

To:
Ministry of transport and communications
Republic of Macedonia

Skopje, 2.11.2010

Subject: Involvement of environmental non-governmental organizations in the Transport Community

Dear Minister Janakieski,

The negotiations for the Transport Community are ongoing, and soon the Treaty establishing the Transport Community will be finalised and signed between the European Union and the Western Balkan countries.

The Transport Community aims at speeding up the alignment of the relevant legislation and allowing transport users and citizens to benefit from the accession process more rapidly. It is also envisaged to accelerate the integration of the transport systems within the region as well as with those of the EU. It should therefore stimulate and speed up necessary investment and economic development in the region.

The future implementation of the treaty will lead to reforms and major restructuring of the transport sector in all of the Western Balkan countries. Implementation of transport infrastructure projects has significant impacts on people and environment and should be therefore carefully planned and carried out without adverse effects to the livelihoods of people, biodiversity and habitats.

We as civil society organisations active in the field of environmental protection are writing to you in order to express our willingness to participate in the Transport Community and provide our assistance. Environmental organisations are a needed partner in the implementation of the Transport Community as they can provide their experience as well as expertise in transport and environment related matters. We believe that environmental organisations can contribute to the work of the Technical Committees to be established under the Treaty. We also believe that further consultations on national, as well as regional level are necessary. Establishment of special environment related forum on national level for governmental and non-governmental organisations could be a possible platform for exchange of views, experiences and expertise when planning and implementing projects and initiatives envisaged with the Transport Community.

As the European Commission has stated on numerous occasions, partnership and inclusiveness of civil society is essential for effective development of programmes, projects and plans in the context of the EU pre-accession and harmonisation of national legislation with the EU's *aquis communautaire*. We, as civil society organisations active in the field of environment expect this partnership to take place for the successful implementation of the Transport Community. We hope that you as a representative of our Government will take this into consideration when negotiating the Treaty establishing the Transport Community.

Sincerely,

Ana Colovic Lesoska
Center for environmental research and information Eko-svest
Macedonia