

30th Regional Steering Committee Meeting

8 May 2026, Budva

Minutes and Conclusions

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

The meeting was chaired by Ms Erjola Muka, the 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 welcomed the participants, expressed her gratitude for the work of the TCT Secretariat and Montenegro's warm hospitality, and congratulated Montenegro on the progress achieved in its EU accession process. She emphasised the importance of commitment to advancing regional cooperation and encouraged RSC participants to contribute to the RSC discussions actively.

In her opening remarks, Ms Björklund, Director of the Policy Coordination Directorate at the European Commission, emphasised the benefits of collaborating with TCT and congratulated Montenegro on the results of its hard work. She encouraged Regional Partners to maintain close collaboration with the TCT Secretariat, especially regarding regulatory alignment and the screening of draft legislation.

The agenda for the 30th 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.

Endorsement of the 2026-2028 Roadmap to road market liberalisation between the Western Balkan Partners

The Director of the TCT Secretariat presented the roadmap and its measures, including the timeline. The roadmap and its defined measures, in consultation with all stakeholders, will further support the full road market liberalisation across the Western Balkans. The roadmap, as part of the Common Regional Market and Growth Plan, is an additional step forward toward the integration of the Western Balkan market among themselves and with the European Union Road market. Ms Erjola Muka considers it an important step and strongly supports a more open, regionally integrated market. She emphasises that implementation will require a careful and gradual removal of the permit regime, strengthened administrative capacities across all RPs, and effective monitoring and enforcement to prevent market distortions. Key elements for success include mutual trust among partners, interoperability of systems, and a consistent, systematic approach across the region.

Ms Mona Bjorklund noted that this was an important initiative for the road transport market. She supported removing the need for bilateral permits in the Western Balkans. She noted the initiative to facilitate negotiations with EU Member States, while emphasising that this does not prejudice the outcome of these negotiations. She noted that its application is part of the TCT Secretariat's work to align with the EU road transport acquis and stressed the importance of sending clear signals that regional partners are making progress in this area.

Ms Emese Urban Lalic considers the roadmap a solid foundation for liberalisation. She emphasised that, for successful implementation, it is necessary to develop the legal framework further and establish clear deadlines.

The Ukrainian representative shared their experience and added that bilateral permits were an issue before the agreement on road traffic with the EU.

Ms Jasminka Kirkova pointed out liberalisation with Bosnia and MNE, and that an agreement with Serbia was signed and ratified, but not from the Serbian side.

Mr Fezulla Mustafa informed that Kosovo's market is liberalised, with full liberalisation in place with Albania. Quotas apply to third countries, while a technical protocol has been established with North Macedonia. Overall, there are no major problems in the region regarding transport operations and transfers.

Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee formally endorses the Road Market Liberalisation Roadmap (2026–2028) presented.

RSC welcomes and expresses its readiness to offer the necessary support for all identified measures that will lead towards the general joint objective of removing the remaining regulatory and operational barriers, while ensuring alignment with the EU acquis, strengthening enforcement capacity, and enabling the digital transformation of the sector.

2.

Information Note on the Technical Assistance on Setting up National Access Points and National Bodies in the Western Balkans

The TCT Secretariat presented information on Technical Assistance for setting up National Access Points (NAPs) and National Bodies (NBs) in the Western Balkans. The assignment aimed to support the Regional Partners in defining a structured pathway for establishing NAPs and NBs in line with Directive (EU) 2023/2661 on Intelligent Transport Systems. It directly supports compliance with the EU ITS Directive's key requirement for digital transport integration and the achievement of measures under the Reform Agenda and the Next Generation of Road Action Plan.

Ms Erjola Muka highlighted the importance of alignment on ITS. From Albania's perspective, the establishment of NAP is a key step toward developing transport data systems. She noted that work is ongoing to improve legislation and prepare institutions to take over NAP and VIS responsibilities, as part of meeting closing benchmarks.

Moreover, expressed appreciation for the Secretariat's support in enabling Albania to become a core observer in the NAP framework, in line with European best practices. The observer status will provide valuable insights into data-sharing mechanisms and capacity building, helping ensure a consistent approach to methodologies across the region.

Ms Muka also described the hybrid NAP model as a pragmatic and flexible approach, initially focusing on safety-related traffic information and traffic flow data, while gradually expanding to additional data categories.

Ms Mona Björklund highlighted that this is an important area included in the reform agenda and is key to making optimal use of data, reducing congestion, and cutting emissions. She welcomed the technical assistance provided by the Secretariat and appreciated the establishment of a clear timeline for setting up national ITS bodies. She stressed that, in line with the Secretariat's study's conclusions, all Regional Partners should establish these bodies by 2030 and urged them to ensure full implementation of the study's recommendations.

Ms Kirkova stated that this initiative is part of the reform agenda. She noted that the law has already been drafted and that the next step is to adopt the accompanying bylaws.

Ms Gjynejt Mustafa thanked the TCT Secretariat for its support in identifying the roadmap. He explained that transport data is currently scattered across different institutions and that consolidating all data management functions within a single institution will take time.

Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee welcomes the progress made on this important topic. At the same time, appreciates the Transport Community Secretariat-funded dedicated technical assistance, implemented over 12 months and finalised in December 2025.

This support provided all Regional Partners with technical guidance, capacity building, and coordination, aiming to fulfil their obligations in line with the Next Generation Road Action Plan and the broader reform agenda. The Regional Steering Committee remains committed

	to advancing towards the formal designation or establishment of National Bodies through legal or administrative acts, and to implementing identified short- and long-term measures.
3.	<p>Information Note on Electronic Freight Transport Information (eFTI) and e-Freight</p> <p>A GIZ representative informed RSC members of the state of play regarding the project “EU4Digital –Pillar 3/Output 3.1”. The project lays the groundwork for introducing electronic Freight Transport Information (eFTI) in the WB economies, driving digital transformation in transport and logistics. Pillar 3/Output 3.1 aims to support the Western Balkan Six in awareness-raising, assessing and aligning the legal and regulatory framework with the relevant EU Regulation, and preparing for technical implementation. As a first step, the project supported the establishment of national inter-institutional eFTI Working groups (WG) with members from all relevant ministries and competent authorities involved in the inspection of freight transport. The working groups are formally established in Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia, and partly established in Kosovo, while in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the process has been initiated.</p> <p>Additionally, the project has been assisting the Western Balkan economies in transposing the eFTI regulation and accompanying legal acts at national level, and has supported the development of national 1st Level roadmaps– comprehensive assessments and gap analyses of the current state of play regarding existing legal regulations in scope of eFTI and existing technical systems in each WB economy, to define the main gaps and opportunities for the smooth implementation of eFTI. Mr Tim Beerens described the presentation as very helpful and informative, noting that valuable regional experience had been presented on the matter. He highlighted that Albania and Montenegro are already aligned with the relevant regulations.</p> <p>He stressed the importance of setting clear deadlines for the technical implementation of eFTI, preferably on a regional level, noting that for EU Member States, the deadline is July 2027. He questioned what the corresponding deadline should be for the Western Balkans, particularly for establishing the necessary systems and structures. In his view, a proposed regional deadline of June 2029 would be both realistic and ambitious, helping ensure alignment across the region.</p> <p>Ms Erjola Muka stated that Albania has drafted the law and submitted it to the European Commission. She explained that the competent authorities, including customs and food safety agencies, will be able to access electronic versions of documents. According to her, the legislation is fully aligned with the acquis. However, she raised concerns about the Western Balkans deadline, noting that there is currently no clear timeline for establishing the platform. She stressed that individual platforms cannot be developed separately and argued that the discussion should be approached differently. In her view, a separate meeting involving Western Balkans programmes is needed to agree on a common regional platform rather than individual national solutions.</p> <p>DG ENEST representative Mr Toszegi presented two possible approaches: either the whole region moves forward together, or frontrunner countries implement eFTI for specific transport modes first. These scenarios are based on the roadmap that TC initially prepared for the eFTI implementation. He emphasised that regional cooperation is important and could serve as a strong platform, potentially escalating issues to the RSC or the Ministerial Council if agreement cannot be reached. He added that further discussion is needed and noted</p>

	<p>continued GIZ support until mid-2027, encouraging full use of their systems during this period.</p> <p>Ms Jasminka Kirkova agreed that the eFTI agenda should be the same for everyone; otherwise, it would be ineffective and incompatible across the region. She noted that the reform agenda runs from 2024 to 2027, with the law expected to enter into force by mid-2028. However, she suggested that if implementation were pushed to mid-2029, it might offer a safer, more realistic timeline. She highlighted the issue of differing deadlines for Regional Partners and questioned whether a mid-2029 deadline would still be acceptable to the European Commission, rather than the 2028 deadline.</p> <p>Mr Nikola Veljovic noted that the eFTI law has already been adopted in Montenegro, making it a frontrunner in the region. However, he stressed that the main challenge lies in implementing the eFTI system itself. He pointed out that the platform is financially demanding and will require support from European partners to be successfully developed and deployed. He also mentioned that the Law on Ratification of the Additional Protocol to the Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road (CMR) concerning the Electronic Consignment Note has also been adopted by the Government and the Parliament.</p> <p>Ms Lalic Urban proposed that, with the Commission's support, the TCT Secretariat should establish a dedicated program to develop a shared eFTI platform for the Western Balkans.</p> <p>Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee welcomes the overall outcome of the project and the support from the Transport Community Secretariat, GIZ and the European Commission. Identified gaps and opportunities that will enable the smooth implementation of eFTI will be addressed, and relevant experts and institutions will take concrete measures.</p> <p>Further involvement of the private sector is crucial and represents an essential step in implementing eFTI.</p> <p>Moreover, the Regional Steering Committee recognises the importance of regional cooperation and harmonised deadlines, as the full implementation of eFTI and its data exchange among all parties requires strong cooperation and coordination. In that respect, it is agreed that the TCT will organise a dedicated meeting with the relevant stakeholders.</p>
4.	<p>Endorsement of Policy Framework and Roadmap on Sustainable Urban Mobility</p> <p>The TCT Secretariat presented the Policy Framework and Roadmap for Sustainable Urban Mobility in the Western Balkans. It offers a strategic, EU-aligned approach to shifting from fragmented, project-based urban mobility planning to structured, institutionalised national systems. Anchored in key EU policies, including the TEN-T Regulation and the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy, the framework introduces National SUMP Support Programmes (NSSPs) as the central mechanism for supporting cities in developing and implementing high-quality Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMPs). It identifies key gaps across the region—such as underdeveloped governance and coordination across levels and limited financing—and sets out a phased roadmap to address them through strengthened policy frameworks, capacity-building, financing mechanisms, and monitoring systems. Ultimately, the framework aims to support Regional Partners in achieving full alignment with the EU acquis, improving urban mobility outcomes, and enabling a more coherent and bankable pipeline of sustainable transport investments.</p>

	<p>Ms Erjola Muka emphasised that introducing national programs is an important step toward more institutionalised systems at the national level. She stressed the need to clearly allocate responsibilities as a foundation for effective implementation of the framework. She also noted ongoing efforts to develop systems in key cities and highlighted that predictable financing mechanisms are critical for sustainability. Capacity building and technical support were identified as key priorities to ensure consistent and high-quality implementation. Finally, she underlined that alignment with EU requirements and obligations remains a key driver for progress in this area.</p> <p>Ms Mona Björklund recognised the importance of enforcing the policy framework, noting that cities are currently facing challenges such as congestion, noise, and safety concerns. She emphasised that the policy framework can help address all of these issues together. She also noted that the TEN-T already includes clear requirements on urban nodes and expressed support for implementing this framework in the Western Balkans.</p> <p>Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee endorses the Policy Framework and Roadmap for Integrated Sustainable Urban Mobility for the Western Balkans, recognising it as a key guiding instrument to support the establishment of structured national systems for sustainable urban mobility, aligned with the EU acquis and TEN-T requirements, and invites pledges to take the necessary steps towards its implementation.</p>
5	<p>Project Implementation Unit - Presentation of Results from Completed Technical Assistance for Observing Participants</p> <p>The TCT Secretariat provided tailored technical assistance to Observing participants, particularly the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, to support their alignment with the EU transport acquis and facilitate integration into the EU transport market as a step towards EU membership. This year, three technical assistance projects were completed in Moldova, resulting in alignment with 35 EU legal acts. In comparison, four additional projects across all transport modes are ongoing and expected to be concluded by the end of 2026. The completed initiatives focused on developing a comprehensive Intelligent Transport System (ITS) Strategy, aligning road transport operations with EU standards, and ensuring compliance with the EU waterborne transport acquis. Each produced extensive legislative packages, strategic frameworks, and implementation roadmaps, supported by detailed analyses, stakeholder consultations, and capacity-building efforts. These projects are expected to improve safety, efficiency, environmental performance, and market functioning across transport sectors. At the same time, the next steps include adopting legislation, strengthening institutional capacity, prioritising investments, and establishing monitoring and enforcement mechanisms. Additional upcoming outputs include support for rail sector reform in Moldova and further legislative alignment in the road and maritime transport sectors in both Moldova and Ukraine.</p> <p>The achievements of the completed Technical Assistance activities were acknowledged, and the TCT's work in implementing the three Technical Assistance projects was highly praised. Very positive feedback was also provided regarding the training and capacity-building activities delivered.</p> <p>Ms Mona Björklund highlighted the impressive results of the technical assistance projects presented for the Observing participants. She urged Moldova to ensure full implementation of the recommendations of the three technical assistance projects recently completed.</p>

	<p>Mr Oleksandr Nikolaev expressed gratitude for the support Ukraine has received from the Transport Community. He provided an overview of legislative acts currently under review and announced that new legal acts are being drafted for adoption in the coming period. Continued support from the TCT was requested, given the large number of legal acts being prepared. He announced that a National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis (NPAA) had been adopted to achieve alignment with the EU acquis. The continuation of cooperation with the TCT and progress towards Ukraine's future full membership of the TCT were emphasised as priorities. Very positive feedback was provided regarding the training and capacity-building activities delivered so far. At the same time, the complexity of travel arrangements due to the situation on the ground was highlighted. The exchange of knowledge with Montenegrin institutions on closing specific chapters was highlighted as a potential study visit for Ukrainian institutions. In addition, a lack of a qualified workforce and difficulties related to language barriers were emphasised. The Ukrainian representative's participation in the Transport Investment Summit was confirmed.</p> <p>Mr Mircea Pascaluta provided an update on ongoing legislative developments in Moldova and the preparation of new legal acts planned for adoption in the coming period. He highlighted that the Transport Community has been Moldova's main supporter in the transposition of the transport acquis. Continued support from the TCT was requested in light of the extensive legislative agenda, and maintaining close cooperation with the TCT was stressed as a key priority, especially given the transposition of the rail and waterborne acquis and the structural changes expected by the end of the year.</p> <p>Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee endorsed the finalisation of three technical assistance initiatives for the Republic of Moldova. It encouraged them to consider and prioritise the actions needed for the upcoming period to ensure the smooth transposition of the EU transport acquis into the national legislative framework, based on the legal packages provided through the support of the Transport Community and financed by the European Union.</p>
6	<p>State of play on implementation of the Green Lanes Comprehensive Roadmap and of the Safe and Sustainable Transport Programme (SSTP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information by the TCT Secretariat on the Green Lanes roadmap • Information by the EC/World Bank on SSTP <p>The TCT Secretariat and the World Bank representative briefed RSC members on the state of play for implementing the Green Lanes roadmap and the current status of the Safe and Sustainable Transport Program.</p> <p>Ms Erjola Muka stated that the SSTP mechanism could provide financing support. In Albania's case, she noted that SSTP is open to all Western Balkan partners and can be used by everyone, making it a practical regional tool. She further explained that SSTP could finance eFTI for the region, with loans potentially granted to a regional organisation if six countries come together in a single joint project. Mr Zsolt emphasised the importance of implementing the 13 projects selected under SSTP1 and SSTP2. He explained further that the Commission has mobilised €55 million for SSTP2, out of which €25 million has been set aside to co-finance the 11 priority border crossing points (BCPs), with one application already received from Albania. He added that a dedicated call for the 11 Priority BCPs is currently open. CONNECTA has been mobilised for this process, supporting the green lanes</p>

	<p>initiative, with CONNECTA experts expected to begin work soon. National contact points have been established, and CONNECTA will support the development of tender documents and technical specifications. He urged stakeholders to make use of this opportunity. He also noted that the general fourth call under SSTP2 is ongoing and covers a wide range of projects not supported under WBIF calls.</p> <p>Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee is informed on the state of play in the implementation of the Green Lanes Comprehensive Roadmap. It welcomes the published General Call and Green Lanes Call for Proposals under the Safe and Sustainable Transport Programme. Regional partners are encouraged to apply for SSTP funds to improve and modernise their respective BCPs, and to use the available CONNECTA assistance to develop the concrete project proposals.</p>
7	<p>Investment Summit – state of play</p> <p>The TCT Secretariat informed the RSC members of the state of play regarding preparations for the upcoming Transport Investment Summit 2026.</p> <p>Ms Mona Björklund encouraged participants to maintain contact with IFIs and work towards a productive, practical, and successful summit.</p> <p>Mr Zakonjšek suggested shifting the focus away from past actions and concentrating on the region's future needs and, with that, opportunities for private-sector engagement.</p> <p>Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee acknowledged the current state of preparatory work for the upcoming Transport Investment Summit 2026.</p>
8	<p>Endorsement of the Roadmap on 112 eCall and Emergency Response Plan for Western Balkans</p> <p>The TCT Secretariat presented the roadmap on 112 eCall and the Emergency Response Plan for the Western Balkans, highlighting key gaps in emergency response systems and the need to strengthen 112 and eCall implementation, as well as overall emergency response capacity, supported by identified investment needs.</p> <p>Ms Björklund recalled the importance of progress in this area to improve road safety in the region.</p> <p>Ms Muka stated that the roadmap is useful, particularly for improving the capacity to respond adequately to incidents involving the transport of dangerous goods, which she identified as a regional risk. She noted that such interventions are essential in complex emergencies. She recognised that further efforts are needed to strengthen institutional mechanisms. In Albania, she reported progress, including the establishment of a legal framework and initial steps related to the 112 emergency system. She added that operational coverage is improving, with further alignment with EU standards expected by 2027, alongside better coordination among emergency services. She emphasised that technical assistance is critical to achieving the roadmap's targets. Ms Mona Björklund expressed strong support for the initiative, stating that it is very important and fully endorsed. She highlighted that it can significantly reduce response times and lower the number of fatalities. She also noted that it would be helpful for partners in promoting higher road safety standards across the region.</p>

	<p>Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee endorses the Roadmap on 112 eCall and Emergency Response Plan for Western Balkans, recognising it regional guiding instrument to support the establishment of comprehensive, interoperable, and efficient emergency response system, including the implementation of the 112 emergency number, the eCall system, and response mechanisms for dangerous goods incidents, in line with the EU acquis and invites regional partners to take the necessary steps towards its implementation with the assistance of the TCT Secretariat.</p>
9	<p>Information on Establishing an Informal Coordination Working Group for the Rail Centre of Excellence</p> <p>The TCT Secretariat presented the Preparatory and Coordination Plan to establish a Regional Railway Centre of Excellence. The initiative aims to support professional development and facilitate knowledge transfer.</p> <p>Ms Erjola Muka noted that significant gaps remain, particularly in the railway sector. She explained that, although authorities have been established for various rail subsectors, addressing these gaps is part of the agreed benchmarks. She emphasised that it is currently difficult to find adequate expertise for railway incidents and safety management. To address this, she suggested maximising synergies with universities and highlighted that financial implications and investment in capacity building will be necessary.</p> <p>Ms Mona Björklund expressed support for enhancing skills in the rail sector in the region. She welcomed the rail centre as an initiative that can contribute to this objective. However, she clarified that the EU cannot finance the operational costs of such a centre. She proposed that the informal group should also develop a tailored financial plan and assess whether Regional Partners can contribute to sustaining the initiative.</p> <p>Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee endorsed the establishment of the Informal Coordination Working Group for the Rail Centre of Excellence, recognising it as a practical and effective mechanism to strengthen regional coordination and stakeholder alignment. The Committee further acknowledged that this initiative constitutes a crucial step toward implementing the Preparatory and Coordination Plan and supporting the possible establishment of the Rail Centre of Excellence.</p>
10	<p>Presentation of the New Transport Community’s Communication Strategy</p> <p>The Permanent Secretariat of the Transport Community presented the Communication Strategy 2026–2030. The Strategy provides a structured framework to increase the visibility of the Transport Community’s work, strengthen public understanding of transport reforms and EU integration processes, and ensure more coordinated communication with Regional Partners, Observing Participants, the European Commission and relevant stakeholders.</p> <p>Ms Muka emphasised that communication should focus on clearly explaining the relevance and impact of transport reforms. She highlighted that building trust and ownership among stakeholders is essential. She also stressed that consistent, clear communication is key to translating complex transport issues into language that is accessible to all relevant actors.</p>

	<p>Ms Mona Björklund expressed full support for the strategy, describing it as comprehensive and excellent.</p> <p>Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee endorses the Communication Strategy 2026-2030 as a framework for strengthening the visibility, consistency and effectiveness of the Transport Community’s communication activities in the upcoming period. The Committee underlines the importance of clear, coordinated and results-oriented communication in presenting the benefits of regional cooperation, EU transport market integration, connectivity reforms, and the wider work of the Transport Community across transport modes to institutions, citizens and other relevant stakeholders across the region.</p> <p>The Regional Steering Committee invites the Permanent Secretariat to coordinate the implementation of the Strategy in close cooperation with Regional Partners, Observing Participants and the European Commission, and to regularly inform the RSC on progress achieved through its established reporting mechanisms.</p>
11	<p>Proposal for enhanced coordination on the review of draft transport legislation within the Transport Community</p> <p>The Permanent Secretariat of the Transport Community briefed the Regional Steering Committee on the overall situation and the challenges Regional Partners face in the review process. The proposed measures and prioritisation will address procedural challenges and improve the quality of documents requiring alignment review.</p> <p>Ms Mona Björklund emphasised the added value of a coherent process across TCT members and observers. She noted that such an approach would help the Secretariat plan and signal upcoming activities more effectively. She stressed that support from the TCT Secretariat is crucial for legislative review to improve draft legislation, and that information sharing should be a key focus. While not mandatory, she strongly argued in favour of the proposed process, under which Regional Partners should first submit draft legislation to the Secretariat for review before sharing it with the Commission. The Secretariat could then also discuss any findings in the technical committees. She also highlighted the importance of tools such as concordance tables and English translations to support consistency and comparability across the region.</p> <p>Mr Tim Beerens clarified that the idea is not to force submissions to the Secretariat. He explained that the final validation of legislation remains with the European Commission. He noted that the Secretariat’s role is to ensure high-quality legal texts and to shorten the time required for feedback and comments, which is ultimately in the interest of the Regional Partners. He added that the first step would be to ask the Secretariat to review the draft materials before further processing.</p> <p>Ms Mona Björklund stated that screening and reviewing laws would proceed more quickly if draft legislation were submitted to the Secretariat well in advance.</p> <p>Ms Emese Urban Lalic noted that the approach may work well for Albania and Montenegro but raised concerns that it is not suitable for Serbia at this stage, saying that the process could prolong the compliance process rather than shorten it.</p> <p>Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee welcomes the continued support of the Transport Community Secretariat and the initiative, as defined in the info note, which will</p>

	<p>further strengthen the process of aligning regional legislation with the European Union Transport Acquis. The Committee also acknowledges the efforts to support the prioritisation process, which will produce high-quality legal documents and improve overall planning.</p> <p>The Regional Steering Committee remains committed to supporting and further engaging in this important process of aligning with the Transport Acquis (ANNEX I of the TCT). Regional Partners and Observing Participants will send the Secretariat information about their plans for drafting new legislation.</p>
12	<p>Proposal for cooperation between the Connectivity Agenda Platform and the Transport Community</p> <p>The TCT Secretariat and DG ENEST, on behalf of the European Commission, presented a proposal for structured cooperation between the Transport Community and the Connectivity Agenda Platform, to be launched on 23 June 2026 in Brussels. The Platform will bring together the European Commission, EU Member States, partner countries and International Financial Institutions as a coordinated framework to advance connectivity between Europe and Central Asia.</p> <p>The Platform addresses key constraints to corridor development by strengthening investment pipeline preparation, supporting regulatory and procedural alignment, and improving corridor performance monitoring. The proposed cooperation focuses on “soft connectivity”, including regulatory approximation, operational coordination, border management, digitalisation and institutional capacity.</p> <p>Cooperation would be implemented pragmatically through reciprocal participation in training and capacity-building activities, without creating new governance structures, and in a way that ensures complementarity between the Transport Community’s acquis-based integration model and the Platform’s corridor-focused approach. For Western Balkans partners, this would enhance their role as a strategic logistics interface between the EU and Central Asia, support EU integration, and improve operational readiness. For Connectivity Agenda Platform partners, it offers access to an established acquis implementation framework with proven tools for translating EU rules into practice.</p> <p>The cooperation is designed to be cost-neutral for the Transport Community and fully aligned with existing EU initiatives, notably the Global Gateway and the Cross-Regional Connectivity Agenda. Ms Muka fully supported the initiative and highlighted that Albania regards Corridor VIII as particularly important because it passes through three countries. She expressed concern about the level of investment required to achieve full connectivity, particularly for major infrastructure such as railways.</p> <p>Ms Mona Björklund highlighted a growing EU agenda to strengthen transport links between the EU, Central Asia, and the Caucasus, as well as deeper integration involving the Western Balkans, Ukraine, and Moldova. She stressed that TCT members should be aware of this initiative and actively explore potential synergies, including the exchange of best practices. She also supported the possibility of joint technical assistance projects with the TCT to facilitate experience sharing, such as in road safety and sustainability. Finally, she noted that such cooperation and development efforts should not require an increase in the TCT budget.</p> <p>Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee endorsed the proposed structured cooperation as outlined between the Connectivity Agenda Platform and the Transport</p>

	Community, recognising its added value in strengthening soft connectivity, enhancing corridor interoperability, and positioning the Western Balkans within the evolving Europe–Central Asia connectivity architecture.
	ADMINISTRATION
13	<p>Presentation of Budget Execution for 2025</p> <p>The TCT Secretariat presented figures on the execution of the 2025 budget. The 2025 budget execution demonstrates strong financial discipline, improved planning capacity, and effective implementation across the Permanent Secretariat and TCT bodies. The organisation has achieved two years of execution above 92%, with minimal remaining balances and broad-based performance across all cost categories.</p> <p>Overall, the 2025 budget execution results reflect stronger planning, better procurement timing, and disciplined implementation.</p> <p>The representative of the European Commission, Ms Cristina Cuadra (a member of the Budget Committee), reported on the Budget Committee meeting and highlighted the main topics discussed.</p> <p>Conclusion: Regional Steering Committee members acknowledged the presentation of the Budget Execution for 2025.</p>
14	<p>Annual Operational Report 2025</p> <p>The Transport Community Permanent Secretariat presented the Annual Operational Report for 2025 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, align with the EU transport acquis, and support institutional capacity and regional cooperation.</p> <p>Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee endorsed the Annual Operational Report for 2025. It commended the Permanent Secretariat and the regional technical experts for their commitment, professionalism, and active engagement in implementing the planned activities and projects throughout the year.</p>
15	<p>Recruitment of the Director and Deputy Director of the Permanent Secretariat of the Transport Community: Hearing of the proposed candidates</p> <p>The European Commission recalled that, in line with the Regional Steering Committee (RSC) Decision of October 2025, it had launched the recruitment procedure for the positions of Director and Deputy Director of the Permanent Secretariat of the Transport Community. The Commission presented an overview of the selection procedure and the methodology applied throughout the process.</p> <p>The Selection Panel, composed of representatives of DG MOVE and DG ENEST, conducted the assessment and interview phases in accordance with the applicable procedures. Following the initial evaluation, two shortlisted candidates for the position of Director were</p>

invited for interviews with Commissioner Tzitzikostas. Based on the overall assessment and the outcome of the interviews, the Commission proposed Mr Talis Linkaits for the position of Director. The Commission highlighted his strong leadership skills, his strategic understanding of the objectives of the Treaty, and his clear vision for the further development of the Permanent Secretariat's work.

For the Deputy Director position, the Selection Panel interviewed shortlisted candidates after the pre-selection phase. After the interviews and overall evaluation of the candidates, the Commission proposed Ms Ljiljana Perkusic from Bosnia and Herzegovina for the position. The Commission underlined her extensive experience in international organisations and multicultural working environments, particularly in administration and budget management, as well as her structured, clear approach demonstrated during the interviews.

The Commission further informed the RSC that both proposed candidates had confirmed their strong motivation and readiness to assume the respective functions.

The Commission recalled that the purpose of the present agenda item was to provide the RSC with an opportunity to hear the proposed candidates and to exchange views with them, in line with the applicable procedural requirements and the practice of informing the RSC before the formal appointment procedure. It was clarified that no immediate decision on the appointments was foreseen at this stage. The next step in the process would be consultation with the Ministerial Council (through written procedure in May), followed by a decision of the Regional Steering Committee in June (also through written procedure).

Both proposed candidates subsequently addressed the RSC and replied to questions raised by the participants.

Conclusion: The Regional Steering Committee took note of the Commission's proposal concerning the recruitment and appointment of the Director and Deputy Director of the Permanent Secretariat of the Transport Community, following the hearing of the proposed candidates. The written procedure for consultation by the Ministerial Council shall be initiated in May.

Chair of the Regional Steering Committee
Ms Erjola Muka

Co-Chair of the Regional Steering Committee
Ms Mona Björklund

