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'I' ITEM NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Permanent Representatives Committee (Part 1)
Subject:	Coordination of the EU position for the 22nd meeting of the Regional Steering Committee and for the meeting of the Ministerial Council (Skopje, 11 and 12 December, respectively) – Approval

1. On 20 November 2023, the Commission services provided an information note to the working party on “Transport – Intermodal Questions and Networks” referring to the next meetings of the Regional Steering Committee (‘RSC’) and of the Ministerial Council of the EU-Western Balkans Transport Community, which will be organised on 11 and 12 December 2023 in Skopje, North Macedonia.¹ The Transport Community’s permanent secretariat had circulated preparatory documents² for the meeting. The information note contained background information and draft Union positions in respect of the foreseen agenda items. The previous meeting of the RSC was held in Vienna on 18 October 2023³.
2. The Commission presented the note to the Working Group on 24 November 2023. The Commission representative highlighted the mixed picture with regard to progress in implementing the transport *acquis* and the positive effect of the use of the new project monitoring tool “TODIS” on the quality of the annual TEN-T report. He then referred to the draft conclusions for the Ministerial Council which had been made available the same day by

¹ Doc. ST 15717/23.

² See WK 15123/23 + ADD 1 and ADD 2.

³ Doc. ST 13894/23.

the Transport Community's permanent secretariat.⁴ He gave an outlook on work streams for 2024, in particular a Transport Community summit planned for the second quarter in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a reflection process within the Commission for the future relations of the Transport Community with the trio (Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia), and the stocktaking phase for the review of the Transport Community Treaty⁵, which, in accordance with its article 42, has to take place five years after its entry into force.⁶ Finally, he referred to the parallel procedures in Council for formal EU positions on two agenda items of the RSC which will have legal effects.⁷

3. The Presidency concluded the meeting by noting support to the draft Union position, and gave delegations reaction time after studying draft conclusions of the Ministerial Council which had just been made available. After the meeting, no delegation signalled the need to further discuss the matter.
4. In view of this, the Permanent Representatives Committee is invited to approve the draft Union position for the forthcoming meetings of the RSC and of the Ministerial Council of the Transport Community as set out in the annex.

⁴ The draft conclusions are attached to the EU positions in the annex of this note.

⁵ OJ L 278, 27.10.2017, p. 3.

⁶ The Treaty entered into force on 1 May 2019.

⁷ See doc. ST 16212/23.

Coordination in preparation for the Regional Steering Committee of the Transport Community on 11 December 2023⁸ and the Ministerial Council of the Transport Community on 12 December 2023⁹

This annex is based on the Commission services' information note ST 15717/23 of 20 November 2023 in view of providing information or coordinating EU positions for the above meetings. It is structured in accordance with the draft agendas (see draft agendas on pages 21 and 23). The draft conclusions for the Ministerial Council meeting are attached as appendix 3).

The Regional Steering Committee will cover the following areas of EU relevance:

- Presentation of the annual report on the implementation of Dangerous Goods guidelines;
- Progress report on the implementation of the Smart and Sustainable Strategy;
- Endorsement of the Development of Indicative TEN-T Extensions of the Comprehensive and Core Network in Western Balkans Report 2023;
- Approval of the draft concept for the Transport Community Green Summit in 2024, Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- Updates on the initial outcomes of Technical Assistance for collecting Road Safety KPIs on Seat Belts and Child Restraint Systems in the Western Balkans region;
- Revision of Annex I of the TCT¹⁰ – information from the European Commission;

⁸ 11 December 2023, 13:30 – 16:30, venue Aleksandar Palace Hotel, Skopje, North Macedonia. As in previous Regional Steering Committee meetings, the possibility of remote participation will be provided (online connection).

⁹ 12 December 2023, 09:00 – 11:30, venue Aleksandar Palace Hotel, Skopje, North Macedonia.

¹⁰ OJ L 278, 27.10.2017, p. 3.

- Information regarding European Court of Justice Rulings with relevance to the Contracting Parties of the Transport Community Treaty – update by the European Commission;
- Acknowledgement of the TODIS operational framework;
- State of play of cooperation with the Observing Participants and presentation of draft Action Plans;
- Transport Community Treaty review;
- Adoption of the Decision on the Budget of the Transport Community for the year 2024 and Endorsement of the Annual Work Programme 2024;
- Adoption of proposed changes to the Rules on Reimbursement of Expenses to Participants at the Meetings Organised by the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat;
- Designation of the external auditor for the 2023 annual financial statements.

The Ministerial Council will cover the following areas of EU relevance:

- Progress regarding the transposition of EU legislation (Annex I of Transport Community Treaty);
- RSC's Report to the Ministerial Council on the Development of indicative TEN-T extensions of the Comprehensive and Core Network in Western Balkans - report 2023;
- Social Issues under the Transport Community Treaty;
- Presentation of Transport Observatory Database/Information System (TODIS);
- State of play of cooperation with the Observing Participants.

PART I – GENERAL

Regional Steering Committee

Article 24 of the Treaty establishing the Transport Community ('TCT') establishes the RSC. It is responsible for the administration of the TCT and for ensuring its proper implementation. For this purpose, it makes recommendations and takes decisions in the cases provided for in the TCT. Notably, the RSC:

- prepares the work of the Ministerial Council,
- decides on the establishment of technical committees,
- as regards newly adopted EU acts, takes appropriate action, notably through the revision of Annex I to the TCT,
- appoints the Director of the Secretariat after consulting the Ministerial Council,
- may appoint one or more Deputy Directors of the Secretariat,
- lays down rules of the Secretariat,
- may review, by way of a decision, the level of budget contributions, on request of any Contracting Party,
- adopts the annual budget of the Transport Community,
- adopts a decision specifying the procedure for the implementation of the budget, for presenting and auditing accounts and for inspection,
- takes decisions on disputes brought by the Contracting Parties,
- adopts general principles in the area of access to documents, in respect of documents held by bodies established by, or under, the TCT,
- adopts annual reports to the attention of the Ministerial Council on the implementation of the Comprehensive Network;
- in respect of certain Union acts, establishes time limits and ways for the transposition by the South East European Parties.

The RSC is composed of a representative, and an alternate representative, of each of the Contracting Parties. Participation as observers is open to all EU Member States.

The RSC acts by unanimity.

Ministerial Council

In accordance with Article 21 of the Transport Community Treaty, the Ministerial Council provides general policy guidelines and reviews progress on the implementation of the Transport Community Treaty, including follow-up of the proposals put forward by the Social Forum.

In view of the preparation of the following meetings of the RSC of the Transport Community, the Intermodal Working Party of the Council already discussed, and Council subsequently endorsed, the Union positions on the following agenda items:

- 18 October 2023 RSC meeting – third acquis implementation report;
- 27 June 2023 RSC meeting – presentation of TODIS functionalities;
- 28 March 2023 RSC meeting – TCT action plan on social matters and passenger rights;

The corresponding Union positions for these agenda items are therefore included in this non-paper in the part concerning the Ministerial Council agenda for the sake of completeness and ease of reference.

PART II – DETAILS

RSC Agenda part 1 (policy)

Agenda item 1

Presentation of the annual report on the implementation of Dangerous Goods guidelines

This is an information point from the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat. The third progress report to be presented contains information concerning the EU Acquis on transport of dangerous goods (TDG) and tachographs as comprised in ANNEX I of the Transport Community Treaty. It also presents an overview of progress achieved per Regional Partner in this regard.

Union position

- To acknowledge the information presented by the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat.
- To invite the Regional Partners to continue efforts to implement TDG-related acquis.

Agenda item 2

Progress report on the implementation of the Smart and Sustainable Strategy in the Western Balkans

This is an information point from the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat.

The Strategy for Sustainable and Smart Mobility in the Western Balkans, which was prepared by the Permanent Secretariat, mirrors the EU Strategy and strives to put the region on the path to achieving green mobility. It outlines how the Western Balkans transport system can achieve its green and digital transformation and become more resilient to future crises.

The Strategy encompasses a roadmap and set of actions that each Regional Partner is invited to implement. The measures presented in this iteration of the progress report are exclusively associated with actions that were scheduled to commence in the previous year or are scheduled to begin within the current year. It is anticipated that the monitoring table will be updated annually to align with the deadlines outlined in the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy for the Western Balkans.

Progress varies among Regional Partners, but some positive green and digital transition efforts (such as the development of ITS Strategies by some of the Regional Partners) can be noted and have been spurred by support provided by the European Commission and the TCT Secretariat.

Union position

- To acknowledge the information presented by the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat.
- To thank the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat for its efforts to promote safe, sustainable and resilient mobility in the Western Balkans.
- To invite the Regional Partners to intensify efforts to implement the Strategy, in line with latest developments at EU level, as reflected in Annex I TCT.

Agenda item 3

Endorsement of the Development of Indicative TEN-T Extensions of the Comprehensive and Core Network in Western Balkans Report 2023

Article 8 of the TCT mandates the RSC to report every year to the Ministerial Council on the implementation of the indicative TEN-T extension of comprehensive and core networks to the Western Balkans.

The 2023 TEN-T report is the first one benefitting formally from the Transport Observatory Information System's (TODIS) inputs. This means benefitting not just from improved analytical tools, but also from the comprehensive data collection and review exercise that accompanied the development of the system and the institutionalisation of TEN-T data management in the region. While the improved data reliability is a positive development, it should also be noted that this year's findings may not be entirely comparable with those of previous years.

Since the elaboration of the 2022 report, new projects have been successfully completed for all transport modes, and the overall investment dynamic appears positive. Consequently, there has been evident progress in achieving compliance with some specific TEN-T indicators. Nonetheless, such advances seem to fall quite short of the necessary pace to achieve full compliance within the defined timeframes and is not evenly distributed among different transport modes.

Union position

- To endorse the 2023 TEN-T Annual Report.

Agenda item 4

Approval of the draft concept for the Transport Community Green Summit in 2024, Bosnia and Herzegovina

This is an information point from the TCT Secretariat on its plans to organise the 2024 TCT Summit in Bosnia and Herzegovina, together with GiZ. The Summit is planned for Q2 2024 (exact date still to be confirmed). The Summit would be focused on fostering discussions and the exchange of knowledge, aiming to raise awareness about the development of sustainable, intelligent, resilient, and eco-friendly transportation infrastructure and operations. The ultimate goal would be to promote transport sustainability, reduce pollution, and enhance the health and well-being of citizens. The Summit will also play a role in supporting the implementation of the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy for Western Balkans.

The concept note specifies that the Summit deliverables might include the signing of a Clean Bus and Fleet Platform by ministers and mayors and a cycling declaration for the Western Balkans. In addition, a discussion concerning multimodal terminals' inclusion in the TEN-T Network is foreseen. It is currently not clear what are the intentions behind the last item are, especially taking into account the recently concluded negotiations on the revision of the indicative TEN-T network in the Western Balkans.

Union position

- To acknowledge the information presented by the Transport Community Secretariat.
- To support the proposed approach for the 2024 TCT Summit to be focused on sustainable transport.
- To invite the Permanent Secretariat to further specify its plans regarding the foreseen deliverables for the Green Summit.

Agenda item 5

Updates on the initial outcomes of Technical Assistance for collecting Road Safety KPIs on Seat Belts and Child Restraint Systems in the Western Balkans region

This is an information point from the TCT Secretariat. Road Safety Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are an integral part of the “Safe System” approach, which underpins the Road Safety Policy Framework 2021-2030, and is also one of the measures of the TCT Road Safety Action Plan. In this regard, the TCT Secretariat has initiated a Technical Assistance contract aimed at collecting and analysing KPIs data on seat belt and child restraint usage in the region and will update on progress during the 11 December 2023 RSC meeting.

Union position

- To acknowledge the information presented by the TCT Secretariat.

Agenda item 6

State of play on the revision of Annex I of the TCT

This is an information point from the European Commission. The European Commission will update the RSC on progress revising Annex I of the TCT. The procedure applicable to the update of Annex I of the TCT is reflected in Article 2(2) of Council Decision (EU) 2019/392, which mandates the Commission to adopt the Union position, after having consulted the Council¹¹ on the anticipated position sufficiently in advance and by means of a written preparatory document.

The relevant Commission decision is likely not to be adopted ahead of the 11 December 2023 RSC meeting. The update of Annex I of the TCT would therefore be adopted by the RSC in a subsequent meeting or via a written procedure.

¹¹ See doc. ST 11459/23.

Agenda item 7

Information regarding European Court of Justice Rulings with relevance to the Contracting Parties of the Transport Community Treaty – update by the European Commission

This is an information point from the European Commission. In line with article 19 of the Transport Community Treaty, which foresees that the relevant rulings of the European Court of Justice should be communicated to the other Contracting Parties, and following the latest presentation provided by the Commission at the RSC meeting of December 2022, the European Commission will present the latest relevant ECJ rulings since 7 October 2022 and 6 October 2023.

Agenda item 8

TODIS operational framework

The Transport Observatory Data Information System (TODIS) has been developed in response to the provisions of article 9 of the Treaty establishing the Transport Community requiring the Permanent Secretariat to put in place “an information system [...] to be used by decision-makers in monitoring and reviewing the condition and performance of the indicative TEN-T extension of the comprehensive and core networks to the Western Balkans.”

The TCT Secretariat has developed an operational framework to define users’ roles and responsibilities, working procedures and access to TODIS data. The operational framework was already discussed at the Intermodal Working Party meeting preparing the 18 October 2023 RSC meeting.

Union position

- To acknowledge the TODIS operational framework.

Agenda item 9

State of play of cooperation with the Observing Participants and presentation of draft Action Plans

This is an information point from the TCT Secretariat, which will report on the state-of-play of the closer involvement of Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia in the work of the Transport Community since the last such update in October 2023.

As previously acknowledged, much progress has been achieved since the endorsement of the joint statement on the closer cooperation with the Trio in November 2022. The TCT Secretariat has engaged the observing participants at various levels, introduced the work of the Transport Community, delivered on their involvement in the work of the TCT technical committees and progressed with work on incorporating the Trio in some of the major TCT deliverables, such as the action plans, and also soon the acquis implementation and TEN-T reports.

The Commission intends to share soon with the Intermodal Working Party its own analysis and proposed next steps for the closer integration of Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia in the TCT.

Union position

- To acknowledge the information presented by the TCT Secretariat.

Agenda item 10

Transport Community Treaty review information

This is an information point from the TCT Secretariat, which, upon invitation from the European Commission, has prepared a proposal to constitute an informal working group to carry out a preliminary assessment of the current implementation of the Transport Community Treaty and identify potential areas for substantive and operational improvements as part of the upcoming TCT review in 2024.

The informal working group would consist of representatives of the EU Member States, the European Commission and the Western Balkan Partners. It would be headed by the Permanent Secretariat of the Transport Community, which would also be responsible for drafting the final report on the outcome of the working group deliberations.

The working group is expected to complete its work and deliver its recommendations within three months from the date of its establishment, but in any case no later than 1 May 2024.

The elaboration of the working group report will support the exploratory phase of talks with the Regional Partners on possible TCT review. The final report and accompanying discussions will therefore inform the Commission proposal for further (formal) steps, which will be presented to the Intermodal Working Party in due time in 2024.

Union position

- To support the proposed constitution of an informal working group to carry out a preliminary assessment of the current implementation of the Transport Community Treaty.

RSC Agenda part 2 (administration)

Agenda item 11

Adoption of the Decision on the Budget of the Transport Community for the year 2024 and Endorsement of the Annual Work Programme 2024

The proposed budget for 2024 represents a 2% increase compared to 2023. This is justified by ongoing inflationary developments in the Region and the EU. This amount will cover the running costs of the Permanent Secretariat and the organisation of the meetings of the different bodies of the Transport Community. The 2024 budget also reflects a strong focus on capacity building activities and technical assistance for the Regional Partners.

The proposed TCT budget for 2024 has already been discussed at the Intermodal Working Party meetings preparing the 27 June 2023 and 18 October 2023 RSC meetings. On 8 November 2023, the Commission adopted its proposal for a Council decision on the Union position to be taken as regards the 2024 TCT budget.¹²

This agenda point also foresees the endorsement of the 2024 Annual Work Programme of the TCT Secretariat. The Annual Work Programme for next year was already discussed at the Intermodal Working Party as part of preparations for the 18 October 2023 RSC meeting.

The 2024 Annual Work Programme presents milestones and activities planned for the year of 2024 by the TCT Secretariat. Given that several studies have been performed in the previous years with concrete set of recommendations, the TCT Secretariat plans to focus in 2024 on capacity building and training to assist the Regional Partners in concrete implementation of activities. In this regard, several workshops/capacity building activities are planned, focused on sustainable and green mobility.

The Annual Work Programme also highlights that in 2024 the TCT Secretariat intends to organise a Summit on “Sustainable and Green Mobility.” A separate concept note on the Green Summit has also been prepared by the TCT Secretariat for the December RSC meeting (see agenda point 4 in this non-paper).

Union position

- The proposed Union position on the 2024 TCT budget is subject to a separate procedure.¹³
- To endorse the 2024 Annual Work Programme of the TCT Secretariat.

¹² COM(2023) 695 final

¹³ See doc. ST 16212/23.

Agenda item 12

Adoption of proposed changes to the Rules on Reimbursement of Expenses to Participants at the Meetings Organised by the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat

Some of the Regional Partners have previously underlined difficulties to participate in different TCT events and official meetings due to government restrictions on travel costs. This has in many instances resulted in an inability to ensure physical presence in meetings. In addition, the institutional structure and allocation of responsibilities within some of the Regional Partners sometimes necessitate the participation of more than one representative per delegating institution.

Government restrictions on travel costs within the Regional Partners have also led to significant additional administrative burden for the Permanent Secretariat, with the majority of South East European Parties participating in events requesting exception and prepayment of participations, resulting in travel and accommodation being prearranged by the Permanent Secretariat.

The envisaged changes to the currently applicable reimbursement rules include a proposal to increase the number of supported participants per delegating institution from one to two for certain events focused on capacity building, as well as the harmonisation of rules applicable to external experts and to participants from the South East European Parties, including the introduction of a daily subsistence allowance equivalent to the one applicable to TCT staff. The introduction of a daily subsistence allowance is also expected to reduce the administrative burden for the Permanent Secretariat, which would no longer need to pre-book travel arrangements and/or accommodation on behalf of the participants from the Regional Partners.

The proposed changes to the TCT reimbursement rules have already been discussed at the Intermodal Working Party preparing the 28 March 2023 and 27 June 2023 RSC meetings. On 8 November 2023, the Commission adopted its proposal for a Council decision on the Union position to be taken as regards the changes to the TCT reimbursement rules.¹⁴

¹⁴ COM(2023) 693 final

Union position

- The proposed Union position on the 2024 TCT budget is subject to a separate procedure.¹⁵

Agenda item 13

Designation of the external auditor for the 2023 annual financial statements

According to the Financial rules and auditing procedures applicable to the Transport Community, in particular Article 62, the designation of the external auditor is at the discretion of the RSC. The TCT Secretariat is presenting the outcome of the procurement procedure and proposing to the RSC the designation of the successful bidder as external auditor for the 2023 financial year.

The TCT Secretariat conducted an open procurement procedure. The call for tenders was published on the website, on social media networks and it was also shared with members of the RSC and the Budget Committee in order to ensure the widest dissemination possible. The audit companies which have conducted the audit of previous financial statements were excluded from participation in this procurement process.

The process was concluded successfully only at the third call, as the previous two were unsuccessful. In the first call no offers were received, in the second two offers were received, however identified shortcomings in the design of the tender documents, which might have subsequently impacted the contract implementation, meant that the procedure had to be cancelled. In the third call, only one offer was received.

The evaluation committee concluded that the offer fulfils the selection and award criteria, and it can be proposed to the RSC for designation as an independent external auditor for the 2023 financial year. This is a one-year contract, which in addition to the audit of TCT financial statements will also cover the expenditure verification in relation to the designated grant received by the TCT Secretariat for covering the expenses of Observing participants.

Union position

- To acknowledge the information presented by the TCT Secretariat;
- To support the proposal from the TCT Secretariat for the RSC to designate the successful bidder as external auditor for the 2023 financial year.

¹⁵ See doc. ST 16212/23.

Ministerial Council agenda

Agenda item 1

Progress regarding the transposition of EU legislation (Annex I of Transport Community Treaty)

This agenda point entails the endorsement by the TCT Ministerial Council of the latest Progress Report on Acquis Transposition and TCT Action Plans. The proposed Union position has already been discussed at the Intermodal Working Party preparing the 18 October 2023 RSC meeting, and subsequently has been endorsed by Council.

The latest Progress Report on Acquis Transposition and TCT Action Plans was then endorsed by the RSC meeting on 18 October 2023.

Union position

- To acknowledge the efforts of the Regional Partners to implement the EU acquis, as listed in Annex I of the TCT, and the support of the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat in the process;
- To express concern about the slow rate of progress;
- To invite the Regional Partners to intensify their efforts;
- To invite the TCT Secretariat to propose concrete measures how to boost acquis implementation in the context of the upcoming new action plans for the period 2024-2027;
- To endorse the Progress Report on the implementation of the TCT Action Plans and on the status of Annex I TCT acquis transposition.

Agenda item 2

RSC's Report to the Ministerial Council on the Development of indicative TEN-T extensions of the Comprehensive and Core Network in Western Balkans - report 2023

This agenda point entails the endorsement by the TCT Ministerial Council of the 2023 TEN-T report. The same report is due to be endorsed by the RSC meeting on 11 December 2023. The proposed Union position and contextual information have therefore been elaborated further as part of this non-paper describing RSC agenda item 3 above.

As part of this agenda item, the Commission will also inform the Regional Partners about the ongoing negotiations on the revision of the TEN-T regulation.

Union position

- To endorse the 2023 TEN-T report.

Agenda item 3

Social Issues under the Transport Community Treaty

This agenda point entails the acknowledgement by the TCT Ministerial Council of the conclusions of the Fourth Social Forum (8 March 2023), as well as the endorsement of the Action plan for the implementation of the EU Acquis in the area of social issues and passenger rights in transport.

The Third TCT Social Forum held on 11 May 2022 agreed to set up a Social Acquis and Passenger Rights Action Plan and recognised that not enough progress has been made regarding the implementation of the EU road social acquis. It called for relevant authorities to make further efforts to improve the current situation and transpose and implement fully road and rail social acquis and passenger rights listed in the Annex I.2 and I.3 of the Transport Community Treaty. The conclusions of the 2022 TCT Social Forum were welcomed by the November 2022 TCT Ministerial Council meeting.

The TCT Permanent Secretariat subsequently prepared an Action Plan on social and passenger rights, which was discussed at the Fourth TCT Social Forum in Pristina on 8 March 2023. The Intermodal Working Party preparing the RSC meeting of 28 March 2023 discussed the action plan, and Council subsequently endorsed it.

The RSC meeting of 28 March 2023 then endorsed the action plan on social and passenger rights.

Union position

- To welcome the conclusions of the Fourth Social Forum.
- To endorse the TCT action plan on social and passenger rights.

Agenda item 4

Presentation of Transport Observatory Database/Information System (TODIS)

This is an information point from the TCT Secretariat, which will present the functionality of the completed phase II of the Transport Observatory Database/Information System (TODIS). Such a live presentation was also done at the 27 June RSC meeting. The below Union position was already discussed at the Intermodal Working Party preparing the 27 June 2023 RSC meeting, and then endorsed by Council.

Union position

- To acknowledge the presentation by the TCT Secretariat.
- To underline the significance of the Transport Observatory for important TCT deliverables, such as the annual TEN-T report and the bi-annual update of the five-year rolling work plan.

Agenda item 5

State of play of cooperation with the Observing Participants

This is an information point from the TCT Secretariat, which will present the initial reports on the transposition of EU Acquis and compliance with the TEN-T network by the observing participants. In addition, the TCT Secretariat will also present its work on draft action plans for the observing participants, mirroring the ones that exist for the Regional Partners.

The documents to be presented by the TCT Secretariat are prepared together with the observing participants on the basis of the voluntary commitment of the latter, as the nature of their involvement in the TCT does not bring any particular obligations in this regard. As such, the draft reports and action plans, while trying to mirror as much as possible the analogous documents for the Regional Partners, will be adapted to the realities of the current relations between the TCT and the observing participants.

The draft acquis implementation and TEN-T reports, as well as the draft action plans, are expected to be shared by the TCT Secretariat towards the end of November. No endorsement on the side of the TCT Contracting Parties for these deliverables is foreseen at the TCT Ministerial Council meeting of 12 December 2023.

Union position

- To acknowledge the information presented by the TCT Secretariat.

DRAFT AGENDA

22nd Meeting of the Regional Steering Committee of the Transport Community
11 December 2023 | 13.30 to 16.30 | Aleksandar Palace Hotel, Skopje, North Macedonia

	POLICY	Materials
1.	Presentation of the annual report on the implementation of Dangerous Goods guidelines	ATT I: Report
2.	Progress report on the implementation of the Smart and Sustainable Strategy in the Western Balkans	ATT II: Report
3.	Endorsement of the Development of Indicative TEN-T Extensions of the Comprehensive and Core Network in Western Balkans Report 2023	ATT III: Report
4.	Approval of the draft concept for the Transport Community Green Summit in 2024, Bosnia and Herzegovina	ATT IV: Concept Note
5.	Updates on the initial outcomes of Technical Assistance for collecting Road Safety KPIs on Seat Belts and Child Restraint Systems in the Western Balkans region	ATT V: Info Note
6.	State of play on revision of Annex I of the TCT (Information from the European Commission
7.	Information regarding European Court of Justice Rulings with relevance to the Contracting Parties of the Transport Community Treaty – update by the European Commission	ATT VII: Info Note
8.	TODIS operational framework	ATT VIII: Acknowledgement of TODIS operational framework
9.	State of play of cooperation with the Observing Participants and presentation of draft Action Plans	ATT IX: Info Note
10.	Transport Community Treaty review information	ATT X: Info Note
	ADMINISTRATION	
11.	Adoption of the Decision on the Budget of the Transport Community for the year 2024 and Endorsement of the Annual Work Programme 2024	ATT XI: Decision on Budget 2024 ATT XIa: Annual Work Programme

12.	Adoption of proposed changes to the Rules on Reimbursement of Expenses to Participants at the Meetings Organised by the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat	ATT XII: Rules
13.	Designation of the external auditor for the 2023 annual financial statements	ATT XIII: Info Note

Before the meeting there will be a lunch hosted by TCT.

**Transport Community Ministerial Council Tuesday, 12 December
2023 | Aleksandar Palace Hotel, Skopje, North Macedonia |**

09.00 – 11.30

DRAFT AGENDA

1.	<p>Progress regarding the transposition of EU legislation (Annex I of Transport Community Treaty)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Endorsement of Progress Report of Acquis Transposition and TCT Action Plans (Presentation by the Permanent Secretariat and then tour de table)
2.	<p>Regional Steering Committee's Report to the Ministerial Council on the Development of indicative TEN-T extensions of the Comprehensive and Core Network in Western Balkans - report 2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endorsement of Progress Report on Development of Indicative TEN-T Extension of the Comprehensive and Core Network in the Western Balkans • State of play by the European Commission on the indicative TEN-T extension to the Western Balkans and on the negotiations of the revision of the TEN-T policy framework <p>(Presentation by the Permanent Secretariat and then tour de table)</p>
3.	<p>Social Issues under the Transport Community Treaty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledgment of conclusions from the Social Forum of Transport Community. • Endorsement of the Action plan for the implementation of the EU Acquis in the area of social issues and passenger rights in Transport
4.	<p>Presentation of Transport Observatory Database/Information System (TODIS)</p> <p>(Presentation by the Permanent Secretariat)</p>
5.	<p>State of play of cooperation with the Observing Participants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of the initial report on the transposition of EU Acquis and compliance with the TEN-T network by observing participants • Presentation of Action Plans

*Official launching of the **Safe and Sustainable Transport Programme***

DRAFT Presidency Conclusions of Ministerial Council of Transport**Community****Skopje, 12 December 2023**

The contracting parties and observing participants of the Ministerial Council of the Transport Community:

1. Express appreciation for the chairmanship of the Transport Community Ministerial Council and the insightful contributions of Mr Blagoj Bochvarski, Minister of Transport and Communications, and of the co-chair Ms Magda Kopczynska, Director-General of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport.
2. Welcome the new Growth Plan for the Western Balkans aiming to advance the accession process, particularly priority action 4 (four) referring to the “*Facilitation of Road Transport*”, as well priority action one related to the border crossing points aiming to reduce the waiting times at the borders.
3. Welcome the Joint Declaration from the Budva Summit 2023, “Taking Forward the Green Lanes”, and the initiative of Transport Community and CEFTA Secretariats on developing a comprehensive Action Plan (roadmap), outlining the next steps to further deliver on the EU-Western Balkans/CEFTA Green lanes.
4. Acknowledge the progress and stress the need for further improvement, as highlighted in the Action Plans and EU Acquis Progress Report 2023. Thank the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat for its support in implementing the agreed measures.
5. Underline our renewed commitment to the accelerated transposition and implementation of ANNEX I of the Transport Community Treaty and vow to redouble our efforts in this endeavour, while making full use of available EU support (inter alia TAIEX). Encourage the TCT Secretariat to focus its efforts on supporting this process in the upcoming period - among else by preparing new draft TCT action plans for the period 2024-2027.

6. Note the progress made by the region in aligning with TEN-T standards. Welcome and express appreciation for continuous support from the European Union through the Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans. Pledge to boost efforts to guarantee the timely and coordinated execution of the TEN-T in line with the stipulated deadlines of the relevant Regulation.
7. Commend the advancements in revising the TEN-T Regulation, notably the creation of a European Transport Corridor crossing the Western Balkans region (*Western Balkans-Eastern Mediterranean* corridor), and the adoption by the Commission of the revised TEN-T in the Western Balkans.
8. Welcome the conclusions of the Social Forum (March 2023, Pristina) and undertake to advance the Social Aspects of the Acquis, as outlined in ANNEX I of the Transport Community Treaty.
9. In this regard, endorse the Action Plan for the implementation of the EU Acquis in the areas of Social Issues and Passenger Rights in Transport, recognising its importance as a monitoring and guidance instrument for the region delivering on its commitments in this field.
10. Welcome the successful imminent operationalisation of the Transport Observatory Data Information System (TODIS), marking a pivotal achievement under the Transport Community Treaty. Recognise the collaborative efforts of the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat and all pertinent regional stakeholders. Commit to supporting the continuous operation and future enhancements of the system, as well as coherence with the EU system TENtec.
11. Appreciate the active participation and dedication of the observing participants from Ukraine, Georgia, and the Republic of Moldova within the Transport Community bodies. Welcome their aspirations towards full membership in the Transport Community. Additionally, welcome their pledge to formulate the five action plans and their interest in synchronising policies with other strategic documents of the Transport Community.

12. Welcome the official launch of the Safe and Sustainable Transport Program and anticipate the practical execution of projects. This program will aim to enhance safety at level crossings, modernise infrastructure, bolster capacity at selected border crossings on the extended TEN-T Network in the Western Balkans, improve high-risk road sections, and promote sustainable and intelligent mobility solutions in the region.

Done in Skopje on 12 December 2023

For the Ministerial Council of the Transport Community

The President

H.E. Blagoj Bochvarski

Minister of Transport and Communications