



Roads

Infrastructure memorandum signed

Karla Peijs, the Netherlands Transport, Public Works and Water Management Minister and Bulgarian Regional Development Minister Valentin Tserovski signed a road infrastructure memorandum on 13 April. The Memorandum between the Bulgarian Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works and the Netherlands' Ministry of Transport was signed in the framework of the



Minister Karla Peijs and Minister Vassilev

programme of the Netherlands government "Partners for Roads" and it will have effect for two years. It contributes to the creation of a basis for bilateral cooperation in the sphere of development and maintenance of the road infrastructure. Karla Peijs was on a one-day visit in Bulgaria prior to the six-month Netherlands Presidency of the Council of the European Union, beginning on 1 July 2004.

During her official visit, Karla Peijs met her Bulgarian counterpart Nikolay Vassilev. Both transport ministers discussed the project related to the implementation of Bulgarian 10-years national transport plan in co-operation with Dutch experts, which starts this year.

The Netherlands supports Bulgaria in its efforts to become a regional air traffic control centre for the Balkans, Karla Peijs declared.

Working visit to Italy

Bulgarian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Transport Nikolay Vassilev paid a three-day working visit in Italy. Nikolay Vassilev met Italian Minister of Transport and Infrastructure Pietro Lunardi. Both ministers discussed the possibilities for removing permits for vehicles with total weight 6 tones or payload up to 3,5 tones and the need of increasing number of permits for transport of goods for Bulgarian hauliers with at least 3000 permits.

Italy has also confirmed its interest in landing concessions for the airports in the Black Sea cities of Varna and Burgas and the privatisation of flag carrier Bulgaria Air. During the talks it emerged that Italy will back Bulgaria in its efforts to become a regional air traffic control centre for Central and Southeast Europe along with Brindizi. Italian Autostrade has shown interest in the implementation of the toll systems for using Bulgarian motorways, Minister of Transport announced.



Road transport

Bulgarian-Turkish meeting on transport

On 17-19 March in the Ministry of Transport and Communications was held Bulgarian-Turkish expert meeting. Working parties on road, water, combined, air and rail transport had meetings. The participants in the meeting united around the idea for updating bilateral legislation in the transport field since the present legislation has not been modernised for 30 years. The Draft Agreement on Maritime Merchant Shipping was coordinated during the talks. The agreements on the international transport of passengers and goods by road, combined transport and air communications will be coordinated by correspondence.

Later on the Bulgarian Minister of Transport Nikolay Vassilev and Deputy Minister Anelia Krushkova paid a two-day working visit in Ankara, Turkey. On 20-21 April was held the 20 Jubilee Session on Joint Bulgarian -Turkish Commission on transport.

During the visit Nikolay Vassilev and his Turkish counterpart Binali Yildirim signed two agreements - on air transport and maritime shipping. Turkey will provide an additional quota of permits for Bulgarian hauliers, it emerged at the meeting.

The European Union grants EUR 32.12 million to Bulgaria under the Phare Cross Border Co-operation Programme

Three financial memoranda on Phare Transborder cooperation amounting to EUR 32.12 million were signed by the Bulgarian Finance Minister Milen Velchev and Fabrizio Barbaso, Director General of DG "Enlargement", European Commission.

The financial aid will be used for boosting economic growth and employment in the border regions, Milen Velchev pointed out. Amongst the programme priorities are infrastructure development and environmental protection.

The first Memorandum worth EUR 20 million is intended for increasing bilateral cooperation between Bulgaria and Greece. A memorandum worth EUR 8 million will boost cooperation between Bulgaria and its northern neighbour Romania, while the third one is aimed at improving collaboration between Bulgaria, Serbia and Montenegro, FYR Macedonia and Turkey.

Bulgarian budget assistance for the three memoranda is Euro 14.365 million.

EUR 2.5 million for the rehabilitation of Malko Tarnovo CBCP

European Union will allocate EUR 2.5 million for the widening of Malko Tarnovo cross border checkpoint under Phare Cross Border Cooperation (CBC) with Turkey, it emerged at the meeting of the Joint Bulgarian Turkish working group and Bulgarian Turkish Committee on Phare Cross Border Cooperation (CBC). It took place in the period 29 March - 01 April in Ankara. Both parties approved Joint programme document and list of projects under Financial Memorandum 2004 on cross border cooperation for the municipalities Bourgas, Yambol and Haskovo.

The project envisages construction of new road section with a length 3.5 km to the existing road Malko Tarnovo - Turkish border and a section of Malko Tarnovo ring road.



Fabrizio Barbaso and Minister Velchev



Road transport

Declaration on development of Corridor 8 signed

The transport ministers of Bulgaria, Macedonia, Albania and Italy, Greek Ambassador to Albania, the representative of European Commission signed a Joint declaration for supporting the development of Trans European Corridor 8 during an informal meeting in Tirana on 31 March. The Declaration appeals to the European Commission and the international financial institution to accept Corridor 8 project as their priority.

The ministers backed Bulgaria in its efforts to become a regional air traffic control centre for the Balkans.

During the visit in Tirana, Bulgarian Minister of Transport Nikolay Vassilev met his Albanian counterpart Spartak Pochi. Both ministers opened the meeting of Fourth Session of Joint intergovernmental Bulgarian Albanian Commission on Economic cooperation. The possibilities of development of all kinds of transport between both countries were discussed during the talks.

Japanese willing to finance Sofia-Nis highway

Japanese bank for International Cooperation is willing to grant an USD 200 million loan for the construction of the Bulgarian section of Sofia-Nis highway, Coordinator of the Pact for Bulgaria Milen Keremedchiev announced. The bank has already provided USD 40000 for its feasibility study. According to Keremedchiev American, Austrian and Turkish companies have shown interest in the construction of 63-km long highway section. Amongst them are American Behtel and Turkish ENKA which have previous experience in similar projects.

Development plan of ferry facility between Nikopol and Turnu Magurele

The development plan of a new Danube ferry line and CBCP between Nikopol and Romanian city Turnu Magurele has been adopted during the meeting of Physical planning expert council. Representatives from Implementing Agency - Phare Programme, Border Police, Road Executive Agency, National Customs Agency, Executive Agency Harbour Administration, etc. took part in the discussion.

The ferry complex is situated to the west of Nikopol and its total area amounts to 18,26 decares. According to the project its capacity is 84 vehicles per day made equal to the length and weight of a heavy vehicle.

The project has been approved by the European Union and the pre-accession Phare Transborder cooperation programme will allocate EUR 4 million.

Bulgaria, Macedonia to lobby for railway financing

Macedonia and Bulgaria will lobby at international financial institutions for providing EUR 250 million to finish the railway line between Skopje and Sofia. The railway is a part of Trans European Corridor 8.

It is necessary international financial community to support efforts of the Balkan countries to improve their infrastructure, it became clear during the meeting between Transport ministers of Bulgaria and Macedonia in Skopje on 26 March. Bulgarian Minister of Transport Nikolay Vassilev and his Macedonian counterpart Agron Buxhaku agreed to settle a part of BGN 4 million Macedonian railway debt to Bulgaria through wares and electricity export. A special intergovernmental group will be set up for that purpose.

To promote the trade between the two neighbouring countries, more border checkpoints will be opened, Bulgarian Transport Minister declared.



Water transport



Railway transport



Road transport

Two tenders for Plovdiv-Svilengrad railway

Two tenders for the implementation of Plovdiv-Svilengrad railway will be announced by the mid-May, Deputy Minister of Transport Sofia Kisidova declared. First tender worth EUR 13 million consist in provision of supervision services. The second tender includes construction of 37-km rail section Krumovo-Parvomai. The total cost of the project is EUR 340 million. EUR 153 million are granted by EU and the rest is provided by the state budget.

Temporary traffic restrictions on Bulgarian road network

Due to rehabilitation of Bulgarian road network the road traffic is temporary organized as follows:

1. **International Road E-79** section from km 287+450 to km 325+390, the traffic runs over the road lane which is not under construction.

Term for realization 15.08.2004.

2. **International Road E-79** sections km 399+769 - km 400+219; km 403+709-km 404+169; km 409+570 to km 409+959 (Kresna-Gradeshnitsa-Strumyani), the traffic runs over the road lane which is not under construction. Term for realization 30.8.2004.

3. **Road E 83 (I-3)** section from km 0+000 to km 155+700 (Byala-Pleven-Lukovit) is closed for motor vehicles with total weight over 16 t. They are diverted to road I-5-South ring road of Veliko Tarnovo-road I-4-road I-3. Term for realization 31.8.2004.

4. **Road I-5, section Kardzhali town - Chernoochene village.** A driving restriction on vehicles with a total weight of over 15 t is in force.

The traffic is diverted to the following alternative routes:

- **In direction Haskovo - Kardzhali:** road I-5 - road III-505 - Manastir village - road II-507 - Voivodino village - Most village - Chiflik village - Kardzhali town.

- **In direction Assenovgrad - Kardzhali:** road II-58 - Road I-5 direction Haskovo - Road III-505- Manastir village - Road II-507 - Voyvodino village - Most village - Chiflik village - Kardzhali town.

- **In direction Mineralni bani - Kardzhali:** road III-506 - III-806 - road I-5 - road III-505 - Manastir village - road III-507 - Voyvodino village - Most village - Chiflik village - Kardzhali town. Term for realization: till the construction of Kardzhali by-pass.

5. **Road E 871 (I-6)** from km 76+860 to km 78+620 in the "Radomir-Pernik" section - the right road lane is closed for traffic. Traffic runs over the left road lane. Term for realization: 30.6.2004

6. **Road E 87 (I-9)** from km 75+691 to km 80+201 section Obrochishte-Albena-Kranevo. The road traffic runs over the road lane which is not under construction. Term for realization 31.5.2004

7. **Road E 87** from km 130+987 to km 142+204 section Varna-Byala. The traffic runs over the road lane which is not under construction. Term for realization 30.6.2004.

8. **Road E 87** from km 2+179 to km 28+166 section Burgas-Sozopol. The traffic runs out over the road lane which is not under construction. Term for realization 30.6.2004

7-digit numbers of mobile operator Globul as of 2 May

Due to Regulator's requirements, Globul implements 7-digit numbers in the night of 2 May 2004. From then on there will be a single code for access to its network: 089.

After 2 May you should add an additional 8 before the 9 in the Globul code.

For example: Number +359 98 123456 will be changed to +359 898 123456

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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