

Joint Declaration on transport cooperation between the EU and Eastern Partnership countries

Participants:

1. Welcome the Commission Communication "The EU and its neighbouring regions: A renewed approach to transport cooperation" and, as stated in the related Council Conclusions, consider it as a concrete contribution to the objectives of the European Neighbourhood Policy that seeks to deepen the relationship between the EU and its closest neighbours.
2. Underline the importance of transport cooperation that facilitates the safe travel of people, essential for the tourism industry, and reliable transport of goods between the EU and the Eastern Partnership countries.
3. Recognise the importance of improving transport connections by making them smoother, safer and more reliable. This is to the mutual benefit of the EU and the Eastern Partnership countries.
4. Agree that better transport connections can be achieved through closer market integration and balanced improvements in infrastructure.
5. Commit to work together across all transport modes to achieve high levels of transport safety, security, environmental and social standards which is crucial for closer market integration.
6. Commit to improve transport connections including through policy cooperation, improved administrative procedures at the border crossings and removal of bottlenecks in infrastructure.
7. Underline the importance of close cooperation with the International Financial Institutions that can contribute to improved transport connections through financing.
8. Welcome the establishment of the Eastern Partnership Transport Panel as a result-oriented permanent framework for transport cooperation between the EU and the Eastern Partnership countries.
9. Invite the Transport Panel to follow up the actions set out in the Commission Communication through discussion of policy reforms; planning of regional transport networks of the Eastern Partnership countries that connect with the Trans-European Transport Network and between themselves; and preparation of a pipeline of transport infrastructure projects of mutual interest for all.
10. Look forward to the first results from the work of the Transport Panel that will be reported to the next Eastern Partnership ministerial meeting.
Eastern Partnership ministerial sessions on transport will be organized on the basis of a proposal by the Commission and the Presidency of the Council, in cooperation and close consultations with the partner countries.