



**Brussels, 14 June 2019
(OR. en)**

10096/19

**TRANS 373
COEST 132
RELEX 592**

NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations
No. prev. doc.: 9552/19
Subject: Eastern Partnership Ministerial meeting on transport, 6 June 2019,
Luxembourg
– Outcome

1. In the margins of the TTE (Transport) Council meeting under the Romanian Presidency, an Eastern Partnership (EaP) Ministerial meeting on transport took place in Luxembourg on 6 June 2019 to celebrate 10 years of collaboration and reflect on the next steps.
2. During the lunch and the ministerial debate, the European Union, its Member States, the six Eastern Partner Countries (Republic of Armenia, Republic of Azerbaijan, Republic of Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine) and representatives from the European Investment Bank (EIB), the World Bank (WB) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) discussed investments and trans-European transport network (TEN-T) connectivity as well as road safety.

3. The two Commissioners underlined the importance of developing mature projects, using common technical standards, for investing in transport networks along the extended indicative core TEN-T network and in line with the Indicative TEN-T Investment Action Plan, the need to use these investments to improve road safety, and the opportunity provided to focus on sustainable transport solutions, referring to a number of projects that had been prioritised in each partner country. They outlined the investment needs and existing and future funding tools, such as a Neighbourhood Investment Platform, national public funds and loans from international financial institutions (IFIs), and put the investment actions into the perspective of connectivity among Eastern Partner Countries and between Eastern Partner Countries and the EU, as well as with Asia, as highlighted in the EU-Asia connectivity strategy.

4. The Ministers from EaP partner countries gave an overview of their national and regional strategies and investment priorities and aspirations for the evolution of transport networks on all modes, some mentioning objectives such as efficiency, connectivity, intermodality, digitalisation and the setting up of logistic hubs and border crossing facilities. They welcomed the guidance provided by the Indicative TEN-T Investment Action Plan agreed earlier this year, and the practical assistance and best practices coming from the European Commission, IFIs and EaP Transport Panels. They also reported on major achievements in reducing the number of road fatalities in some countries, and looked forward to the creation of a regional road safety observatory to supplement and coordinate national efforts, particularly on data collection. They agreed that innovation was important when developing strategies and projects, and some underlined the political and security aspects of transport connections in addition to economic ones.

5. Ministers from EU Member States, in particular those neighbouring EaP partner countries, supported the cooperation process, the extension of the TEN-T network to the partner countries and the development of projects included in the Indicative Investment Action Plan with the appropriate funding, and welcomed all that had been achieved since the last EaP Ministerial meeting on transport in 2013 in Luxembourg and the follow-up action to the 2017 Brussels Summit and the 2018 Ljubljana Ministerial meeting. Some Ministers referred to supplementary coordination efforts between EU Member States and the Partner countries, namely within the Danube Regional Cooperation (Slovenia), the Via Carpathia initiative (Poland) and Visegrad 4 (Slovakia). Ministers underlined that digitalisation and decarbonisation were important objectives for investment actions, and stressed that cooperation within transport networks provided an opportunity for developing common standards, for instance in procurement and safety, and improving the transport system on a large scale. Ministers shared information on their own efforts to improve road safety (e.g. Bulgarian Road Safety State Agency). Connectivity with Asia was also stressed.

6. The representatives from international financial institutions reported on their loan portfolios linked to the investment priorities included in the Indicative Action Plan and committed to maintaining this focus, subject to available fiscal space and the economic viability and maturity of concrete projects. They referred to their requirements on procurement, safety and sustainability and to their focus on providing technical assistance for economic impact analysis and administrative capacity building for project preparation. They highlighted the importance of achieving the objectives regarding road safety. In this regard they proposed a regional road safety observatory (WB) and the establishment of the Safer Transport Platform (EIB).

7. All participants agreed on the Joint Declaration entitled ‘Eastern Partnership - taking the transport cooperation agenda forward’, as set out in the Annex to this note. Belarus made the following interpretative statement:
- “Belarus has been engaged constructively and in good spirit in the drafting of the Joint Ministerial declaration. We understand that the Declaration should take into account different interests of the Eastern Partners with regard to the scope of legislative approximation with the European Union. Paragraph 11 of the Joint Declaration should be interpreted as respecting particularities of the different legislative environments in the Eastern Partnership countries and the principles of the EU acquis.”*
8. As regards forthcoming international conferences, the Swedish Minister invited participants to the 3rd global road safety conference in Stockholm (February 2020), the Georgian Deputy Minister called for participation in the next Silk Road Forum, to be organised in Tbilisi in October 2019, and the Lithuanian Deputy Minister announced that the next EaP Transport Panel would be hosted by Lithuania (Vilnius) in November 2019.
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Joint Declaration

Eastern Partnership - taking the transport cooperation agenda forward

- (1) The European Union (EU) and its Member States and the six Eastern Partner countries of the Eastern Partnership (the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine) met in Luxembourg on 6 June 2019 to discuss cooperation in transport and logistics, with special emphasis on the improvement of transport connections between the EU and the Eastern Partner Countries.
- (2) The European Union, its Member States and the Eastern Partner Countries (hereinafter referred to as the "Participants") reiterate the shared commitment to provide opportunities and deliver tangible results for citizens across the EaP region through improved transport connectivity, as outlined in the Joint Declaration of the EaP Summit of November 2017, and in the document '20 Deliverables for 2020' endorsed by the Participants at the Summit.
- (3) The Participants acknowledge the commitment of the Eastern Partner Countries to foster actions for road safety improvements as confirmed by their unanimous political endorsement of an EaP Declaration on Road Safety on 27 April 2018 in Ljubljana.
- (4) The Participants welcome the entry into force of a Commission Delegated Regulation on 6 March 2019, establishing indicative maps for the extension of the TEN-T core network to the Eastern Partner Countries, as an important achievement of the EU Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) and European Neighbourhood Policy.



- (5) The Participants acknowledge the important role of the Eastern Partner Countries within the TEN-T policy in the wider context of the EU-Asia connectivity, in particular by promoting quality infrastructure and intermodal and multimodal connection projects which are economically, fiscally, environmentally and socially sustainable and which comply with rules of good governance.
- (6) The Participants recognise the progress in cooperation between the EU and the Eastern Partner Countries since the Eastern Partnership Summit of November 2017 and the results achieved by the Eastern Partnership Transport Panel as an efficient framework aiming to strengthen regional transport dialogue.
- (7) In this context, the Participants highlight the importance of facilitating movement of people and goods through the improvement of cross-border links and welcome the existing close cooperation and dialogue between the EU and the Eastern Partner Countries covering all transport modes, including through exchanges of best practices on making transport connections more secure, more sustainable and more efficient. At the same time, the Participants emphasise the importance of developing transport and logistics hubs, with increased involvement of the private sector, serving the region to improve Western-Eastern connectivity in the continent.
- (8) The Participants underline the importance of their commitment to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, in order to foster more sustainable transport.
- (9) The Participants welcome in this context ongoing work towards the conclusion of the common aviation area agreements with some Eastern Partner Countries and the implementation of already signed aviation agreements with some other Eastern Partner Countries.
- (10) The Participants recall the existing association agreements and bilateral agreements providing for regulatory approximation with EU legislation in all transport areas in the Eastern Partner Countries.

- (11) The Participants recognise, as a prerequisite for any sustainable investments in the Eastern Partner Countries, the importance of a sound regulatory framework, alignment of transport legislation with the EU acquis, encompassing technical standards, transparent and solid procurement rules and other standards for investments, including enforcement rules and measures to fight against corruption.

The Participants will endeavour to:

- (12) *implement* the Indicative TEN-T Investment Action Plan, in line with Deliverable 13 of the '20 Deliverables for 2020' as endorsed by the Participants at the last Eastern Partnership Summit in November. The Plan, published on 15 January 2019, was prepared by the Directorate General for Mobility and Transport and the Directorate General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations in cooperation with the World Bank to identify priority projects on the extended core TEN-T in Eastern Partner Countries, following the corridor approach. The priority projects will contribute to improving transport and logistics connections that support a more efficient movement of people and goods in a pan-European transport area,
- (13) *use* the Indicative TEN-T Investment Action Plan, prepared in close cooperation with the Eastern Partner Countries, as guidance for future investments with the goal to complete the extended core TEN-T network by 2030 as well as to promote digitalisation and decarbonisation of transport within the framework of the EU neighbourhood policy. Financial support from the EU's External Investment Plan, in line with the applicable rules and within the limits available, could be used to leverage loans from European and international financial institutions in the context of the implementation of the Indicative TEN-T Investment Action Plan,

- (14) *work towards* the establishment of a technical assistance facility for the TEN-T in the Eastern Partner Countries, within the framework of the EU neighbourhood policy, in order to assist the preparation and implementation of projects identified in the Indicative TEN-T Investment Action Plan. This assistance facility will promote quality infrastructure projects, a level playing field including open public procurement and alignment with high standards of good governance,
- (15) *deliver* on road safety actions, in line with the EaP Declaration on Road Safety endorsed by all Eastern Partner Countries in Ljubljana in April 2018 as well as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals on reducing the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents. The technical assistance provided to Eastern Partner Countries by the Eastern Partnership Transport Panel should focus on concrete actions in this respect, including also organising high-level events to raise awareness,
- (16) *work towards* the establishment of a Regional Eastern Partnership Road Safety Observatory, which should provide analytical support for adjusting the national road safety policies, strategies and annual action plans. The intention is to address concrete shortcomings and improve road safety in the Eastern Partner Countries,
- (17) where relevant, *work towards* the update of the priority actions for transport cooperation and of the Indicative TEN-T Investment Action Plan,
- (18) *enhance* cooperation in all international fora dedicated to transport,
- (19) *continue working* together with a view to achieve further concrete results in areas that will benefit the citizens of the Eastern Partner Countries and the EU.
- (20) This Joint Declaration is not intended to create new financial obligations, or rights or obligations under international or domestic law, or to amend rights or obligations resulting from existing agreements.