

# KEY OUTPUTS

# **SAGOV +**



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## Conference “Blue Balkans: Maritime Connectivity in South Adriatic”



On 19 December 2022, at Aleksandër Moisiu University, Durrës the Conference “Blue Balkans: Maritime Connectivity in South Adriatic” was organized.

The event focused on the Western dimension of the WB European Transport Corridor and targeted maritime connectivity in the South Adriatic area with a special emphasis on the cooperation amongst Italy, Albania and Montenegro in the maritime transport sector, as the western component of the Adriatic – Black Sea connectivity through Corridor VIII.

The welcoming addresses were delivered by Mrs. Floreta Kertusha, representative of the Municipality of Durrës who highlighted the relations of the Port and the City and how to further improve it; as well as Mr. Osman Metalla, Dean of the Faculty of Professional Studies, Aleksandër Moisiu University, who focused on the investment in human capital (to be done through academia) in order for the Port – City binomial to function efficiently. The establishment of the Centre of Excellence for Maritime Affairs (CEMA) was mentioned as a successful initiative in this direction.

The first panel on “Waterborne Connectivity Balkan Peninsula” started with a presentation and update of the situation of ports in the eastern coast of South Adriatic (SA) – Port of Bar in Montenegro, Port of Durrës, Shëngjin, Saranda in Albania and maritime ports in the Puglia Region. Mr. Massimo Lupis, Coordinator at the Regional Mobility Center in the Puglia Region, also stated the importance that Corridor VIII has for the port in the South Adriatic in terms of connectivity for commercial purposes and geo-political ones.

The second panel on “Raising Convergence with EU, regional initiatives and other sectors” focused on the regional and EU dimension of the waterborne sector. Mr. Elson Thana, representative of the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat informed the participant that the main novelty on Trans-European Transport Network is the connection that each corridor will have with the Green Agenda and Green Deal as well as the influence of geopolitics. Another important innovation that was

emphasised and directly influence the WB6 is the inclusion of the Western Balkan European Transport Corridor.

Furthermore, the connection of maritime transport with other sub-sectors of transport such as the railway, as well as other sectors such as digital, environmental, etc. were discussed. In this panel, Mr. Dritan Spahiu, Administrator of ALBRAIL brought the example of a successful railway line from Fier to a port facility in Vlora. Followed by Mr. Rezart Kapedani the Deputy Team Leader of the project “Supporting Albanian Negotiations in Environment, Chapter 27” mentioned the main normative acts that Albania should align with the EU acquis in the transport sector that are directly related to the environment sector and effect climate change.

## Conference on “WB6 European Transport Corridor”



On 20 December 2022, at Aleksandër Moisiu University, Durrës the Conference “WB6 European Transport Corridor” was organized.

The event focused on Corridor VIII, as the only European Transport Corridor that connects the Adriatic Sea and the Black Sea through Southeast Europe and that passes through NATO countries, with a focus on its rail component.

The keynote speech was delivered by Mr Lucas Bosser, Director of Transport from Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CRPM) on the progress of the draft Regulation for the development of the trans-European transport network, from WB6 ETC. This may be considered best practice on how with the right expertise CSOs can influence the decision-making of the EU, in this case by including Corridor VIII in TEN-T corridors as part of the WB6 European Transport Corridor.

The first panel on “Western Balkans European Transport Corridor in Rail” where the state of play of the main railway sections in Albania, Montenegro that are part of / connected to Corridor VIII was provided. Also, during this panel, Mr Driton Rusi, Assistant Director at Public Enterprise for Railway Infrastructure Railways of the Republic of North Macedonia updated with the state of play of the works of this corridor in North Macedonia, while the representative from the Region of Puglia, Mr Claudio Polignano shared with the participants the importance and support that Italy as a strategic partner gives to Corridor VIII.

As a case study, the participants were informed of the process of implementation of the Tirana-Durrës railway extension to Rinas.

The second panel “Increasing Convergence with EU: Institutional, Normative and Good Governance” focused on how the EU programs interact with the national initiatives of the countries of the region

and how we can further improve their cooperation for better efficiency and higher impact. In this panel, Mrs Martina Hakl, representative of the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat mentioned the regional initiatives that the secretariat has undertaken for the involvement of civil society in the transport sector, sharing the example of the Social Forum which has been organized for several years now. Whereas, Mr Altin Fuga, representative of the office of the Chief Negotiator, gave an overview of the current situation of the negotiations for Chapters 14 “Transport” and 21 “Trans-European Networks” as well as the next steps in this process.

Furthermore, Ms Petia Manolova, representative of the European Investment Bank in Albania, informed the audience about the new strategy that this International Financial Institution has adopted to support the transport sector, clearly stating that till now and in the upcoming period a large part of the support will go to the railway sector. Mrs Manolova also points out that the European Bank together with the European Commission is currently supporting the process of maturing the dossier of Corridor VIII in Albania.

## Conference on “Enhancing Centre of Excellence and Maritime Affairs (CEMA) regional footprint as maritime services provider”



On 6 March 2023, at Durrës Port Authority the Conference on “Enhancing Centre of Excellence and Maritime Affairs (CEMA) regional footprint as maritime services provider” was organized.

The event focused on reinvigorating and reinforcing CEMA regional component in the South Adriatic Area as well as in what has been done so far through CEMA, lessons learned, plans and best practices from the South Adriatic Area.

The keynote speech was delivered by the Director of the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat, a key stakeholder in supporting the establishment of CEMA. Mr Zakonjšek mentioned that major investments are underdoing in the transport sector in the WB, including the maritime subsector, and this investment should go in parallel with strengthening administrative capacities per this sector. Furthermore, he emphasised that this is what CEMA is currently doing and congratulated the input of all actor part of this ecosystem (Durrës Port Authority, Cooperation and Development Institute, University Aleksander Moisiu).

The first panel on “Encouraging blue careers with the quadruple innovative model” where the liaison between the government, academia, civil society and private sector was discussed. Mr Endrit Pollo, Director of CEMA informed the participants about CEMA’s main highlights in 2022 and its objectives for 2023. Also, during this panel, the link between the business and academia was elaborated by Mr Artis Pugacs, General Manager at Mariner Adriatic, Hili Company, where it was emphasised that in order to address their needs the business should directly communicate with the academia.

Mrs Malvina Jani and Mrs Erjona Toslluku, respectively from the port of Saranda and Vlora addressed their need to further strengthen administrative capacities in the maritime sector, including in tourism.

The second panel, “Regional cooperation in the South Adriatic Area for better human resources” focussed on the ways of increasing regional cooperation in the maritime sector in terms of human capital. During these discussions, Mrs Zorica Durovic, representative of the University of Kotor mentioned that in their faculty they offer not only academic degrees but also specified courses. Furthermore, she mentioned that they have collaborated within the region in different EU Programmes and they are looking forward to collaborating with Albania and Italy in this direction. In order to strengthen their regional footprint, they have already introduced PhD programmes in English.

Whereas, Mr Ugo Patroni Griffi, President of the Autorità di Sistema Portuale del Mare Adriatico Meridionale in Bari, highlighted that they signed memorandums with employment association and trade association in order to promote continuity in the education of maritime experts. He also expressed his willingness to cooperate within South Adriatic Area.

Furthermore, Mr Osman Metalla emphasized that the maritime sector is expanding in Albania, with major investments and this is to be considered an opportunity as well as a challenge for students and the Universities that provide maritime education, because the people are the most valuable asset of each organization and human infrastructure is the most important one.

## Conference on “Development of Port Infrastructure and TEN-T Compliance Indicators”



On 21st of March 2023, Conference on “Development of Port Infrastructure and TEN-T Compliance Indicators” was organized at the Polytechnic University of Tirana.

The event focused on discussing the new Durres Port Authority investment in the Porto Romano location, and on elaborating how this project fits with the current geopolitical situation, the development of new TEN-T Regulation, as well as the influence that this investment will have on Albania and the South Adriatic Area.

The keynote speech was delivered by the Director of the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat, Mr Zakonjšek. He highlighted the importance of maritime connectivity and underlined the importance of human capital for its efficiency. Furthermore, he updated the participants on the revision of the TEN-T network and the inclusion of the Western Balkan Corridors for the first time in the EU transport network.

Mr. Paolo Viola, Professor at the University of Naples addressed the audience on the need for a joint plan for the development of tourism and the economy including all-coastal countries of the Adriatic-Italy, Albania, Slovenia, Croatia, Montenegro.

The first panel on “Diving into the Porto Romano Port” focused on the details of Porto Romano project and its geopolitical importance. Mr Jurriaan de Jong, Project Manager, Royal Haskoning dhv presented the technical components of the new Port, including geotechnical features, quay structures, dredging and disposal aspects, fill & surcharge material, etc. Furthermore, he mentioned that the start of this “ecosystem” is not only the construction but also operation and maintenance which requires trained human capital.

Mr Vengu the CEO of Durres Port Authority underlined the importance of this project as an opportunity that brings together the logistics industry in Albania and the region, revitalizes and valorizes the Durrës city waterfront, improves environmental and security conditions, integrates industrial activities, etc and converts Durres into a key node of transport & logistical network in South East Europe.

Part of this panel was also Mr Goran Temovski, representative of the Ministry of Transport and Communication of the Republic of North Macedonia. Mr. Temovski highlighted the importance that Corridor VIII has for the region and the link that this corridor creates to the Adriatic sea, as well updated the audience about the state of play of the works of this corridor in North Macedonia.

Mr Massimo Lupis, representative from the Region of Puglia mentioned the importance of this Corridor as well, and the support that Italy as a strategic partner offers in this regard.

The second panel on “Strategic Investment in maritime: what to consider?” focused on the factors that Albania needs to take into account, in terms of maintenance, multimodality and human capital development. After providing a comprehensive overview of ongoing rail projects, Mr. Bashkim Kasoruhu, representative of Albanian Railways, elaborated on the SoA and multimodality of the railway Tirana-Durres extension to Rinas. Following Mr Kasoruhu, Mrs Zana Josa, Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure, in her intervention underlined the orientations resulting from the “Action plan for capacity strengthening for the management of railway infrastructure projects”, the implications for the Albanian Railway and the Port Authorities when planning and implementing such major investments.

As part of the discussions Mr Mateo Spaho, Dean at Barleti University and Mrs Ani Tola, Vice Dean, of the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism elaborated more on the importance and ways how to develop human capital from the academic perspective.

Conference “Corridor VIII, back on tract” (A comprehensive progress review on the enhanced role of the Pan-European Corridor VIII in the European strategic framework) and the B2B meeting Balkans: The Western Gate.



The connections between Puglia and the Balkans are becoming increasingly strategic for the European Union, with new and growing opportunities for economic operators in the Puglia area.

And Bari hosts two international conferences for the relaunch of "Corridor 8", the system of connections which - starting from the ports of Bari and Brindisi - reach the Black Sea coast, crossing Albania, Macedonia and Bulgaria.

The first was held on 4 May 2023, at the headquarters of the Puglia Region in via Gentile, in which experts and representatives of the European Union, the various Balkan countries and the Puglia Region met on the new opportunities that the EU has relaunched for the development of the naval, road and railway routes of the Pan-European Corridor 8: a multimodal route that connects Italy with the Black Sea, allowing Italian goods to reach Ukraine, Russia and the Caucasus countries from the Bulgarian ports of Burgas and Varna, through a land route that develops entirely within NATO countries.

On 5 of May 2023 at the Confindustria headquarters, the representatives of the Italian, Albanian and Montenegrin ports of the southern Adriatic, together with a delegation of international logistics and transport companies are meeting entrepreneurs interested in optimize costs and times of shipments to Eastern markets. A work session will allow Italian exporting companies to explore new and better opportunities business, starting direct negotiations with specialized freight forwarders, in an efficient and completely confidential manner.

