



**Opening Address by Hido Bišćević
Secretary General of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC)**

Conference

**“6th Annual Meeting of Ministers on the Development of the South East
Europe Core Regional Transport Network”**

- Ways to Strengthen Regional Cooperation -

Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, 01 December 2010

Esteemed Ministers,

Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

- Allow me to greet you all on behalf of the Regional Cooperation Council Secretariat and to thank you for the invitation to attend the 6th Annual Meeting of Ministers on the Development of the South East Europe Core Regional Transport Network (SEE CRTN), here in Sarajevo.
- Allow me to start by thanking our hosts, the European Commission and South East Europe Transport Observatory (SEETO) for organizing this important Conference that allows us to take stock of the progress made since the last Multi-Annual Program on Development of the SEE Core Regional Transport Network 2010-2014, which has become important regional transport planning document mapping out the way ahead towards the new MAP 2011-2015.
- We have gathered today to assess the present and contribute to elaboration of future plans of SEE countries regarding development of the Core Transport Network, as well as to discuss removing non-physical barriers and the future EU transport policy. Before focusing on the current and potential role of the RCC in the context of development of regional cooperation in the transport area, I want to briefly touch upon

the regional context that the RCC Secretariat is part of, and outline some of the developments and challenges in this field.

- It is a fact that smooth functioning of international transport and trade is increasingly challenged by the economic and financial crisis and its social impact, as well as by climate change and other environmental pressures. At the same time, infrastructure reform and development present a major challenge to South East Europe, considering their limited resources and administrative capacities.
- Still, we think that regional cooperation in transport sector has been reinforced over the last years as it is seen essential for successful tackling trans-boundary issues and key common challenges in this area. We are all aware that better integration of national networks will foster regional cooperation and integration not only between the EU and its neighbours, but also among the countries of the region themselves.
- It will be substantially intensified and improved by implementation of the Treaty establishing the Transport Community (TCT) with the countries from South East Europe (SEE) which is currently under negotiation. It must be noted that Transport Community process, which will emerge after TCT related negotiations, signature and ratification, could highly benefit from the experience gained in the Energy Community.
- In the aviation sector, South East European countries have undertaken an important step towards SEE integration into the EU Internal Aviation Market by signing the Agreement on establishment of European Common Aviation Area (ECAA). It is needed to assist the countries of SEE in their efforts to fully adopt Single European Sky requirements what will have positive effects mostly concerning the reduction of airspace fragmentation, i.e. decrease in air traffic costs and cut of CO₂ emissions.
- As the successor of the Stability Pact, RCC is placed in a very strong position to encourage SEE parties to implement more integrated approach in line with the myriad of demands placed on transport-related legislation particularly in the light of administrative and institutional weaknesses in the region. An important part of our mandate is further increase of regional ownership.
- The RCC kept up and deepened sound working relations with a variety of stakeholders engaged in regional activities, among which we identified SEETO as our key partner responsible for development of efficient regional transport systems. In that respect,

RCC is very much committed to enhancing current cooperation with SEETO to bring integrated “holistic” regional perspective, and filling specific gaps in close coordination with its existing structure.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Distinguished Participants,

- I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate that in accordance with the recently adopted Regional Cooperation Council’s Strategy and Work Programme 2011-2013, transport infrastructure has been identified as one of our priorities to which the RCC will pay full attention, in particular to air and road traffic sector (road safety).
- In the area of air traffic, RCC has already taken certain steps reflecting the expressed interest of the RCC members from SEE with the aim to explore potentials for further development of air services, having in mind that only 10% of all SEE airline commercial activities are realized within the SEE network, what represents a barrier for fast and convenient travel. The RCC will focus on activities which will enable full application and better use of market access based on the existing legal framework.
- Our intention is to also support national administrations from SEE to implement very demanding Single European Sky (SES) regulation, aimed at increasing their operational capacity to improve safety levels in accordance with the European Common Aviation Area Agreement (ECAA).
- Due to continuous increase of traffic accidents and casualties in the region as well as their physical, social and economic consequence, road safety is being identified as an important issue that requires more efforts in the sense of combination of soft measures and physical infrastructure.
- RCC will promote multisectoral approach in order to involve all relevant stakeholders and partners responsible for road safety issues. Our objective is to encourage South East European countries to implement the relevant EU directives, and in particular the UN General Assembly Resolution, in SEE.
- In this context, we have recognized the SEETO as one of the relevant partners that has been very actively involved in this area by developing soft measures such as Road Safety Audits (RSA) and Road Safety Inspections (RSI) with the aim to facilitate implementation of infrastructure safety management tools in more efficient way.

- Furthermore, I would like to mention that due to the increased interest of SEE countries to have the RCC more actively involved in the area of railway, RCC will pay due attention to supporting the commitments under Izmir Ministerial Declaration on Development of a New Common Vision for Transport Sector within the SEECF Region, (11 March 2010, Izmir, Turkey) and in particular the Agreement on the Establishment of a High Performance Railway Network in South East Europe.
- Commitment to regional approach in the mentioned area resulted in a very good example of regional cooperation - a joint rail company project set up by Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia. Since each railway in the region is highly dependent on the structure of neighbouring system, these countries have recognized the need to establish a joint body in order to reduce the time of transport of goods along Corridor X, demonstrating political will to support development of transport infrastructure in SEE region.
- We all agree that the region is currently facing a lack of available financial resources for large-scale infrastructure projects aggravated by the global economic downturn which threatens South East Europe's previous impressive growth and acts as a deterrent to investors. The principle of public-private partnership (PPP) provides a unique framework for attracting private sector resources for development of public infrastructure, while enabling a structured allocation of risks between governments and investors.
- Thus, RCC intends to promote public-private partnership model for infrastructure development with the aim to fill the gap between the existing infrastructure and available financial resources. This could be an opportunity to invite SEETO countries to explore the possibilities for common coordination of activities on identification of eligible PPP projects within the new MAP 2011-15 having in mind the fact that the SEE PPP Network has been recently established under the umbrella of RCC.
- Cross-border cooperation is one of the potential areas to which the RCC could contribute, due to the fact that coordination among different national authorities is crucial in order to simplify procedures and reduce delays at borders. This issue could be properly addressed only at regional level by coordinating infrastructure projects and creating a political climate favourable to implementing projects of a wider regional character. Therefore, the RCC involvement in the process of facilitation of a common "regional" transport policy is also expected, which must be agreed upon and implemented by national governments.

- Finally, RCC will explore the possibilities to support integration of three crucial infrastructure sectors, namely energy, transport and environment with the aim to integrate not only different energy infrastructure subsectors but also transport subsectors while always keeping in mind the need to respect strict environmental limitations, thus promoting the integrated approach to infrastructure planning.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

- RCC's presence at today's Conference confirms our strong commitment to contribute, together with you, to continuous development of the Core Regional Transport Network in SEE region, with the aim to find solutions to our common problems through regional cooperation. RCC stands ready to invest additional efforts and remains open to new ideas and suggestions. At the same time, we call for active engagement of all regional actors in transport field in supporting the RCC to implement its mandate.

Thank you