



Road transport

New vignette charging system to be implemented

As of 1st April 2004 will be implemented a new vignette charging system for motor vehicles using the Bulgarian road network for a certain periods of time. With the implementation of the new charging system the motorway charges which were paid by foreign transport operators are to be abolished. The vignette charges are given below:

Vignette charges (EUR)		Year 2004	Year 2005	Year 2006	Year 2007
Motor vehicle 1st category	weekly	49.00	49.00	49.00	23.52
	monthly	124.00	124.00	124.00	58.29
	yearly	689.00	689.00	689.00	323.65
Motor vehicle 2nd category	weekly	25.00	25.00	25.00	12.27
	monthly	61.00	61.00	61.00	29.66
	yearly	345.00	345.00	345.00	162.08
Motor vehicle 3rd category	weekly	-	5.00	5.00	2.45
	monthly	-	12.00	12.00	6.14
	yearly	-	69.00	69.00	32.21

◇ **Motor vehicle 1st category:** all freight vehicles with more than two axles, road trains, special construction equipment, autocranes, special trailers for transport of heavy or oversized cargo and other special motor vehicles.

◇ **Motor vehicle 2nd category:** all passenger transport vehicles with more than 8 seats excluding the driver's seat and all freight vehicles with two axles, as well as construction equipment, autocranes, special trailers for transport of heavy or oversized cargo and other special motor vehicles, all of them with two axles.

◇ **Motor vehicle 3rd category:** all passenger transport vehicles with not more than 8 seats.

Priorities of the Transport Ministry for 2004

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Transport Nikolay Vassilev presented the priorities of the Ministry of Transport and Communications (MTC) for 2004 before the members of Association of the Foreign Investors in Bulgaria (AFIB).

The construction of the new terminal at Sofia Airport in 2005 and the commencement of high technology projects are amongst the main issues of the MTC, Minister Vassilev said. The operation of Varna and Burgas airports on concession basis and the privatization of Bulgaria Air carrier are priorities in the transport sector as well.

AFIB was established in 1992 by 7 large companies: British Gas, Bulgarian-American Enterprise Fund, International Computers Limited, PriceWaterhouse, Rank Xerox, Shell Bulgaria and ITT Sheraton. There are 225 companies from 25 countries that at present are members of the association.

Bulgaria to ease border control regime

Bulgaria has announced its plan to complete the revamping of its border crossing regime by the end of January 2004.

In a decision reached by the Bulgarian government on 9 January 2004, local authorities will soon introduce a comprehensive action plan to ease the crossing of the country's border checkpoints and simplify passport and customs control procedures. The cabinet has given the ministers responsible until 26 January to complete their progress reports.

Commission approves financial support for cross-border co-operation between Bulgaria-Serbia and Montenegro and Bulgaria-Macedonia

On 30 January the Minister of Regional Development and Public Works Valentin Tserovski met Mr. Francois Bejeot, Head of the Team for Bulgaria in the Enlargement Directorate of the European Commission. The goal of the meeting was the EC mission in Bulgaria for Phare CBC, which was held from 29 January to 8 February. The main objective was to present Phare CBC Programme for cooperation between Bulgaria-Serbia and Montenegro and Bulgaria-Macedonia. The programmes' implementation is in the framework of the initiative "External borders" of the European Union. This programme is primarily aimed at upgrading the infrastructure in the cross-border area and the development of cross-border co-operation in fields such as business development, environment, etc. EUR 9 million are envisaged under the Phare CBC Programme for cooperation between Bulgaria and Macedonia while the provided funds for Phare CBC Programme for cooperation between Bulgaria and Serbia and Montenegro amount to EUR 13 million for the period 2004-2006.



Minister Tserovski during the meeting with Mr. Francois Bejeot (left)

PHARE grants Bulgaria EUR 39.9 million for border regions development

New Phare projects at the total amount of Euro 39.9 million start in the spring of 2004, officials by the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works announced.

According to the Financial Memorandum 2002, the projects, which will be implemented under Phare Trans-border cooperation between Bulgaria and Greece, amount to EUR 20 million. Rehabilitation and partial reconstruction of Road II-19 Razlog-Gotze Delchev and a second tunnel construction of the ring road of the town of Dupnitsa are amongst the projects in the field of infrastructure.

EUR 8 million is the envisaged amount in the framework Phare Trans-border cooperation with Romania for the construction of a cross-border check point and ferry complex at Nicopol and rehabilitation and partial reconstruction of Road II-15, section Mizia-Oriahovo.

Construction of new Bulgarian-Romanian CBCP at Silistra-Kalarash starts

Setting up of a ferry line Silistra-Kalarash and new cross border check point starts in March. Both the Bulgarian and Rumanian Governments support the project. The complex will service the passengers and trade traffic between both towns and it will give an opportunity for the development of RO-RO transport to the Ukrainian town of Reni.

Ministry of the Regional Development and Public Works provides for the project over EUR 4 million. Contracting company is Bulgarian Siconko. The term of construction is 18 months.



Bulgaria and Serbia cooperate in the traffic of goods and passengers

Bulgarian and Serbian authorities will take every step necessary for railway service between the two neighbor countries to be improved, Bulgarian Transport Minister Nikolay Vassilev said during the meeting with Amir Nurkovich, Minister of Economy of Serbia and Montenegro at Gradina-Kalotina frontier pass.

Vassilev pointed out that measures would be taken to speed up border checks, thus passengers from Bulgaria to Serbia and the other way about would reach their final destination more quickly. According to him the opening of the new frontier pass Salash - Novo Korito and the completion of the railway station in the town of Dimitrovgrad in South Bulgaria will contribute to the free passing of goods and passengers between Serbia and Montenegro and Bulgaria.



Minister Vassilev and Minister Nurkovich (right)

BGL 10 million requisite for reconstruction of CBCP Capitan Andreevo

The Minister of Regional Development and Public Works Valentin Tserovski visited the Bulgarian-Turkish border in an attempt to take measures for improving the cross-border traffic of passengers and goods. As first necessary step according to the experts from the Ministry of Regional Development and Border Police was pointed out the widening of exit and entry carriageways. The infrastructure will be financed by the national budget while some measures may be compensated through a loan from the World Bank.

Bulgaria eases Border Crossing regime with Turkey

A new checkpoint near Lesovo village will be opened at Bulgarian border with Turkey in a bid to ease the border crossing regime. The decision was announced by Transport Minister Nikolay Vassilev. The move aims to facilitate customs and transport control with Turkey. Six ministers prepared proposals for improving control at all border checkpoints, presented in the end of January.

Bulgaria negotiates joint transport projects with Turkey

On the invitation of Minister of Transport of Republic of Turkey Binali Yildirim, Bulgarian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Transport Nikolay Vassilev paid an official visit in Turkey. Nikolay Vassilev and his Turkish counterpart reviewed the possibilities for cooperation in the field of civil aviation and management of the air traffic, from the Ministry of Transport announced. Both ministers discussed the opportunities for improvement the quality of services at cross border control points between Bulgaria and Turkey and collaboration in the sea and internal continental transport field. Both ministers considered the possibilities to boost joint infrastructural projects and to update bilateral transport legislation.

Bulgarian-Romanian Danube Bridge II construction discussed

The topics of the pan European transport corridors were discussed on the meeting of the Business Consultative Council for Southeast Europe with the Stability Pact on 11 February. In the event, opened by Minister of Transport and Communications Nikolay Vassilev, took part Erhard Busek, Special Coordinator of the Stability Pact.



Danube Bridge II and Sofia-Nish Motorway remain priorities of the Stability Pact, Erhard Busek said during the meeting. The National Center for Territorial Planning presented an alternative project for Sofia-Nish Motorway at a roundtable on infrastructure within the Stability Pact Business Consultative Council.

Danube Bridge 2 project has already entered its final stage and will start in a few weeks, Deputy Economy Minister and Coordinator of the Pact for Bulgaria Milen Keremedchiev said. Establishment of a regional aviation company was welcomed by the Pact's coordinator as well.



Minister Vassilev and Mr Erhard Busek (right)

Tendering an approach road to Greek border

The Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works announced two international open tenders for construction and provision of supervision services of approach road to Greek border through Rudozem CBCP. Their implementation is financed by the national budget and Bulgaria-Greece CBC Programme and its total amount is EUR 11 million.

The new section is a part of the existing road II-86 Rudozem-Xanthi. Construction works have to be completed in two years period. The selection criteria of the candidates include annual turnover EUR 7 million and positive annual operating profit for each of the last three years.

The second tender is for provision of supervision services for the construction of the road. During the construction period the Consultant shall supervise the construction works on behalf of the Bulgarian Government, represented by Road Executive Agency.

Bulgaria, Armenia may set up joint ferry line

Bulgarian Transport Minister Nikolay Vassilev and Armenian Minister of Transport Andranik Manukyan discussed in Sofia the possibilities for opening a ferry line between Varna and Caucasus on 24 February.

Manukyan arrived in Bulgaria for the third session of the Bulgarian-Armenian intergovernmental committee, established to improve cooperation between the two countries in the fields of trade, economy and science. The possibility for launching regular flights between Sofia and Yerevan was also considered at the forum.

An agreement on multimodal transport, which is already signed by both sides and Georgia, was adopted by the Bulgarian Council of Ministers on 19 February.

Sofia public transport project

The city of Sofia has received a loan from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) to implement the 1st Phase of a Public Transport Project.

The project will require the procurement of the following works, goods and services: tram refurbishment, solo buses and electronic ticketing system.

Under the Project EBRD financing is anticipated for tram refurbishment and buses, totaling approximately EUR 25 million. The new ticketing system will be financed through a grant of the Dutch Government and the city's budget. Tendering for the above contracts is expected to begin during the first half of 2004.

TRANS-INFO INTERNATIONAL, a bimonthly newsletter published by AEBTRI (ASSOCIATION DES ENTREPRISES BULGARES DE TRANSPORTS INTERNATIONAUX ET DES ROUTES)

For more information and contacts: Mr. Christo LOZENOV, Mrs. Antonia ATANASOVA, Trans-Info Centre, AEBTRI., BG-1680 Sofia, 6 Iskarski Prolom str.; Tel: +359/2/958-14-74, 958-10-56; Fax: +359/2/958-10-91, 958-12-59; E-mail: lozenov@aebtri.ttm.bg; Web site: www.aebtri.com

Editor: Christo LOZENOV