025. The Secretariat highlighted that the initiative, organised in cooperation with DG MOVE, DG ENEST, and the Open Society Foundations, brought together over 20 civil society organisations from the Western Balkans and the European Union. The project aimed to enhance transparency, environmental oversight, and accountability in transport policy and project development, while promoting a more structured dialogue and cooperation between institutions and civil society. The Secretariat also informed the Committee that a follow-up survey had been circulated to participants to collect feedback and identify future areas of engagement. It was noted that the initiative is expected to evolve into a dedicated programme in 2026, with the continued financial support of the Open Society Foundations. Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee acknowledged the report on Civil Society Organisations’ Engagement in Infrastructure Projects and Policy Reform and welcomed the continuation of this initiative in 2026. Members expressed strong support for further strengthening cooperation between civil society and institutional partners in the transport sector. Moreover, the Committee welcomed the readiness of the Open Society Foundations to support the establishment of an annual platform to further reinforce cooperation between Western Balkans and European Union civil society organisations.
6.	Transport Community Treaty Revision – State of Play The European Commission presented the state of play regarding the revision of the Transport Community Treaty, outlining the ongoing discussions and progress achieved to date. Mr Mircea Pascaluța, State Secretary of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development of the Republic of Moldova, briefly presented Moldova’s achievements in the transposition of legal acts under Annex I of the Transport Community Treaty, carried out with the support of the European Commission and the Transport Community Secretariat. He reaffirmed Moldova’s strong commitment to fulfilling all necessary conditions to become a full member of the Transport Community. Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee acknowledged the information regarding the state of play on the Transport Community Treaty revision. It was agreed that, together with the RSC Conclusions, the Informal Working Group Report on the Treaty Revision will be shared with all RSC members.

	ADMINISTRATION
7.	Second Discussion on the Transport Community Draft Budget 2026 The Transport Community Permanent Secretariat presented the Draft Budget for 2026, which represents a 2% increase compared to the 2025 Budget. The proposed Budget has been prepared in alignment with the 2026 Work Plan and within the established financial framework, applying the previous year's budget plus the 2% adjustment. The Presidency took note of the presentation and expressed appreciation to the Budget Committee for its work. No objections were raised, and members agreed in principle with the proposal. The European Commission expressed support for the continued focus of the budget on technical assistance and capacity-building activities, and confirmed that it would proceed with internal procedures to prepare for the formal adoption by the RSC. Ms Kirkova inquired about specific budget differences compared to 2025, and the Secretariat provided clarifications, notably: • an increase in the budget line for studies and technical assistance related to EU acquis transposition; • adjustments in office running costs reflecting expenses for the TODIS system and the Western Balkans road undertakings database; • a higher allocation for the Ministerial Council, reflecting experience and market price changes. Mr Mustafa proposed that RSC members be financially supported to participate in meetings of the Technical Committees, while Ms Kirkova suggested that two RSC members be financed to attend future RSC meetings. Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee agreed in principle with the proposed Draft Budget for 2026. The Decision on the Budget will be presented for adoption at the Regional Steering Committee meeting on 4 December 2025.
8.	Proposal for Salary Indexation for the Staff of the Permanent Secretariat The Presidency took the floor, noting that there were no objections to the proposal and expressing support for the introduction of salary indexation for the staff of the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat. The European Commission reiterated its strong support for the proposal and informed the Committee that letters had been addressed to all Ministers of the Regional Partners seeking their endorsement. It was noted with appreciation that a broad majority of Partners had already provided written responses in support of the measure. Ms Kirkova suggested that the issue could be revisited in the context of a future revision of the Transport Community Treaty. In this regard, the European Commission recalled that it had already received written confirmation from North Macedonia expressing agreement with the proposal as of the 2026 budget exercise, while the possibility and added value of also reflecting this in the Treaty revision could also be examined.

	The European Commission further proposed that the Decision on salary indexation for the staff of the Permanent Secretariat is to be adopted through a written procedure, to be launched in January 2026, following the completion of the Commission's internal procedures. Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee took note with appreciation of the update and expressed majority support, in principle, for the proposal to update the salary grid and introduce salary indexation for the staff of the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat. Members agreed that the matter will proceed to formal adoption through written procedure in line with the established institutional process.
9.	Information on the Draft Transport Community Annual Work Programme 2026 The Transport Community Permanent Secretariat presented the Draft Annual Work Programme for 2026, outlining its key priorities, milestones, and planned activities for the forthcoming year. The Programme reflects the strategic objectives of the Transport Community and aligns with the commitments under the Treaty and the EU Growth Plan for the Western Balkans. Bosnia and Herzegovina proposed that the Transport Observatory Data Information System (TODIS) be presented at the Transport Investment Summit 2026 and suggested that public access to TODIS be enabled in time for this event. Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee welcomed the Draft Transport Community Annual Work Programme 2026 and commended the Secretariat for its preparatory work. The final version of the document will be presented for endorsement at the Regional Steering Committee meeting on 4 December 2025 in Brussels.
10.	Information on the Outcomes of the Audit Report for the 2024 Accounts of the Transport Community The Transport Community Permanent Secretariat presented the Auditor's Report for the 2024 Accounts of the Transport Community, noting that the Auditor issued an unqualified opinion, confirming that the accounts present a true and fair view of the financial position of the organisation. The Presidency and the European Commission expressed positive views, underlining the importance of transparency, sound financial management, and clear audit reporting, and congratulated the Secretariat on the quality and integrity of its work. Other Regional Steering Committee members echoed these sentiments and commended the Secretariat for maintaining high standards of financial governance. Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee acknowledged the Auditor's Report for the 2024 Accounts of the Transport Community.
11.	Proposal for Amendments to Annex I of the TCT Financial Rules To enhance efficiency while maintaining transparency and accountability, the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat presented proposed amendments to Annex I of the TCT Financial Rules. The amendments introduce a simplified procurement procedure for contracts with a value not exceeding EUR 20,000, under which at least three offers must be collected and evaluated based on objective criteria, including price, quality, and capacity to deliver the required services.

	The Presidency and the European Commission expressed their support in principle for the proposal, noting that it represents a balanced approach to improving administrative efficiency while safeguarding the principles of fair competition and transparency. Other RSC members likewise expressed their agreement. It was agreed that a draft Decision reflecting these amendments will be prepared for consideration at the next RSC Meeting in Brussels in December 2025. Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee agreed, in principle, with the proposed amendments to Annex I of the TCT Financial Rules and invited the Secretariat to prepare the Decision for adoption at the forthcoming meeting in Brussels.
12.	Mid-Year Report on the Transport Community Annual Work Programme 2025 The Transport Community Permanent Secretariat presented the Mid-Year Report on the implementation of the Transport Community Annual Work Programme 2025. The report included the activities and studies requested by the Serbian Regional Steering Committee member at the previous RSC meeting held in May 2025 in Belgrade. The Secretariat also reported on the status of Secondments, noting that none had been implemented during 2025, which is expected to affect budget execution. The Secretariat invited Regional Partners to react proactively and, where necessary, transfer the opportunity to the next Partner in line to ensure proper implementation of the process. During the discussion, Albania highlighted challenges related to limited human resource capacity within the ministry. At the same time, Montenegro referred to administrative issues that had caused delays but assured members that nominations would be submitted by the end of the month. Mr Andrić, representing Bosnia and Herzegovina, expressed positive views on Bosnia's previous secondment, emphasising its mutual benefits for both the Secretariat and the Partner administration. Kosovo reiterated its strong interest in participating in the secondment programme and inquired about the status of its nomination. The Secretariat acknowledged the comments received and clarified that all procedural steps had been followed in full accordance with the established rules, noting that the Director, Mr Zakonjšek, had sent official correspondence to the Minister Aliu informing him of the outcome. Director Zakonjšek further underlined that the secondment programme remains open to Kosovo and encouraged continued engagement to ensure future participation. In the context of human resources and administrative matters, Mr Mustafa requested that the Secretariat prepare an overview of the geographical balance of the TCT staff, broken down by Regional Partner. Bosnia and Herzegovina additionally requested that the European Commission explore the inclusion of Regulation (EU) No 305/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 March 2011, laying down harmonised conditions for the marketing of construction products and repealing Council Directive 89/106/EEC (Text with EEA relevance), into Annex I of the Transport Community Treaty. Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee welcomed the Mid-Year Report on the Transport Community Annual Work Programme 2025 and took note of the information and recommendations presented.
13.	Information on the Ministerial Council of the Transport Community, Brussels, 5 December 2025

	The Transport Community Permanent Secretariat presented information and the draft agenda for the upcoming Ministerial Council meeting, scheduled for 5 December 2025 in Brussels. The Secretariat underlined the importance of ensuring ministerial-level participation and invited each Regional Partner to confirm, as soon as possible, the composition of their ministerial delegations and any requests for bilateral meetings. Ms Mona Björklund emphasised the Commissioner’s engagement in the Ministerial Council and welcomed the forthcoming high-level political dialogue. She also confirmed the participation of the Western Balkans Eastern Mediterranean Corridor Coordinator at the meeting. She invited the regional partners and observing participants to present during the Ministerial Council ambitious plans for the upcoming period to accelerate progress on acquis alignment. Mr Zoran Andrić, representing Bosnia and Herzegovina, proposed that the issue of the 90/180-day rule under the Schengen Border Code, which affects professional drivers from the Western Balkans, be formally discussed under Any Other Business (AOB) at the Ministerial Council meeting. The proposal aims to elevate the issue to the political level and foster a regionally coordinated response. During the subsequent discussion, Ms Kirkova suggested that the Multimodal Study be removed from the agenda, noting that it is not within the Ministers’ mandate to endorse studies. Following a brief exchange and acknowledging the strategic importance of the topic, RSC members agreed to remove the item from the formal agenda while retaining the supporting background documentation, as suggested by Mr Andrić. Conclusion: The Ministerial Council of the Transport Community will be held on 5 December 2025 in Brussels. All Regional Partners are invited to confirm their respective Ministers' participation by 21 November 2025. A revised draft agenda, reflecting the agreed changes and the additional AOB item, will be circulated in the coming days.
14.	Proposal by the European Commission to Open a Call for Applications for the Position of Director of the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat and Renewal of the Mandate of the Deputy Director The discussion began with Director Mr Matej Zakonjšek expressing his sincere gratitude for the trust and cooperation extended to him throughout his two mandates, while formally informing the Committee that he would not seek a third mandate. The European Commission then outlined the process for the selection of a new Director, specifying the following steps: • The vacancy notice for the position of Director will be published in the coming days. • The selection process will be led by the European Commission, which will establish a Selection Committee including a representative of the Presidency. • Upon completion of the evaluation, the three best-qualified candidates will be presented to the Commissioner for interviews and final assessment. • The Commissioner will then propose a preferred candidate to the Regional Steering Committee (RSC) and subsequently submit the proposal for opinion to the Ministerial Council. • The process is expected to be completed before summer 2026, ensuring a smooth transition and institutional continuity within the Secretariat prior to the conclusion of Mr Zakonjšek’s mandate.

	Following the debate on the renewal of the Deputy Director's mandate, RSC members agreed to launch an open call for applications for the Deputy Director's position, thereby ensuring transparency, inclusiveness, and equal opportunity. Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee approved the opening of calls for applications for the positions of both Director and Deputy Director of the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat.
	AOB
15.	Information from the European Commission on the Implementation of Article 3(3) of the Transport Community Treaty The European Commission presented the note which clarifies the functioning of TCT Article 3(3) and its potential application to tachograph legislation. Mr Fejzulla Mustafa raised a concern regarding Kosovo's limited inclusion in certain areas of regional cooperation, citing tachographs as an illustrative example. The European Commission acknowledged the concern and provided clarification on the broader context. The issue can be further discussed on a technical level.. Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee acknowledged the information presented by the European Commission regarding the implementation of Article 3(3) of the Transport Community Treaty.

Chair of the Regional Steering Committee
Ms Erjola Muka

Co-Chair of the Regional Steering Committee
Ms Mona Björklund

