

EaP CSF Working Group 3 “Environment, climate change and energy security”: Recommendations on Transport

Prepared for: 15th EaP Transport Panel

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Summary

- Threat posed by the E40 Waterway
- Improve the management and coordination of Road Safety
- Decarbonise transport and infrastructure
- Develop the economic connectivity of the EaP Region
- Increase the sustainability of public transport and urban mobility
- Make EU support to civil society organisations more effective

Threat posed by the E40 Waterway

1. Stop the restoration project of the E-40 Waterway.

The E-40 Waterway project poses a threat of secondary radioactive contamination to the environment – as a result of activities in territories contaminated by radioactive isotopes after the Chernobyl nuclear power plant disaster (1986). The implementation of the project will have a significant impact on protected areas, including flora and fauna, valuable wetlands, landscapes, forest and agricultural land. The construction and operation of the channel will lead to the loss of habitat and stopover sites for migratory birds. For these reasons, the project should be stopped and other options considered.

Improve management and coordination of Road Safety

Road safety is a crucial aspect of transport infrastructures. In order to achieve better road safety, we recommend to:

1. Establish a road safety lead agency – or improve work of the lead agency where it already exists – with responsibilities over analysis, monitoring, promotion and finances;
2. Allocate a budget for lead agency activities and capacity-building;
3. Develop a Road Safety Fund at national level to be used for awareness raising campaigns or research and funded by fines, insurance and taxes;
4. Set measurable targets within the Action Plan and Strategy – including criteria such as saving lives;
5. Improve data collection of accidents: include data monitoring and road crash investigations, accounting for the use of child booster seats, helmets, seatbelts, reflective materials and mobile phones, -
6. Reform driving schools’ national curriculum and introduce a one-year, provisional license in order to improve novice drivers’ preparation and training;

7. Integrate road safety education in primary schools' curricula;
8. Include representatives of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum in the working groups of the World Bank Road Safety initiative, - to create synergies and to work together on practical, result-oriented and impactful projects.

Decarbonisation of transport and infrastructure

Increase the capacity of low-carbon transport use, creating incentives for low-carbon forms of transport and road infrastructure, which contribute to environmentally friendly cargo transfers and passenger vehicles. The EaP region has a well-developed infrastructure only for petroleum and diesel – the biggest sources of air pollution. A truly environmentally friendly transport infrastructure must include infrastructure for biofuel, e-chargers, liquid natural gas and other types of stations for eco-vehicles. While investments – is the key, a clear policy on transparent, environmentally friendly vehicle infrastructure – is a necessary pre-condition. In order to achieve Decarbonisation of transport and infrastructure, we recommend to:

1. Create a transparent infrastructure for electric vehicles development; Support the creation of a transparent and simplified regulation mechanism for the development of e-vehicles charging infrastructure in the EaP countries. The charging of e-vehicles is currently not regulated as a service in its own right, therefore a new regulation needs to be introduced
2. Regulate the import of vehicles with negative environmental impact – particularly vehicles older than 10 years;
3. Incentivise the purchasing of new, ecological cars – including through tax incentives;
4. Develop a programme for recycling and scrapping old cars in the EaP countries.

Develop the economic connectivity of the EaP region

1. Work towards the unification of tariff rates for the usage of roads across the EaP region;
2. Liberalise freight transport, especially transit between Moldova and Ukraine, as well as Moldova and Belarus;
3. Develop modern transport network between Europe and the South Caucasus, which is fundamental, particularly for what concerns high-speed road connections. The isolation of South Caucasian countries from mainland Europe – due to geographical barriers such as the Black Sea or the Russian border to the North – presents no obvious or safe solutions, with the exception of transit through Ukraine. Waterways across the Black Sea can also be used to connect the EaP region to Europe through the Balkans.

Increase the sustainability of public transport and urban mobility

1. Formulate a EaP-wide plan for the development of public transport;

Most EaP countries have very inefficient public transport systems, worsened by old fleets and the lack of internal regulation. The formulation of a EaP-wide plan for the development of public transport could bring great benefits to the entire region. The plan should include road safety measures and have a low impact on the environment, as well as foster economic development and stimulate interconnectivity between regions, cities and rural communities. Environmentally friendly public transport, with easy connections, leads to economic growth, new jobs and trade opportunities,

as well as better service provision. The plan can be complemented by nation-wide initiatives and programmes focused on introducing alternative or environmentally conscious transport options, especially in cities and big urban areas, which suffer from heavy traffic, congestion and air pollution.

2. Promote national initiatives and programmes on introducing alternative, ecological and mobile transport in big cities, as they suffer most from heavy traffic, congestions and air pollution.

Make EU support to civil society organisations more effective

1. Involve civil society organisations as a real partner in achieving better road safety and mobility-related objectives by:
 - a. Involving local civil society organizations as partners. Civil society organizations strongly appreciate the support provided by the EU to projects aimed at improving road safety in the EaP region. However, in most cases, technical assistance projects have very limited and delayed impact on reducing road fatalities in EaP countries. In most cases, the main results of multimillion projects are sophisticated reports often ignored by local policymakers. Focusing on concrete objectives (such as improving the use of seat-belts) can have a tremendous impact and ultimately, save thousands of human lives. Civil society organisations can produce impactful projects and be indispensable partners in rolling out advocacy campaigns, raising awareness and capacity building in the domain of road safety;
 - b. Making mobility and road safety eligible areas of activities to be funded by EU grants; As for now, in most of EU-sponsored grant programmes, mobility in general and road safety in particular are not eligible areas of activities to be funded with EU grants.

More Information

The Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (EaP CSF) is a unique multi-layered regional civil society platform aimed at promoting European integration, facilitating reforms and democratic transformations in the six Eastern Partnership countries - Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Serving as the civil society and people-to-people dimension of the Eastern Partnership, the EaP CSF strives to strengthen civil society in the region, boost pluralism in public discourse and policy making by promoting participatory democracy and fundamental freedoms. For more information, please visit the EaP CSF website at www.eap-csf.eu