

# Next Generation Action Plan

for Implementation of the EU Acquis on  
Social Issues and Passenger Rights in Transport

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**2026 - 2028**

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# List of abbreviations

<b>Annex I</b>	Annex I to the Transport Community Treaty
<b>CEFTA</b>	Central European Free Trade Agreement
<b>CONNECTA</b>	Technical Assistance to Connectivity in the Western Balkans
<b>DEBO</b>	Designated Body
<b>DG MOVE</b>	Directorate General for Mobility and Transport
<b>DG ENEST</b>	Directorate General for Enlargement and Eastern Neighbourhood
<b>EBRD</b>	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
<b>EC</b>	European Commission
<b>EIB</b>	European Investment Bank
<b>EMSA</b>	European Maritime Safety Agency
<b>ERA</b>	European Union Agency for Railways
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>EU DEL(s)</b>	European Union Delegation(s)
<b>EU Member State(s)</b>	European Union Member State(s)
<b>IFI</b>	International Financing Institutions
<b>IM(s)</b>	Infrastructure Manager(s)
<b>IPA</b>	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
<b>ITS</b>	Intelligent Transport Systems
<b>IWW</b>	Inland Waterways
<b>JASPERS</b>	Joint Assistance to Support Projects in European Regions
<b>RP</b> s	Regional Partners (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia)
<b>RSC</b>	Regional Steering Committee
<b>TA</b>	Technical Assistance
<b>TAIEX</b>	Technical Assistance and Information Exchange instrument of the European Commission
<b>TCT Secretariat</b>	Transport Community Permanent Secretariat
<b>TEN-T</b>	Trans-European Transport networks

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



# 1. Introduction

The transport sector in the Western Balkans plays a crucial role in economic development and regional integration. However, challenges remain in ensuring adequate social standards for transport workers and in enforcing passenger rights. Strengthening these areas is essential for alignment with EU legislation, improving working conditions, and enhancing the overall passenger experience.

The **EU Growth Plan<sup>1</sup> for the Western Balkans** is a key framework aimed at fostering economic development and integration with the European Union. The associated **Reform Agendas** prioritise policy and regulatory improvements to ensure that transport connectivity is efficient, safe, and inclusive. A significant part of the accession process focuses on enhancing transport connectivity, which inherently includes advancing passenger rights and promoting social standards. This also entails ensuring a fair, healthy, and safe working environment across the transport sector, contributing to more equitable and sustainable growth in the region.

In the Western Balkans, the **transposition and implementation of Annexes I.2 and I.3<sup>2</sup> of the Transport Community Treaty<sup>3</sup>**—which cover legislation on social issues and passenger rights—remains insufficient. These annexes include key provisions related to working conditions, health and safety at work, equal opportunities, and accessibility and usability of transport services for persons with disabilities and persons with reduced mobility.

The **first Action Plan for the Implementation of the EU Acquis in the Area of Social Issues and Passenger Rights (2023–2025)<sup>4</sup>** laid the groundwork for aligning regional policies with the EU acquis, yet progress has been uneven. Overall progress in the implementation of the **first-generation Action Plan** for the EU acquis on in the area of social issues and passenger rights in transport has been moderate. Critical areas such as the enforcement of social regulations, accessibility in transport services, and compensation mechanisms for passengers require more attention.

The current implementation rate of the Action Plan for Social Issues and Passenger Rights shows progress across its key pillars. Workers' fundamental rights have reached an overall progress rate of 52%, while passenger rights show a slightly higher implementation rate of 60%.

Chapters — Equality to improve the gender balance and contributing to a more diverse workforce with a just transition for transport workers as digitalisation and innovation bring new opportunities, are not being scored.

While progress has been made in recent years, several areas such as workers' rights, passenger protection, and gender equality, still require further attention if they are to meet EU standards. Notable achievements include tangible steps towards the transposition of EU regulations on working time and rest periods in the road and rail sectors. However, full compliance with smart tachograph regulations remains a challenge, particularly in aligning regional practices with the latest EU requirements. Despite progress, the enforcement of social legislation related to workers' rights, rest periods, and tachograph use has been uneven across the region. Montenegro and Serbia have made commendable strides toward compliance, while Bosnia and Herzegovina and North Macedonia have experienced delays in aligning with the most recent EU regulations, indicating the need for more robust efforts. Albania has made notable progress in implementing working time regulations and strengthening enforcement mechanisms in the road sector, setting a strong example for the region. Although Kosovo has made progress, it continues to face challenges in achieving full alignment with EU social legislation, particularly in the consistent use of tachographs and enforcement of rest period rules for transport workers.

1 [enlargement.ec.europa.eu/enlargement-policy/growth-plan-western-balkans\\_en](https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/enlargement-policy/growth-plan-western-balkans_en)

2 [transport-community.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Annex-1\\_with-links.pdf](https://transport-community.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Annex-1_with-links.pdf)

3 [transport-community.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/treaty-en.pdf](https://transport-community.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/treaty-en.pdf)

4 [transport-community.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/TC-Action-Plan-Social-and-PAX-rights-Acquis\\_WEB.pdf](https://transport-community.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/TC-Action-Plan-Social-and-PAX-rights-Acquis_WEB.pdf)

During the **6th Social Forum**, held on 10 April 2025 in Tirana, it was announced that 2025 would mark the final year for monitoring the first-generation Action Plan (2023–2025), and that preparations would begin for drafting the **Next Generation Action Plan** on Social Issues and Passenger Rights.

The Next Generation Action Plan is shaped by insights gained during the implementation of the previous action plan which anticipates legal and strategic developments for the period 2026–2028.

The **Next Generation Action Plan (2026–2028)** introduces even more concrete and enforceable measures relating to social issues and passenger rights.

The following documents were taken into account when identifying the measures indicated within the Next Generation Action Plan for Social Issues and Passenger Rights:

- Transport Community Treaty, Article 55 referring to implementation of the social acquis as per Annex I of the Transport Community and Article 27<sup>6</sup> establishing the Social Forum, is to serve as a platform for a dialogue between key transport stakeholders of the European Union and Western Balkans regional partners;
- Transport Community Treaty; ANNEX I.2, ANNEX I.3 <sup>7</sup>;
- Conclusions of the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Social Forum <sup>8</sup>;
- Strategy<sup>9</sup> for Sustainable and Smart Mobility in the Western Balkans

The **Next Generation Action Plan (2026–2028)** for implementation of the EU acquis on social issues and passenger rights in transport was developed through close cooperation and coordination with all relevant stakeholders: regional partners, representatives of the European Commission, members of technical committees from various sectors, and other key institutions.

Draft measures on social issues were finalised and endorsed at the **Informal Tachograph Group meeting** held in Germany in September 2025. Passenger rights measures were endorsed earlier, at the **6th Social Forum** in April 2025 in Tirana, which focused specifically on strengthening passenger rights in the Western Balkans.

The Action Plan will continue to serve as a **strategic roadmap**, setting out key actions and milestones with associated timelines. The measures it contains will provide clear guidance to regional partners and stakeholders in fulfilling the commitments outlined in EU strategic documents and the Transport Community Treaty.

5 “The South East European Parties shall implement the relevant social acquis with regard to transport as set out in Annex I. The Transport Community shall reinforce and promote the social dialogue and the social dimension through the reference to the acquis in social matters, the workers’ fundamental rights and the involvement of the European Economic and Social Committee and the national and European social partners acting in the transport sector, at the appropriate level.”

6 “For addressing these social matters, the Contracting Parties shall agree to establish a Social Forum. Each Contracting Party, in accordance with its internal procedures, shall designate its representatives, who may take part in the relevant meetings of the Social Forum. The representation shall cover the governments, as well as the organisations of workers and employers and as any other relevant bodies, which are considered appropriate in accordance with the discussed topics. The European social dialogue committees related to the transport sector shall be present and participate in the meetings, as well as representatives of the European Economic and Social Committee. The Social Forum shall establish its rules of procedure.”

7 [transport-community.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Annex-1\\_with-links.pdf](https://transport-community.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Annex-1_with-links.pdf)

8 [transport-community.org/social-forum](https://transport-community.org/social-forum)

9 [transport-community.org/strategy-for-sustainable-and-smart-mobility-in-the-western-balkans-2](https://transport-community.org/strategy-for-sustainable-and-smart-mobility-in-the-western-balkans-2)

## 2. Next Generation Action Plan for Implementation of the EU Acquis on Social Issues and Passenger Right

The first generation of the Action Plan for Social Issues and Passenger Rights (2023–2025) served as a strategic guide in developing an efficient, inclusive, and socially sustainable transport system in the Western Balkans. It provided a structured framework for aligning national policies with the EU acquis in areas such as working conditions, enforcement of social legislation, gender equality and protection of passenger rights. The execution of the planned actions was supported by the TCT Secretariat and various instruments and assistance provided by the European Commission (e.g. TAIEX), as well as through active collaboration with national authorities and regional stakeholders.

The objective of the **Next Generation Action Plan** is to address persistent gaps in the **transposition and implementation of Annexes I.2 and I.3** of the **Transport Community Treaty**, which cover EU legislation on **social issues, passenger rights, and gender equality**. These include provisions on **working conditions, healthy and safe working environments, equal opportunities**, and the **accessibility and usability of transport services**, particularly for **persons with disabilities and persons with reduced mobility**.

The updated Action Plan introduces a set of **forward-looking and targeted measures** to strengthen the effectiveness of regional policies on social rights and passenger protection. While maintaining the three main pillars of the previous plan (2023–2025), the **Next Generation Action Plan (2026–2028)** offers a more detailed set of actions, tailored to reflect the specific challenges and needs of each regional partner and recent developments in the relevant EU acquis.

The current Action Plan places a strong emphasis on the **rail and road transport sectors**, where most of the EU legal acts under Annex I.2 and I.3 apply. **Measures related to other transport modes**, such as **inland waterways (IWW)** and **maritime transport**, are acknowledged and referenced within the Next Generation Action Plan for Waterborne Transport and Multimodality.

The Action Plan is a blend of the EU legislation deriving from ANNEX I of the Transport Community and non-legislative measures that are planned to be supported by the TCT Secretariat.



## 3. Content

The Next Generation Action Plan for Implementation of the EU Acquis on Social Issues and Passenger Rights in Transport rests on three pillars:

- Social Issues - Establishing high social standards by providing fair, healthy and safe working conditions,
- Passenger Rights - Strengthening Passenger Rights to ensure a fair and accessible transport system,
- Gender equality and attractiveness of transport - Providing equal opportunities and a more attractive transport sector for everyone.

### 3.1. Social Issues

These measures aim to enhance social protection and fair working conditions in the transport sector through structured legislative transposition, enforcement mechanisms, and institutional capacity building.

Action Rail	Regional Partners Concerned; deadlines		Relevance to TCT Annex I – EU Legislation
	Transposition	Implementation	
<b>Transpose the EU Acquis on organisation of working time Directive (EU) 2003/88</b>	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro Q3 2027	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro Q3 2028	Annex I.2 rules applicable
<b>Transpose the EU Acquis on working conditions of mobile workers engaged in interoperable cross-border services in railway Directive (EU) 2005/47</b>	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro Q3 2027	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro Q3 2028	Annex I.2 rules applicable
<b>Transpose the EU Acquis on common procedures and specifications necessary for the interconnection of electronic driving card registers of driving cards Regulation (EU) 2016/68</b>	All Regional Partners Q3 2027	All Regional Partners North (excluding North Macedonia) Q3 2028	Annex I.3 Rules applicable
<b>Transpose the EU Acquis on tachographs in road transport Regulation (EU) 165/2014</b>	All Regional Partners Q3 2027	All Regional Partners Q3 2028	Annex I.3 Rules applicable
<b>Transpose the EU Acquis laying down requirements for construction, testing, installation, operation and repair of tachographs and their components Regulation (EU) 2016/799</b>	All Regional Partners Q3 2027	All Regional Partners Q3 2028	Annex I.3 Rules applicable

Action Rail	Regional Partners Concerned; deadlines		Relevance to TCT Annex I – EU Legislation
	Transposition	Implementation	
<b>Transpose the EU Acquis regarding recorded data content recorded and the checking of tachograph repair checking Regulation (EU) 2024/1886, laying down detailed rules implementing Regulation (EU) No 165/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the content of the initial and continuing training of control officers for the analysis of the data recorded and the checking of tachographs</b>	All Regional Partners Q4 2027	All Regional Partners Q4 2027	Annex I.3 Rules applicable
<b>Transpose the EU Acquis on the working time of persons engaged in mobile road transport activities Directive (EU) 2002/15</b>	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo Q4 2027	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo Q4 2027	Annex I.3 Rules applicable
<b>Transpose the EU Acquis on harmonisation of certain social legislation Regulation (EC) No 561/2006</b>	Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo Q3 2027	Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo Q3 2027	Annex I.3 Rules applicable
<b>Transpose the EU Acquis relevant to maximum periods for downloading of relevant data from vehicle units Regulation (EU) 581/2010</b>	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo Q3 2027	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo Q3 2028	Annex I.3 Rules applicable
<b>Establish National Electronic Databases for Driving and Rest Time Monitoring Regulation (EU) 561/2006, Directive 2006/22/EC</b>	All Regional Partners Q4 2027	All Regional Partners Q4 2027	Annex I.3 Rules applicable Develop interoperable IT systems to collect, monitor, and exchange tachograph data to support fair enforcement of rest period regulations.
<b>Transpose the EU Acquis related to minimum conditions for implementing social legislation related to road transport activities Directive (EU) 2006/22</b>	Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo Q4 2027	Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo Q4 2028	Annex I.3 Rules applicable

**Expected outcomes:** Strengthened implementation of EU social acquis in transport, improved working conditions for transport workers, better oversight of labour rights compliance, and enhanced enforcement mechanisms across the region. Introduction of smart tachograph systems in all Regional Partners by 2028 is anticipated to reduce undeclared working hours and improve enforcement by up to 20%, ensuring better labour rights protection.

## 3.2. Passenger Rights

These measures aim to establish clear enforcement structures, improve accessibility, and ensure that passenger rights are upheld in line with EU standards.

Action Rail	Regional Partners Concerned; deadlines		Relevance to TCT Annex I – EU Legislation
	Transposition	Implementation	
<b>Transpose EU Acquis regarding rail passenger rights Regulation (EC) No 2021/782</b>	Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro Q4 2026	Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro Q4 2028	Annex I.2 rules applicable
<b>Transpose EU Acquis on rights of bus and coach passengers. Regulation (EC) No 181/2022</b>	All Regional Partners, Q3 2027	All Regional Partners, Q4 2028	Annex I.2 rules applicable
<b>Establish complaint handling and compensation mechanisms Regulation (EC) No 2021/782</b>		All Regional Partners, Q4 2028	Annex I. 3 Rules applicable for Regulation (EC) No 2021/782 Regulation (EU) No 181/2011
<b>Establish data collection and reporting process Regulation (EC) No 2021/782 , Regulation (EU) No 181/2011</b>		All Regional Partners, Q4 2028	Annex I.2 and 3 Rules applicable
<b>Draft a training roadmap and ensure training of transport personnel on the rights and needs of persons with reduced mobility No 2021/782 , Regulation (EU) No 181/2011</b>		All Regional Partners, Q4 2027	Annex I.2 and 3 Rules applicable

**Expected outcomes:** Stronger passenger rights enforcement mechanisms, better public awareness of rights, improved accessibility at transport hubs, and a harmonised regional approach to passenger rights enforcement. Designated National Enforcement Bodies in all Regional Partners fully operational by 2028, ensuring effective complaint handling and compensation procedures. Training programmes for transport staff on passenger rights and the needs of persons with reduced mobility are expected to cover at least 70% of public transport operators by 2028.

## 3.3. Gender equality and attractiveness of transport

This measure aims to examine analyse the barriers to gender equality in transport and develop targeted strategies to improve the sector's image and increase the participation of women in the workforce.

Action Rail	Regional Partners Concerned; deadlines		Relevance to TCT Annex I – EU Legislation
	Transposition	Implementation	
<b>Implement up to two identified measures deriving from Women in Transport – EU Platform for Change 25 Recommendations to attract, recruit and retain women in the transport sector<sup>10</sup>.</b>		All Regional Partners Q1 2028	

**Expected outcomes:** Increased awareness of gender gaps in transport employment, evidence-based recommendations for policy and investment, and improved sector attractiveness; a 10% increase in the participation of women in the transport workforce by 2028, as a result of implementing measures recommended in the Women in Transport – EU Platform for Change 25 Recommendations to attract, recruit and retain women in the transport sector.

<sup>10</sup> Women in transport: [op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/87d21922-35f8-11f0-8a44-01aa75ed71a1](https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/87d21922-35f8-11f0-8a44-01aa75ed71a1)



## 4. Conclusion

The Next Generation Action Plan on Social Issues and Passenger Rights (2026-2028) serves as a strategic roadmap to improve working conditions in the transport sector and enhance passenger rights enforcement across the Western Balkans. By aligning national policies with EU standards, this plan provides concrete, enforceable measures to create a more inclusive, fair, and accessible transport system.

The implementation of these measures will be closely monitored through annual progress reports, with the active participation of the relevant national authorities, the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat, and the European Commission. Each regional partner is expected to submit yearly updates on transposition and enforcement progress.

Expected results include strengthened legislative compliance, better working conditions for transport workers, more reliable enforcement of passenger rights, and enhanced cooperation among regional partners to ensure a uniform approach to EU transport policy integration.

By strengthening enforcement mechanisms, increasing transparency, and fostering regional cooperation, this plan aims to create tangible improvements in both social issues and passenger rights, ensuring a fair and efficient transport sector for all.



