

# **EU–Western Balkans Green Lanes Initiative**

**Crossing Points Fiches**





# **Explanatory Note**

# 1. Background

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The Intra-CEFTA Transport Community-CEFTA Green Lanes initiative, supported by the European Commission, was established at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Its primary achievement has been preservation of trade and transport flows in the Western Balkans. The existing Green Lanes have yielded significant economic benefits proving invaluable in facilitating exports within CEFTA/the Western Balkans, By saving nearly 20 years of cumulative waiting times<sup>1</sup>, they have ensured the continued functioning of supply chains, boosted trade, and enhanced the region's attractiveness to investors.

Building on its success in the Western Balkans, the initiative for **Green Lanes linking the EU and the Western Balkans** has emerged as a strategic priority. This initiative, jointly undertaken by the Transport Community's and CEFTA's Secretariats with the support of the European Commission, was established as a priority at the EU-Western Balkans Summit in Sofia in 2020 and reaffirmed at subsequent summits. The EU's position as Western Balkans' leading trading partner, accounting for almost 70% of total trade, highlights the strategic importance of this initiative.

*A Comprehensive Roadmap for Enhancing Green Lanes, Improved Customs Cooperation and Modernisation of Border/Common Crossing Points<sup>2</sup>* was prepared by the TCT and CEFTA Secretariats and endorsed at the Leaders' summit in Kotor in May 2024.

## **The Roadmap:**

- Outlines upcoming activities.
- Establishes the necessary coordination structure, which includes neighbouring EU Member States (EU MS). A Steering Committee at a technical level oversees implementation and includes representatives from CEFTA, EU MS Customs Administrations, and Transport Ministries from Western Balkans partners. At a higher level, Sherpa will be informed of progress and take necessary coordination on a political level when and if needed.
- Elaborates the support provided by CEFTA, TCT, and the European Commission, in line with the Green Lanes fiche under the Growth Plan - Enhancing Green Lanes / Improved Customs Cooperation Single Market Priority Action 1 (ii) & (iii)

## **The Roadmap has three key pillars:**

1. Enhancement of intra-Western Balkans/CEFTA Green Lanes, for which the Commission and CEFTA are already focusing on Authorized Economic Operator (AEO), risk management, and the New Computerised Transit System (NCTS).
2. Extension of the Green Lanes to the EU, - which is an extension of the Systematic Exchange of Electronic Data+ (SEED+) to all neighbouring EU Member States, enabling two-way data exchange, once the exchange is made possible in two directions

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1 Statistics on Green Lanes utilisation and waiting times is available at <https://greencorridors.cefta.int/greencorridorsanon>

2 [https://www.transport-community.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Green\\_Lanes\\_Comprehensive\\_Roadmap.pdf](https://www.transport-community.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Green_Lanes_Comprehensive_Roadmap.pdf)

3. Modernisation of 11 pairs of Border/Common Crossing Points (BCPs/CCPs), requiring investments based on needs identified in the BCP/CCP fiches.

The System for Electronic Exchange of Data (SEED) is critical to the implementation of Green

**Comprehensive Roadmap for Enhancing Green Lanes, Improved Customs Cooperation, and Modernisation of Border/Common Crossing Points**

**Pillar 1**

Enhancement of intra-Western Balkans/CEFTA Green Lanes

**Actions for the Western Balkans/CEFTA**

- Adopt CEFTA JC Decisions on AEOs and Risk Management
- Continues piloting and expansion of AEO programmes and Joint Risk Management actions
- Take necessary steps to align with relevant data protection rules and ensure confidentiality of commercially sensitive data (i.e. list of acquis to be confirmed)
- Accelerate preparations to accede to the Common Transit Convention (CTC)
- Agree upon harmonization of working hours of the agencies involved in the clearance of goods and reduction of trade costs

**DATA EXCHANGE**



**Pillar 2**

Extension of Green Lanes to the EU

**Actions for the EC**

- Set the regulatory framework for exchange of data between the EU and Western Balkans and mutual recognition of AEOs
- Actions for the Western Balkans/CEFTA parties and EU Member States
- Maintaining existing SEED+ from CEFTA to participating EU MS
- Expansion to all crossings and establishing data matching and sharing findings from EU to CEFTA – Establishing SEED+ with the remaining neighbouring EU MS
- Establishing full electronic exchange and highlight AEOs in pre-arrival messages (in 2 directions) on all main BCPs/CCP

**DATA EXCHANGE**



**Pillar 3**

Modernisation of 11 pairs of BCPs/CCPs

**Preparation of TCT/CEFTA fiches for 11 busiest BCPs/CCPs:**

- Identification of TA and investment needs for new infrastructure facilities, technologies, and capacity building programmes
- Securing investments for modernisation in accordance with the BCPs/CCPs fiches
- Improvements needed:
  1. Infrastructure
  2. New technologies and digitalization
  3. One-stop concept and capacity building

Lanes, as it enables pre-arrival sharing of information on consignments across all agencies involved in clearance processes (e.g., customs, phytosanitary, veterinary, and food inspections). By now, the following Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) have been signed for electronic data exchange on shared BCP/CCPs:

- Road transport: i) Greece–North Macedonia, ii) Croatia–Montenegro, iii) Croatia–Bosnia Herzegovina, and iv) Hungary–Serbia.
- Maritime transport (Blue Lanes): v) Italy–Albania and vi) Italy–Montenegro.

### Extension of the Green Lanes Initiative between the Western Balkans and EU Member States



### **The extension process is divided into two phases:**

- Phase 1: Facilitating exports from CEFTA by sending data from CEFTA to the EU through SEED. This is already operational at several BCPs/CCPs, between the abovementioned pairs of Western Balkans and EU Member States
- Phase 2: Supporting risk analysis for goods exported from the EU to CEFTA through data-sharing. Full implementation of this phase depends on establishing the necessary regulatory framework.

## **2. BCP/CCP Fiches – Scope and Methodology**

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The Roadmap identifies activities required for full implementation of Green Lanes, including preparing BCP/CCP fiches. These fiches aim to aid decision-makers and investors preparation when considering small-scale interventions and projects related to infrastructure and technical assistance and to serve for further project preparation of such projects

The list of 11 pairs of BCPs/CCPs for which fiches are to be prepared is included in the Roadmap. The criteria for selecting the relevant crossing points are: 1) Being located on the extended Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) for the Western Balkans; 2) Being the busiest in terms of traffic volumes, and 3) Respecting the principle of inclusivity, ensuring that all partners have at least one pair included.

- Roszke-Horgos (Hungary-Serbia)
- Bajakovo-Batrovci (Croatia-Serbia)
- Kalotina-Gradina (Bulgaria-Serbia)
- Evzoni-Bogorodica (Greece-North Macedonia)
- Stara Gradiska-Gradika (Croatia-Bosnia and Herzegovina)
- Slavonski Samac-Bosanski Samac, including Svilaj-Donji Svilaj (Croatia-Bosnia and Herzegovina)
- Kakavia -Kakavia (Greece-Albania)
- Stamura Moravita- Vatin (Romania-Serbia)
- Gyesevo-Deve Bair (Bulgaria-North Macedonia)
- Karasovici-Debeli Brijeg (Croatia- Montenegro)
- Hani i Elezit-Blace (Kosovo\*-North Macedonia)

To identify and present the priorities for improvements in: 1) Infrastructure, 2) New technologies and digitalisation, and 3) Synchronised controls and capacity building, the TCT Secretariat engaged a short-term consultant, while the CEFTA Secretariat provided inputs on trade-related actions and activities. In preparing the fiches, the following were taken into account:

- The study on BCP/CCP facilitation for the TEN-T Road Core/Comprehensive Network in the Western Balkans (ref. number CONNECTA-TRA-CRM-REG-04).

\* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in accordance with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence

- In-person meetings with stakeholders:

- 1st Green Lanes Steering Committee, 5 March 2024, Zagreb.
  - Explanatory meeting with the administrations of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 5 June 2024, Banja Luka.
  - 2nd Green Lanes Steering Committee, 6 June 2024, Sarajevo
  - 24th Regional Steering Committee meeting of the Transport Community, 10 July 2024, Belgrade.
  - Explanatory meeting with Serbia, 12 July 2024, Belgrade.
  - Four-lateral meeting with Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, and Serbia, 24 July 2024, Kotor.
  - Four-lateral meeting with Albania, Greece, Kosovo, and North Macedonia, 17 September 2024, Ohrid.
  - Final versions presented at the 18th Technical Committee meeting on transport facilitation/Green Lanes Steering Committee, 14 November 2024, Vlora, and at the 25th Regional Steering Committee of the Transport Community, 14 November 2024, Brussels.
- Email consultation and correspondence with the Green Lanes Committee and the European Commission.

The following elements are included in all 11 BCP/CCP fiches and are presented in the template below:

- investment needs in the infrastructure to increase BCP/CCP capacity throughput, such as modernisation/upgrade of outdated facilities, additional truck/bus/car lanes, weighbridges (scales for trucks), traffic management systems, etc.
- investment in new equipment, installation of new IT/ICT systems, and digitalisation of services, aimed at facilitating, accelerating, and simplifying procedures.
- investments in human resources, bilateral cooperation, and inter- and intra-agency coordination, including the use of shared facilities and IT/ICT systems, as well as practising joint police and customs controls by neighbouring administrations aimed at improving the efficiency and performances of BCP/CCP staff.

BORDER CROSSING POINT  
**BCP Name 1 – BCP Name 2**

MACRO LOCATION			<b>BRIEF INFO</b>	<b>Regional Partner</b>	Serbia	Croatia
			<b>Road Number</b>	E70	E70	
			<b>Road Type</b>	Motorway	Motorway	
			<b>Corridor/Route</b>	WBEM Core TEN-T (Corridor X)	WBEM Core TEN-T (Corridor X)	
			<b>Freight Terminal</b>	Yes	Yes	
			<b>Number of Lanes for Passenger Cars (In/Out)</b>	8+9	8+9	
			<b>Numbers of Lanes for Buses</b>	n/a	2+2	
			<b>Number of Lanes for Trucks (In/Out)</b>	2+2	2+3	
			<b>Truck Parking Capacity (In/Out)</b>	80+20	90+40	
			<b>Queue Capacity (trucks) (In/Out)</b>	30+10	45+45	

MICRO LOCATION	BCP NAME 1                      BCP NAME 2		<b>FACILITIES</b>	<b>Weighting Point</b>	Yes	Yes
			<b>Scanning</b>	Yes	Yes	
			<b>Phytosanitary Inspection</b>	Yes	Yes	
			<b>Veterinary Inspection</b>	Yes	Yes	
			<b>Lane for Empty Trucks</b>	No	No	
			<b>Plate Recognition</b>	Yes	Yes	
			<b>Radiological Inspection</b>	Yes	Yes	
			<b>Sniffer Dogs</b>	No	Yes (upon request)	
			<b>Passport Scanner</b>	Yes	Yes	
			<b>Garage for Physical Inspection</b>	Yes	Yes	

ISSUES/CHALLENGES	<b>Traffic Demand (in both direction)</b>				
	add year (trucks/year)	add year (trucks/year)	add year(trucks/year)	Average annual change in the period (%)	Average annual change in the period (%)
	<b>Percentage of Transport by Type (export, import, transit, empty trucks)</b>				
	BCP NAME 1		BCP NAME 2		
	chart		chart		
	<b>Percentage of Trucks Subject to Physical Inspection</b>				
	BCP NAME 1		BCP NAME 2		
	chart		chart		
	<b>Average Truck Waiting Time (min)</b>				
BCP NAME 1		BCP NAME 2			
chart		chart			
<b>Main Issues/Challenges</b>					
<b>Common Challenges:</b>					

IMPROVEMENT MEASURES	<b>Proposed Main Interventions</b> (Responsible administrations: Croatia – Customs Administration; Serbia – Property Directorate and Ministry of Interior)				
	<b>Short-term Measures</b>		<b>Medium-term Measures</b>		<b>Long-term Measures</b>
	<b>Investment Needs (Infrastructure, Facilities, IT/ICT Equipment)</b>				
	<b>Human Resources &amp; Intra-Agency Coordination</b>				
	<b>Timeline for Implementation</b>				
	2025-2026		2027		Beyond 2027
	<b>Total Estimated Costs (EUR)</b>				
	Works & Supply		Works & Supply		Works & Supply
Services (Technical Assistance)		Services (Technical Assistance)		Services (Technical Assistance)	



The overall investments are roughly estimated at 57 million EUR, of which 3.5 million EUR is allocated for services (Technical Assistance (TA)). The total budget for EU, Western Balkans, and joint activities is presented in the table below:

	<b>Works and Supply (million EUR)</b>	<b>TA (million EUR)</b>
<b>EU Member States</b>	7.70	0.15
<b>Western Balkans</b>	37.50	2.35
<b>EU Member States and Western Balkans joint activities at the BCPs/CCPs</b>	8.40	0.90

In addition to these costs, the Western Balkans partners have endorsed the Common Regional Market Action Plan 2025–2028, which includes piloting an electronic queue management system. The total cost of implementing this system at the identified BCPs/CCPs is estimated at 40 million EUR.

Intervention needs are based on available data from recent studies and designs, as well as consultations with stakeholders.

The following methodology for cost estimation has been applied:

- For infrastructure and facilities: Costs are estimated based on average unit market prices (e.g., per m2 of road rehabilitation or construction of the new lane, per m2 of a new facility for secondary vehicle checks, etc.).
- For equipment: Costs are calculated per units and lumps sums, based on the latest average equipment market prices and recent costs of supplies at some BCPs/CCPs.
- For ICT and new systems: Estimates are based on recent experiences (e.g., implemented data exchange systems for one or both directions) and developed designs (e.g., infrastructure improvements, one-stop-shop implementation, electronic queuing management system design).
- For training and capacity buildings: Estimates are informed by recent experiences with similar assignments.
- For the design and other services: Costs are calculated as a market share of the total investment cost for certain components, based on similar experiences in CEFTA/Western Balkan.

### 3. Next steps

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Following the finalisation of the consultation process described above, the BCP/CCP fiches (or at least the main findings) are expected to be presented and endorsed at upcoming high-level meetings in coordination with the European Union. Discussions regarding potential sources of financial support are ongoing.

The Green Lanes Steering Committee will continue to monitor the implementation of the BCP/CCP fishes over the next three years. The TCT Secretariat and CEFTA, in cooperation with the European Commission, will provide the necessary support throughout the process.