



## Road transport

### National Transport System Development Strategy

The large-scale project for a National Transport System Development Strategy till 2015 was presented on the 15th of March, 2005 in the Sheraton Hotel by the Deputy Prime Minister Nikolay Vassilev to the participants in the public discussion of the document.

Despite the availability of a multitude of documents on various themes there is a lack of a whole, logically connected and consistent political framework for the development of the Bulgarian transport system.

For the first time a National Transport System Development Strategy till 2015 has been drawn up as a common political framework, which encompasses all aspects of transport in Bulgaria. The Ministry drew up the Strategy with the methodological help of the Dutch company ECORYS-NEI under the National Transport Plan Project. The goal of the National Transport Strategy is to turn Bulgaria into a country, which has a modern and safe transport system.

The idea is that in the following years the state will preserve its important role in the sector, but not so much as an owner and investor than as a legislator and regulator.

The liberalisation of the transport market and the application of new contemporary management models take up a major place in this approach.

During a public discussion the priorities will be determined and also the ways for rehabilitation and modernisation of the transport infrastructure.

### Bulgaria and Armenia Sign a Program for Cooperation

The Minister of Transport and Communications of the Republic of Armenia Andranik Manukyan arrived in our country at the invitation of the Deputy Prime Minister Nikolay Vassilev.

In the Ministry of Transport and Communications a meeting took place between the two ministers and the delegations of Bulgaria and Armenia. Issues of mutual interest in the field of transport and communications were discussed.

Bulgaria and Armenia are ready to grant each other the so-called "fifth freedom", so that the company flying between the capitals of the two countries will be allowed to fly to third countries. There will be an analysis of which company will be flying the destination Yerevan - Sofia.

Minister Vassilev specified that last year, upon Minister Manukyan's proposal, Bulgaria continued its negotiations with Russia for the creation of a direct ferry-boat link between Varna and Port Caucasus.

"I made a commitment to my counterpart to send a letter to the Georgian Minister of Transport with a request for Georgia to ratify faster the Agreement on developing multi-modal transport between Bulgaria, Georgia, and Armenia," the Deputy Prime Minister added.

During the plenary talks it was noted that Bulgaria and Armenia cooperate well in the intergovernmental TRASSECA Commission.



*Minister Manukyan and  
Minister Vassilev*

## **Joint Bulgarian-Czech Committee on Transport**

The Ministry of Transport and Communications is preparing projects amounting to EURO 6 billion for improving and modernising the railway infrastructure, which are to be implemented upon our EU accession. This was announced by Deputy Prime Minister Nikolay Vassilev after his meeting with the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Transport of the Czech Republic Milan Shimonovski.

Minister Vassilev briefed his Czech counterpart on the projects for concessioning the airports and ports in Bulgaria.

The vehicle permits which the Czech Republic issues were another accent during the talks. In view of the increased traffic of Bulgarian vehicles through the Czech Republic due to the higher road tolls in Austria the current quota is insufficient. Minister Vassilev expects this problem to be solved in the future after experts from the two countries meet and discuss the possible solutions.

As Minister Shimonovski suggested a joint committee on transport will be established between the two ministries to discuss and offer solutions to current problems.

## **New Agreement on Road transport to be concluded with Jordan**

During her four days' visit to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan the Deputy Minister of Transport and Communications Anelia Kroushkova had talks with her Jordanian colleagues on the draft of an Agreement for International Road Transport, which is to be signed. At the moment the road transport operations are carried out on the basis of the agreement between the governments of both countries for road transport of passengers signed on 28th of May 1970 in Sofia and the protocol accompanying it, which was signed on the 3rd of January 1982 in Aman. The Agreement regulates the performance of goods transport operations under "without authorisations" regime.

During the fourth session of the Bulgarian-Jordanian Joint Commission for Economic, Industrial and Trade Co-operation (Sofia, 24-26 September 2003) both countries exchanged drafts of a new agreement for road transport. In the year 2004 the Jordanian party suggested the expert negotiations to be carried out in Aman.

During the current visit Deputy Minister Kroushkova had conversations about the perspectives for extending the bilateral relations in transport and in particular for the opportunities for education of Jordanian staff in Bulgaria in the field of maritime and railway transport.

Deputy Minister Kroushkova presented the opportunities given by our country as a Transport and Logistic Centre between Europe, the Near East, Asia and Africa as well as the favourable investment climate.

## **New border crossing point Lesovo-Hamzubeili is to be opened in June**

Deputy Prime Minister Nikolay Vassilev met Kurshad Tuzmen State Minister of the Republic of Turkey and the business delegation accompanying him. Both ministers discussed the measures taken by Bulgaria and Turkey for improving the border passes and for serving the increasing international traffic

At the moment at the border crossing point - Capitan Andreevo a new concrete road surface is placed for the TIR zone. After a project of the World Bank the premises for processing of the goods vehicles and at the end of May new booths for passport and visa control are to be opened.

The Deputy Prime Minister Vassilev and the State Minister Kurshad Tuzmen were talking also about the opportunity to have opened the border crossing Lesovo-Hamzubeili. Both parties agreed to provide timely completion of the construction works at the point.

The issue for the liberalisation of road haulages between Bulgaria and Turkey remained open. Our country proposed abolishment of the quota of the authorisations for back loads, as it is a restriction for encouraging goods-exchange.

## Common border railway station between Bulgaria and Serbia and Montenegro

From January 2006 Bulgaria and Serbia and Montenegro are to have common railway station, which will significantly reduce the waiting times of passenger and goods trains on passing through the border.

It became obvious after the Deputy Prime Minister Nikolay Vassilev and the Minister of Capital Investment of the Republic of Serbia and Montenegro Velimir Ilic signed in Dimitrovgrad (Serbia and Montenegro) an Agreement for border control and procedures in railway traffic.

The Agreement is first of that kind within the Balkans. It foresees the creation of common railway border station in Dimitrovgrad. It will afford an opportunity for accelerated processing of passenger and goods trains in the destination of European corridor No 10, and the waiting times of the trains at the border crossing between Bulgaria and Serbia and Montenegro, which up to now were more than 3 hours, will be many times reduced. Actually the common station will start functioning next year.



*Prime Minister Simeon Saxe-Coburg and his colleague of Serbia and Montenegro Voislav Kostunica inspect the renewed common border station at Dimitrovgrad*

## Ferry connection between Nikopol and Turnu Magurele

The Prime Minister Simeon Saxe-Coburg attended at the symbolic "turning of the first sod" of border crossing point Nikopol. It was made by the Minister of Regional Development and Public Works Valentin Tserovski, the Deputy Prime Minister of Romania George Sekulic and the Head of the Delegation of the European Commission in Bulgaria Dimitris Kurkulas.

The border crossing point Nikopol is to be completed till September 2006. There will be a ferry ramp, a retaining wall, premises of the Customs Administration and Border Police etc. On Romanian side the project is totally alike and there starts the construction of border crossing point Turnu Magurele and providing a ferry connection. Both border crossing points are to be reorganised after the accession of Bulgaria and Romania in the European Union as ferry ports along the inner border of the community. The project for the border crossing point Nikopol is performed by the programme PHARE - Trans-border cooperation with Romania, ruled over by the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works. 75% of the resources for the construction site are provided by the programme PHARE, and the rest 25% are from national co-financing of the State Budget.

## Bulgaria and Romania to Have United Border Control Teams

Bulgaria and Romania share the opinion and the belief that we have to achieve our goal together - that is the full EU membership in 2007, said Prime Minister Simeon Saxe-Coburg at the joint press conference with his Romanian counterpart Calin Popescu-Tariceanu.

The development of good neighbours' relations concerning the forthcoming accession of our countries to the EU was the major topic at the bilateral meeting. We shall make our best to remove some minor administrative difficulties, which still exist especially at the border checkpoints, Prime Minister Simeon Saxe-Coburg pointed out. The two countries negotiated to take particular steps as soon as possible and establish united border-control teams. This is to alleviate the efficiency of border supervision. A related working meeting between representatives of the Interior Ministries is scheduled.

At the meeting, the participants discussed specific issues on the implementation of joint infrastructure projects - Nabucco, Pan-European Corridor No4, bridges Vidin-Kalafat and Rousse-Guyeshevo. They decided that the technical parameters concerning the Danube will be considered by representatives of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs.





Roads

## **The Concession Contract of Trakia Highway was Signed**

The concession contract for the Trakia motorway was signed under condition at the Council of Ministers. The document was inked by regional minister Valentin Tserovski on behalf of the Bulgarian government and by Emil Kotsev and Costa Ferreira for the Bulgarian-Portuguese contractor. The ceremony was attended by prime minister Simeon Saxe Coburg-Gotha and high Portuguese officials.

The contract is conditional and will not become effective if the Commission for Protection of Competition, Eurostat or the financial institutions do not approve it, minister Tserovski said. Each of the parties has right to terminate the contract if the other fails to observe its commitments.

The Bulgarian state will provide EUR 168 million to the concessionaire for the start of the project and will hope to receive its money back if the concession is profitable. The construction, rehabilitation and modernisation of the Trakia motorway will be carried out in two stages. As much as EUR 590 million is needed for the first stage, the second will cost EUR 125 million. Under the project, the concessionaire will complete the construction of 188 km of the motorway and install 33 toll-collection facilities.

The concession fee to be paid to the state in the next 35 years amounts to EUR 3.808 billion, minister Tserovski said. About 58% of the income is expected to come from foreign drivers using the motorway.

## **New Logistic Terminal of Dutch Company Royal Frans Maas Group**

Prime Minister Simeon Saxe-Coburg opened a logistic terminal of Dutch company Royal Frans Maas Group. The Prime Minister cut the ribbon to inaugurate the up-to-date facility together with Peter van Vollenhoven. He is the honorary president of the International Transportation Safety Association. Deputy Prime Minister Plamen Panayotov, Transport Minister Nikolay Vassilev, Minister of Economy Milko Kovachev, ambassadors of the Netherlands, Baroness Henriette van Lynden, of the UK, Jeremy Hill, and Henk Benjamins, Chairman of the Executive Board of Royal Frans Maas Group attended the event.

Last year Royal Frans Maas Group chose Bulgaria to implement its biggest Greenfield investment in Eastern Europe. The project was started on 19 May 2004.

The new logistic terminal is near Sofia Airport. The total of the built-up surface is 14 500 square meters. The terminal is the first stage of the overall investment of the Dutch company, which amounts to EUR 15 million.

## **Copenhagen Airports Was Granted a Concession of Coastal Airports**

Copenhagen Airports have been ranked first in the contest procedure for granting a concession for our civil aviation airports for public use in Bourgas and Varna, announced the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Transport and Communications Nikolay Vassilev at a special press-conference.

This is the first concession in the system of the Ministry of Transport and Communications. The Deputy Prime Minister pointed out that the concession of the airports is an important step forward for the development of Bulgarian tourism and aviation. New terminals with longer runways will be constructed. This modernisation will enable the introduction of new destinations to the seaside resorts, and hence the quality of services will change drastically.

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Air  
transport