

12 Transport policy

Through the development of a modern, sustainable, efficient, interoperable and integrated transport network, a sound transport policy can promote closer co-operation with neighbouring economies and be a key driver of competitiveness, both for an economy as well as for the region. The first sub-dimension, planning and management, measures the extent to which an orderly, coherent, consistent and transparent process is in place for developing transport policy and implementing infrastructure projects. The second sub-dimension, regulation and connectivity, determines how well transport modes and networks are regulated and operated, as well as how they are leveraged to promote regional connectivity. The third sub-dimension, sustainability, measures progress towards resource efficiency, environmental protection, reducing health impacts and increasing safety as well as social inclusion.

Key findings

Since the last *Competitiveness Outlook* (CO) assessment (2021), Albania has made progress in designing and implementing policies related to planning and management, as well as environmental sustainability, in its transport sector (Table 12.1). With Serbia, Albania is the best performer among the WB6 economies. Going forward, further efforts are needed to drive forward regulatory reforms and implement policies that seek to improve regional connectivity as well as road safety.

Table 12.1. Albania's scores for transport policy

Dimension	Sub-dimension	2018 score	2021 score	2024 score	2024 WB6 average
Transport	11.1: Planning and management	2.7	2.5	3.5	2.6
	11.2: Regulation and connectivity			2.4	1.9
	11.3: Sustainability			2.3	2.1
Albania's overall score		2.7	2.5	2.8	2.2

The **key findings** are:

- Environmental sustainability policies for transport are increasingly being developed and implemented. The upcoming Transport Sector Strategy and Action Plan incorporate sustainability considerations and outline a range of planned measures. Significant efforts have been made to promote electric vehicles and charging infrastructure, to increase the adoption of biofuels and to enhance public transport.
- Progress is under way in developing asset management systems for road and rail transport in Albania. Once operational, these systems will represent an important step towards enhanced management of transport infrastructure, enabling Albania to allocate maintenance spending and new investments more efficiently.
- The project selection process was further reinforced, through updates to the legal framework. These changes strengthen the link between the Single Project Pipeline and overarching strategic documents, as well as integrate environmental and social impact assessments into the process.
- Notable efforts were made on rail reforms and infrastructure. Albania has approved rail projects to enhance rail connectivity within the country, and with Montenegro and North Macedonia. Reforms have been implemented to align Albania's rail market with the EU *acquis*, by setting the stage for the creation of a new regulatory body and separating the national rail company into four separate entities.
- There is room for improvement in the road safety policy framework. Despite a positive trend, the rate of road fatalities, at 59 per million inhabitants in 2022, remains higher than the EU average of 46. While general road safety policies have been outlined in the Transport Sector Strategy and Action Plan 2025, Albania has been without a comprehensive road safety strategy since the previous one expired in 2020.

State of play and key developments

Sub-dimension 11.1: Planning and management

Albania has continued efforts to improve the planning and management of the transport sector since the last CO assessment. The Sectorial Strategy of Transport (SST) and its accompanying Action Plan 2021-25 have been drafted and reflect Albania's **transport vision**. The main goal of the SST and its Action Plan 2016-20 is to i) enhance the national transport infrastructure of Albania and ii) notably enhance its sustainability, connectivity, compatibility and alignment with both the broader international and European transport networks and the region. Moreover, these objectives are clear and measurable, are supported by defined implementation plans and clear timelines and budgets, and were developed in consultation with relevant stakeholders. However, the 2021-25 SST and Action Plan have not yet been adopted (and their timeline has been extended until 2030 pending their adoption), meaning that Albania is currently implementing its overarching transport policies from the previous strategy, as well as under cross-sectoral documents, such as the National Development and Integration Strategy, or ad hoc policies, limiting the ambition, coherence and efficient strategic articulation of the transport vision and its policy objectives.

The SST and its Action Plan also include guidelines to ensure monitoring of the progress in implementation of the priority actions. However, monitoring is not yet taking place due to the strategy not yet being in force. A monitoring report for the previous Sectorial Strategy of Transport and its Action Plan 2016-20 was published in 2021 and is publicly accessible. It concluded that 67% of activities were completed according to the timeline, 25% were ongoing and the remaining 8% had not yet been started (Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy of Albania, 2021^[1]), showing some room for improvement in the implementation of the next strategy once it is adopted.

The Albanian Government relies on the National Single Project Pipeline (NSPP) as a strategic medium and long-term prioritisation instrument for economy-wide **project selection**. The National Single Project Pipeline defines the list of strategic projects in Albania, orients foreign and domestic sources of funding towards these priorities, and connects long-term priorities with medium-term budget planning (MTBP) (Republic of Albania, 2023). The NSPP merges and prioritises the projects in the pipelines of each sector/ministry (Single Sector Project Pipeline, SSPP). All projects in the NSPP process are developed based on the EU Guide to Cost-Benefit Analysis of Infrastructure Projects. Albania notably improved its selection process through a new Decision of the Council of Ministers (DCM), "On public investment management procedures", that came into force in January 2023. Among other updates that aim to improve investment management procedures, the DCM gives the NSPP legal power to select projects based on criteria linked to strategic documents, government priorities, and sectoral priorities. In addition, the new DCM integrates environmental and social impact assessments into the selection process.

The SST and its Action Plan further consider the National Package of Priority Projects prioritised under the SSPP system in the transport sector. These Projects of Strategic Significance are approved annually by the Strategic Planning Committee/Strategic Investment Council chaired by the prime minister. The Albanian National Transport Plan (ANTP) serves as a transport master plan and was first adopted by the government in 2005 (TYPSA, 2019^[2]). ANTP provides the basis for an overarching framework for the development of the sector and is updated every four years. The second revision of the ANTP, i.e. the 3rd ANTP covering the period 2019-23, was approved in 2020, prioritising the projects using the transport model (TYPSA, 2019^[2]). The Sectorial Strategy of Transport and Action Plan 2021-25 (now 2023-30) is aligned with all the latest strategies and plans of ANTP3.

Several relevant updates have also been made to Albania's **implementation and procurement** processes over the last assessment period. Albania has fully aligned with important EU *acquis*¹ on review procedures regarding public procurement rules applicable to the transport sector, strengthening oversight, transparency, and efficiency in allocating resources and contracts within the industry. All the remaining

directives and regulations that prescribe procurement procedures and related services are partially aligned now (Transport Community, 2023^[3]). Besides public procurement, public-private partnerships (PPPs) and concession contracts have been in use over the assessment period. In Albania, as of the end of 2021, the record of PPPs and concessions included data on 229 contracts at the economy-wide level, with 6 newly signed during that year (European Commission, 2022^[4]). However, PPPs are not yet fully integrated into the public financial management system revision (European Commission, 2023^[5]). PPPs and concession contracts can enhance competitiveness by attracting private investment, fostering innovation, and improving infrastructure development and service provision efficiency. Provided they are accompanied by sufficient oversight mechanisms, they can allow for the sharing of risks between the public and private sectors, leading to better-quality infrastructure and services while freeing up public funds for other priorities.

The DCM also lays down monitoring guidelines by clearly mentioning the information required for performance indicators at the project level and for implementation of procurement procedures, information on the cases of creation of substantiated arrears, actions for problems faced in the implementation of projects, justification in case of delays, etc. Budget monitoring reports are published yearly for all sectors, including transport, and were last published in 2022. One of the main objectives of the new DCM is to include the PPP financing option as a separate section in the submission phase of the Project Proposal Form, as well as in the feasibility study for all the projects under the NSPP. The recent changes outline the regulatory and methodological framework for preparing, approving, updating, monitoring and implementing public investment management (PIM) procedures and National Single Project Pipeline procedures (Republic of Albania, 2023).

While further action has been taken to improve **asset management** in the transport sector, Albania could improve processes further. Although asset management systems do not yet exist for all modes of transport, procedures are being developed for road and rail transport.

Progress has been made on the four-year maintenance plan for the entire road network until 2026. The main network that spans over 1 400 km is undergoing maintenance through four substantial contracts within the 2022-26 framework agreement (Transport Community, 2023^[3]). Additionally, the Albanian Road Authority has entered into 11 contracts for secondary road segments, totalling 347 km, under DMC No. 600 dated 13 October 2022.² Importantly, the government of the Republic of Albania received World Bank funding to establish a Road Asset Management System (RAMS). However, the contract between the government and the subcontractor was terminated due to lack of progress. Albania obtained an EBRD Grant for Technical Assistance with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), the Asset Management Plan, and Track Access Charges in 2020. This included the creation of an Asset Management Plan (AMP), including an assessment of the full cost and direct cost of maintaining and operating the rail infrastructure (Transport Community, 2020^[6]).

Sub-dimension 11.2: Regulation and connectivity

Albania has advanced significantly in updating and aligning its **rail regulation** more closely with the EU's Rail Action Plan to boost long distance and cross-border passenger rail.³ Several laws⁴ have been passed and updated over the assessment period. These have paved the way for the establishment of key institutions, such as the National Investigating Body (NIB), the regulatory body – Rail Regulatory Agency (RRA), and the separation of the National Rail Company (HSH) into four separate entities responsible for infrastructure, freight operations, passenger operations, and vehicle maintenance (Transport Community, 2023^[3]). The Railway Safety Authority was legally established in December 2022 but is not yet fully operational.⁵ Rail market opening has been approved in Albania since 2018, and there are currently three operators in the market. New railway companies are being established but have not yet started operations in the economy.

Several railway modernisation and rehabilitation projects are under way in Albania. These projects encompass a range of initiatives aimed at enhancing infrastructure and connectivity. They include the rehabilitation of existing railway lines, such as the Durrës – Rrogozhinë and Vorë-Hani Hotit routes, as well as the construction of new lines like the Durrës – Pristina and Pogradec – Korça – Border with Greece links. Additionally, plans involve electrifying certain railway sections, such as Tirana – Durrës and Vora – Hani Hoti. These projects are vital for improving transportation efficiency, promoting economic development, and fostering regional connectivity. By upgrading railway infrastructure and expanding networks, Albania can facilitate smoother freight and passenger transportation, reduce travel times, and enhance overall connectivity within the economy and with neighbouring regions. Furthermore, electrification initiatives contribute to environmental sustainability by reducing reliance on fossil fuels and lowering carbon emissions.

Albania's rail network and fleet utilisation are presented in Table 12.2. A significant downward trend has been noticed in passenger railway transport, and fleet utilisation is low compared to the EU average. There are many steps to be taken to revive railway passenger transport. On the contrary, fleet utilisation is higher than the EU average for freight transport, reflecting a more efficient use of resources and infrastructure for transporting goods, potentially indicating a stronger demand for freight services compared to passenger services.

The reforms in Albania's railway sector, including establishing regulatory bodies, would aid in modernising regulations, enhancing safety standards, and fostering competitiveness. These reforms are crucial for aligning with EU standards and attracting investment, improving efficiency and service quality. Market opening and the emergence of new railway operators promote competition, driving innovation and offering greater choice for consumers. Furthermore, ongoing modernisation projects enhance infrastructure quality, reliability and capacity, supporting economic growth through efficient freight and passenger transportation while instilling confidence among passengers and stakeholders through adherence to safety standards.

Table 12.2. Trends in rail transport in Albania (2019-22)

	Change 2019-22 (in %)	2022	EU average (2021)
Rail network utilisation			
Passengers (passenger-kilometres/km of track)	-76	0.002	0.99
Freight (tonne-kilometres/km of track)	-46	0.098	2.02
Rail fleet utilisation			
Passengers (passenger-kilometres/train-km)	-19	4.46	59.21
Freight (tonne-kilometres/train-km)	77	203.73	178.69

Sources: European Commission (2023^[7]); Information provided by the government of Albania for the *Competitiveness Outlook* assessment.

Albania has also advanced in its efforts to implement the initiatives outlined in the Waterborne Transport and Multimodality Action Plan through enhancing its maritime regulations. Albania has taken actions aimed at strengthening the system for seafarer training and improving the procedures for the recognition of their training and certificates within the European Union framework. Albania's advancements in maritime regulations and seafarer training bolster safety standards, fostering safer navigation and reducing maritime incidents. Aligning with EU frameworks enhances Albania's competitiveness in the global maritime industry, attracting investment and facilitating trade for economic growth.

Several efforts have been made to improve aviation regulations in Albania over the last assessment period, bringing the economy closer to the EU *acquis*. The Albanian Civil Aviation Authority (ACAA) monitors the aviation market in Albania. Albania has fully aligned with the Single European Sky (SES) I package already during the last CO assessment and has progressed on alignment with the SES II package, but it is yet to be completed – meaning that there is room for improvement in enhancing airspace efficiency, reducing

delays, and improving safety standards, as well as the unrealised potential for cost saving for airlines and modernisation of Albania's aviation infrastructure.

The regulatory reforms for road transport have progressed as well; these mainly correspond to Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) deployment, asset management and climate resilience, and are discussed in relevant sections of this chapter.

Investment in rail infrastructure is considerably higher in this assessment period than for road transport (Table 12.3) due to the ongoing construction and electrification projects. This investment, however, still falls short of the EU and OECD average when it comes to the share of GDP spent for rail. On the other hand, the investment in road transport surpasses the EU and OECD average for the share of GDP spent. Maintenance of road infrastructure is slightly below the EU and OECD average (Table 12.3), but for rail infrastructure it indicates that the economy has not spent on maintenance during the period. This reflects a disparity in investment priorities between rail and road infrastructure in Albania. Despite higher investment in rail infrastructure during the assessment period, it falls short of international benchmarks, while investment in road transport surpasses them.

Table 12.3. Trends in transport infrastructure investments and maintenance, Albania (2019-22)

	Investment					Maintenance				
	Change 2019-22 (in %)	Value in 2022 (million EUR)	% of GDP (2022)	OECD average - % GDP (2021)	EU average - % GDP (2021)	Change 2019-22 (in %)	Value in 2022 (million EUR)	% GDP (2022)	OECD average - % GDP (2021)	EU average - % GDP (2021)
Road infrastructure	15	202	1.13	0.57	0.59	107	27.00	0.15	0.27	0.28
Rail infrastructure	802	16.5	0.09	0.30	0.30	-19	0.00	0.00	0.17	0.18

Note: OECD and EU averages represent the average value for the countries with available data.

Source: ITF (2024^[8]).

Albania has taken concrete steps to improve **regional connectivity** with its neighbours. Measures have been implemented to enhance rail connectivity within the economy as well as with its neighbouring economies of Montenegro and North Macedonia. Albania started reconstructing and modernising the railway line Rinas – Tirana – Durrës in January 2022. This will have a direct link with Tirana airport and will be the first rail connection with an airport in the region (Transport Community, 2022^[9]).

Albania has also progressed in improving road border crossings with its neighbours. Progress has been made on electrification, land expropriation, equipment, installation of IT systems and additional accompanying works at the joint border crossing point (JBCP) Zatrijebacka Cijevna – Grabon between Montenegro and Albania, and operations began in July 2021. Albania has also established the BCP Qafe Thane with North Macedonia, and it has been operational since 1 August 2023. With the support of the World Bank's Transport and Trade Facilitation Project, infrastructure improvements and new equipment are expected to be in place to increase the capacities of the relevant BCPs. This could facilitate trade, improve companies' competitiveness, reduce waiting time at the border, and increase co-operation and trust, enhance border security and reduce corruption (Transport Community, 2023^[3]).

The Customs Administration of Albania and the Excise Customs and Monopolies Agency of Italy (ADM) have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) in 2022, which lays the basis for the facilitation of sea traffic (Blue Lanes) through the electronic exchange of data on goods transported by maritime transport, including information about empty trucks via the SEED+ system (Transport Community, 2023^[3]).

The upcoming SST includes promoting intermodal and **combined transport** as a strategic priority. It calls for the creation and implementation of the National Strategy for the Promotion of Intermodality and Combined Transport in Albania; and the construction of logistics centres (intermodal dry port, 100 TEU [twenty-foot equivalent unit] storage in the first phase) in the areas of Elbasan and Milot in connection with the rehabilitation of the railway line. However, pending the SST's adoption, Albania does not have a policy framework in place to implement these measures, although work on the National Strategy for the Promotion of Intermodality and Combined Transport is ongoing. Albania has partially implemented the Interoperability Directive 2008/57/EC (valid until June 2020) and its new version, the Directive (EU) 2016/797 (4th railway package). However, concrete actions are yet to take place (Transport Community, 2023^[3]).

Albania must continue to support the development of **smart transport** systems. The ITS Directive 2010/40/EU is partially implemented, and more effort is required to reach full implementation. While the SST calls for the expansion of ITS projects and creating a platform for digitalising information related to traffic, management plans, and road interventions, concrete actions have not been taken yet without the strategy's adoption. Albania has continued preparing a national ITS strategy for rail and maritime transport.

Albania completed the detailed design for the deployment of ITS on 200 km for which EUR 20 million has been designated, including the Traffic Monitoring Centre, and is planning to apply for funds within IPA III for the implementation of this project (Transport Community, 2023^[3]). ITS equipment for roads has been procured and is yet to be installed revision (European Commission, 2023^[5]). The Albanian Road Authority (ARA) has allocated a budget of EUR 1.8 million to establish the Albanian National Traffic Operation and Control Centre (ANTOCC).

Sub-dimension 11.3: Sustainability

Albania has made significant progress in advancing towards **environmentally sustainable transport**. The Sectorial Strategy of Transport and Action Plan 2021-25 (now 2023-30) includes specific emission reduction targets from different transport modes. While particular actions are not outlined in the strategy, developments that will lead to reduced emissions from the transport sector have been observed in Albania. Albania also has a National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) adopted in 2021, in line with the 2030 energy and climate target, but it is currently undergoing revision (European Commission, 2023^[5]). The NECP represents an integrated policy framework to steer decarbonisation efforts until 2030 and beyond, and aims to steer the decarbonisation of the transport sector.

Under the NECP, planned transport-related measures include integrating freight systems with EU networks, implementing ITS, improving road quality, promoting energy-efficient vehicles, and enhancing public transport infrastructure. Additionally, efforts will focus on setting minimum annual amounts of biofuels, developing electric car charging infrastructure, and upgrading taxi fleets to hybrid or electric models (Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy of Albania, 2021^[10]).

Albania has not yet implemented the Alternative Fuel Infrastructure Directive, which provides a basis for the deployment of alternative fuel infrastructure and specifies minimum requirements for building this infrastructure. However, Albania has taken steps to deploy e-charging stations in the economy and offers incentives for electric vehicles. In June 2023, a nationwide tender was initiated to establish electronic charging stations as part of the NECP (SEENews, 2023^[11]). Albania offers few new and electric vehicle incentives to encourage the phaseout of older, highly polluting vehicles. New vehicles (manufactured in the past three years) are exempt from paying the annual vehicle tax, and new electric cars can be imported without customs duty or paying value added tax. They are also exempt from annual turnover tax and can be registered at no initial cost (Exit.AI, 2022^[12]). The Albanian Road Authority (ARA), with the support of the World Bank, is working on the preparation of the Resilient Risk Map for the 100 priority Bridges out of 745 bridges of the national network (Transport Community, 2023^[3]), in order to increase the resilience of these key points.

The Port of Durrës is the largest seaport of Albania and, as part of an Interreg project, is undergoing major renovation and expansion focused mainly on greening of the port. The project is being carried out through four action areas: revitalisation of green spaces within and outside the port areas; a recycling plan for a sustainable port; a mobility plan for Durrës port staff to increase the use of green transport modes; and clean energy investment (renewable) (Alite, 2019^[13]). While monitoring reports are not officially published, progress has been observed in advancing the development of green transport. Data on transport emissions are regularly collected and available.

Albania has continued efforts to improve **road safety**. Road fatalities have been following a downward trend; between 2019 and 2022, they have fallen by 28% (Table 12.4). Nonetheless, these accomplishments must be sustained to align with the updated objective outlined in the European “Vision Zero” strategy for 2050, which includes an interim target of reducing road fatalities by 50% within the period from 2021 to 2030. The fatality rate per million residents surpasses the average risk observed in the EU (Table 12.4), underscoring the imperative to persist in enhancing traffic safety measures in Albania. Albania had a Road Safety Strategy 2011-20; a new strategy is being developed, with the support of IPA III, but has not been adopted yet (Transport Community, 2023^[3]).

In 2021, Albania finalised the designs for ten high-risk road sections spanning approximately 300 km. The projects for refurbishment and modernisation of these sections to reduce their level of risk are now ready for investment. Albania is one of the first WB6 economies to adopt the guidelines and complete the training for Road Safety Inspections (RSI) and Road Safety Audits (RSA), thereby aligning the legislation with the EU Directive 2008/96/EC on Road Infrastructure Safety Management (Transport Community, 2023^[3]).

Safety strategies for other transport modes have not yet been developed in Albania. The economy also established the National Authority of Investigation of Railway and Maritime Accidents and Incidents (AKIAIHD) in July 2021, determining its organisation's and functioning rules. This will improve safety standards, mitigate risks, and enhance overall safety in railway and maritime operations.

Table 12.4. Road safety trends in Albania and the EU (2012-22)

Changes are expressed in percentage

	2012-22	2019-22	2022
Change in number of road fatalities in Albania	-51	-28	
Change in number of road fatalities (EU)	-22	-9	
Number of fatalities per million inhabitants in Albania			59
Number of fatalities per million inhabitants (EU)			46

Sources: European Commission (2023^[14]). Albania data – Information provided by the government for the *Competitiveness Outlook* assessment.

A **just and fair** transport system is addressed in several strategic documents. The actions outlined in the Railway Code of Albania demonstrate a concerted effort to ensure fair and just transport for all passengers, particularly focusing on the rights of individuals with disabilities and reduced mobility. Provisions such as Article 96 emphasise transparency and communication during delays or disruptions, with an obligation for railway operators to inform passengers promptly and provide alternative transport options where necessary. Similarly, Article 97 addresses the specific needs of disabled passengers, prohibiting discrimination and requiring railway undertakings to offer assistance and information tailored to their requirements.

Furthermore, the Code underscores the importance of accessibility in Article 98, mandating that railway facilities meet international standards to accommodate persons with disabilities and reduced mobility. These measures aim to facilitate inclusive travel experiences and ensure equal access to rail services. Additionally, as highlighted, alignment with EU legislation in air transport further reinforces the commitment

to passenger rights and establishes a comprehensive framework for addressing issues such as denied boarding, flight cancellations, and long delays. Overall, these legislative efforts reflect a proactive approach to fostering a fair and just transport system that prioritises the needs and rights of all passengers, including those with disabilities or reduced mobility.

Overview of implementation of Competitiveness Outlook 2021 recommendations

Albania has made progress in following up on the Recommendations of the CO Assessment 2021 (Table 12.5). Significant efforts have been made to complete the actions of the EU Rail Action Plan, aligning Albania's rail sector more closely with the EU *acquis*. Moderate progress has also been observed in developing processes for implementation, monitoring and readjusting policy frameworks and institutionalising guidelines for project selection.

Table 12.5. Albania's progress on past recommendations for transport policy

Competitiveness Outlook 2021 recommendations	Progress status	Level of progress
Enhance implementation, monitoring and readjustment of the approved policy framework	Albania's SST 2021-25 (2023-30) still needs to be adopted, but it has a framework that supports monitoring and evaluation. The SST has several new indicators based on previous evaluations.	Moderate
Develop national cost-benefit analysis (CBA) guidelines and tailor them specifically to Albania, ensuring they cover all transport modes	The CBA guidelines in Albania are within the National Single Project Pipeline framework and are based on the EU guidelines. These guidelines clearly outline the principles that the project selection should be based on. However, the CBA guidelines have not been tailored to Albania's needs and national context yet.	Moderate
Continue rail reforms	Albania has made significant progress in updating and aligning its rail legislation more closely with the EU's Rail Action Plan. Several laws have been passed and updated over the last assessment period.	Strong
Prioritise road safety	Albania is developing a new Road Safety Strategy, but it has not been adopted yet. Albania has continued efforts to improve road safety, but these could be further accelerated by the development of an ambitious policy framework.	Limited
Develop an Integrated Environmental and Transport Action plan	Albania also has a National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) adopted in 2021, in line with the 2030 energy and climate target, but it has yet to be in force, pending its revision. The NECP contains targets and measures to decarbonise the transport sector, and combined with measures under the SST could represent a solid policy framework for greening transport once fully in place. In June 2023, a tender was initiated to establish electronic charging stations nationwide as part of the plan.	Moderate

The way forward for transport policy

Considering the progress made in several areas, and areas in which there is still room for improvement, to ensure sustained successful development of better transport policies, policy makers in Albania may wish to:

- **Place additional emphasis on policies ensuring a fair and inclusive transport system.** An equitable transport system makes mobility affordable and accessible in all regions and for all passengers, ensures access to opportunities for all, and enhances the conditions of transport workers. Addressing policy areas such as accessibility to destinations, accessibility for users with specific needs, affordability, and enhanced working conditions is essential. Albania should introduce relevant policies and integrate them into the SST and other strategic documents. Some of the EU legislation that must be covered through these policies includes the rights of people with reduced mobility — air travel, EU rail passengers' rights, bus and coach passengers' rights, EU air

passenger rights in case of denied boarding, a delayed flight or a cancelled flight, internal market and state aid. Albania has already aligned with some of this legislation,⁶ and efforts should be made to align with the remaining *acquis*.

- **Advance on implementation of rail reforms:** While significant progress has already been made, there is room for improving the regulation of the rail sector. Albania should build on the advances of recent legislative efforts by establishing functional and operational institutions such as the National Safety Authority (NSA), the National Investigating Body (NIB), and the Regulatory Body (RRA) for rail transport. Albania should expedite the restructuring of Albanian Railways (HSH) into separate entities for infrastructure, freight operations, passenger operations, and vehicle maintenance. Efforts should also be made to align the national law with the Passenger Rights EU Regulation 1371/2007, as it plays a crucial role in safeguarding the interests of passengers and promoting a fair and efficient transportation system within the European Union.
- **Improve the legal and policy framework for road safety.** Further efforts are required to align national legislation with the EU *acquis* on road safety. Albania should ensure that the New Road Safety Strategy is linked to the Action Plan with aspirational targets to reduce fatalities and serious injuries by 50% by 2030 and reach Vision Zero by 2050. The monitoring results of the previous road safety strategy, including lessons learned, should be used to develop the new strategy. All actions proposed need to include the implementing agency responsible, the timeline for implementation, the budget, and monitoring indicators. An impact assessment of the new strategy should also be carried out. Albania should also establish a Road Traffic Safety Agency fully competent to co-ordinate and spearhead efforts to improve the road safety management system. Adopting a safe systems approach and developing safety performance indicators (Box 12.1) can help Albania achieve better outcomes in road safety.

Box 12.1. Adopting the Safe System Approach and Safety Performance Indicators for improved road safety

In the past decade, the International Transport Forum (ITF) has promoted the adoption of the Safe System Approach to road safety. This approach can drastically reduce road fatalities and is endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly. It now forms the basis for the new Global Plan for the Decade of Action on Road Safety 2021–30. The Safe System Approach is a proactive approach to road safety; it is preventive and is predicated on the notion that people make mistakes and that these errors can result in traffic crashes. It seeks to identify and proactively address vulnerabilities in the transportation system in a holistic manner. Adopting the Safe System Approach is a concrete step that the WB6 economies can take to improve road safety outcomes.

The Safe System Approach requires road safety authorities to collect, analyse and use accurate road safety data and develop Safety Performance Indicators (SPIs). The European Commission developed a list of SPIs with the correspondent methodology in the baseline project. These Safety Performance Indicators are those that are related to driving behaviours, such as following speed limits, drunk driving, and seat belt usage. Indicators related to vehicles, infrastructure, or trauma are also important. Road safety improvement can be further accelerated by identifying distinct at-risk user groups – or vulnerable user groups – and implementing SPIs to improve road safety outcomes. The ITF report recommends SPIs tailored for vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, cyclists, and motorcyclists. Implementing SPIs that are specific to these groups can help the WB6 economies in advancing on the Road Safety Action Plan goal of protecting Vulnerable Road Users.

Sources: ITF (2022_[15]; 2023_[16]).

- **Enhance efforts to develop well-functioning combined transport.** Combined transport is the most cost-efficient transport mode, reducing environmental pollution and increasing co-operation between the freight forwarding network companies. Achieving well-functioning logistical chains and establishing an international corridor approach and intermodal solutions could promote high competitiveness in Albania's transport market. The policy measures in place are currently inadequate to support combined transport systems. Specific detailed measures should be included in order to develop co-modal solutions and identify corridors to decrease transportation costs, enhance interoperability, improve the quality of trade-related infrastructure, and increase the competence and quality of logistics services and timeliness of shipments. Albania should enhance efforts to align with the Action Plan for Waterborne Transport and Multimodality and relevant sections of the Transport Community Treaty.

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Notes

¹ Council Directive 89/665/EEC of 21 December 1989 on the co-ordination of the laws, regulations and administrative provisions relating to the application of review procedures for the award of public supply and public works contracts (OJ L 395, 30.12.1989, p. 33).

² Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 600, dated 13 October 2021, On the ownership of state roads and transfers of ownership between road owner entities, www.qbz.gov.al/eli/fz/2021/161/90324a3b-0759-4080-a396-75242bc226b0.

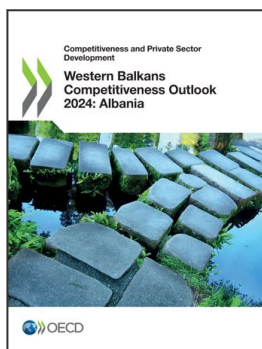
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⁴ Laws passed during 2021-24: Law No. 90/2021, dated 1 July 2021, "On separation of the 'Albanian Railways' company SA", partially aligned with the Directive 2012/34/EU, as amended; Law No. 89/2021, dated 1 July 2021, "On the establishment of Railway Regulatory Authority", partially aligned with the Directive 2012/34/EU, as amended; Law No. 88/2021, dated 1 July 2021, "On the establishment of the Railway Safety Authority", partially aligned with Directive 2016/798/EU; DCM No. 657, dated 31 October

2018, "On the determination of the Railway Licensing Authority", which partially aligned the Directive 2012/34/EU, as amended; Law No. 91/2021, dated 1 July 2021, "On the creation, organization and functioning of the National Authority for the Investigation of Railway and Maritime Accidents and Incidents", partially aligned with the Directive 2016 /798/EU.

⁵ Law No. 88/2021, dated 1 July 2021, Establishing the Railway Safety Authority, www.qbz.gov.al/eli/fz/2021/125/3ad6c11a-71e1-4b1b-9150-6cdb7c00d16c.

⁶ Including ones that concern the rights of disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility when travelling by air and compensation and assistance to passengers in the event of denied boarding and of cancellation or long delay of flights.



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