

# Treaty establishing the Transport Community

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**PURPOSE:** to approve, on behalf of the European Union, the conclusion of the Treaty establishing the Transport Community.

**PROPOSED ACT:** Council Decision.

**ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT:** Council may adopt the act only if Parliament has given its consent to the act.

**BACKGROUND:** strengthening **regional cooperation within the Western Balkans** is a key element for political stability, security, economic prosperity and social development in the region.

Transport cooperation with the Western Balkans countries had been governed by the South East European Transport Observatory (SEETO), a the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) of 11 June 2004 signed by Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, the United Nations Mission in Kosovo and the Commission. The main objective of the MoU was to extend the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) and related policies to the Western Balkans.

The MoU has, however, shown limits. Therefore, the Commission proposed, based on the positive experience with the implementation of the Energy Community Treaty, to take inspiration from this example for the purposes of the transport sector and negotiate an agreement providing that the legislation, standards and technical specifications applied by the Western Balkans partners be made compatible with those of the Union.

The Commission negotiated, on behalf of the Union, **the Treaty establishing the Transport Community (TCT) between the European Union and Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia.**

The TCT was signed on behalf of the Union on 12 July and 9 October 2017, subject to its conclusion at a later date.

All South East European Parties except Kosovo have already ratified the TCT. In the meantime, the TCT is applied provisionally among the Parties.

**CONTENT:** the Commission proposes that the Council decide to **approve, on behalf of the European Union, the Treaty establishing the European Transport Community (TCT).**

The aim of this Treaty is the creation of a Transport Community in the field of road, rail, inland waterway and maritime transport as well as the development of the transport network between the European Union and the South East European Parties. The Transport Community is based on the progressive integration of transport markets of the South East European Parties into the European Union transport market on the basis of the relevant acquis, including in the areas of technical standards, interoperability, safety, security, traffic management, social policy, public procurement and environment, for all modes of transport excluding air transport.

The Commission considers that the TCT will benefit the accession framework for the Western Balkans by speeding up the alignment of national legislation with the Union acquis on transport and related areas.

The TCT will also be a key instrument to foster the reform process in the context of the Western Balkan Six initiative as well as the implementation of the TEN-T as extended to the Western Balkans. It will replace the existing cooperation framework, the South East European Transport Observatory (SEETO), which is in place since 2004.