



Road transport

Bulgaria to chair the ECMT in 2006

Bulgaria was unanimously elected to chair the European Conference of the Ministers of Transport (ECMT) as of July 1, 2006. This emerged during the 88-th session of the Council of Ministers of ECMT, which took place in Ljubliana, Slovenia. By June 1, 2006 the country will participate in the conference management, whereby our Minister of Transport and Communications will be the Vice President. The members of ECTM are 43 countries and Bulgaria has been a full member since 1992.

Transport infrastructure, modernization of border checkpoints, liberalization of the international road transport and fight against world terrorism were amongst the main issues, discussed at the meeting.

During the conference Transport Minister Vassilev had a number of bilateral meetings with the Ministers of Transport of the USA, Russia, UK, Denmark, Norway, Hungary, Portugal, Ireland, Slovenia, Poland and Montenegro. Within these meetings the Deputy Prime Minister asked for support for turning the newly built air traffic management centre in Sofia into a regional centre for Southeastern Europe, together with Brindizi, Italy.

At his meeting with the Minister of the Public Construction, Transport and Housing of Portugal Pedro Carmona Rodrigues, Minister Vassilev negotiated an increase in the licenses quota.

During his visit in Slovenia Minister Vassilev signed a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Transport and Communications of Republic of Bulgaria and the Ministry of the Information Society of Republic of Slovenia for cooperation in the field of information, telecommunications and postal services.



Minister Vassilev

Bulgaria receives 15 bids for Danube Bridge

Fifteen national and EU member companies have submitted bids for the design and construction of Danube Bridge II, to link the Bulgarian port of Vidin, 210 kilometers (130 miles) north of Sofia, and the Romanian port of Calafat.

The pre-qualification procedure started on 7 May and was opened for applicants from all EU countries, including the ten newcomers, Romania, Turkey and Bulgaria, till June 14. Between four and eight bidders will be short-listed to reach the final stage of the tender and submit detailed bids.

According to the Transport Ministry the price will be the main criterion in selecting the winner in the tender.

The construction of the bridge is expected to start in 2005 and be completed in 2008. The total cost of the project, including the construction of the accompanying infrastructure, is EUR 230 million. Financially the project is supported by the ISPA Program of the EU, the European Investment Bank, the French Development Agency, the German KfW Bank Group, as well as by the state budget.

The Danube Bridge II is considered to be a major priority of the Bulgarian government. It has a great social and economic significance for the region and it will provide the missing link of Transport Corridor 4.



Roads



AEBTRI awarded "The Best Haulier prize" of the year 2003

On 1 June in Sofia AEBTRI bestowed the prize "The Best Haulier of the Year" for the fifth time. As official guests at the celebration presented Martin Marmy - IRU Secretary General, Deputy Minister of Transport Anelia Krushkova, Member of Parliament Antonia Parvanova, Mayor of Sliven town Iordan Lechkov, Secretary General of the Ministry of the Interior Boyko Borissov, Kiril Ermenkov - former Transport Minister and other distinguished guests.

In class freight transport the candidates were divided into four categories depending on the number of trucks they own. For each category have been awarded three prizes. Also prizes have been awarded to the best coach operators of the year.

Winners in the different categories are: category 1-5 trucks - company Stimi-97 Ltd., Botevgrad, with a manager Stilian Stoev; category 6-10 trucks - Technoengineering-96 Ltd., Botevgrad, with a manager Petyo Dilanov; category 11-20 trucks - company Stidan 97 Ltd., Sofia, with a manager Dragomir Alexandrov; category over 20 trucks - SO MAT PLC, Sofia, with a manager Ivan Popov. The best coach operator is Eurolines Bulgaria Eurobus Ltd., Sofia, with a manager Miroulub Stolarsky.

A special prize has been awarded to the National Bulgarian Television as a media which reflected in the best possible way the problems and successes of the Bulgarian international road transport companies.

For second time this year the participants in the training programme for professional competence of the IRU Academy, organized by the AEBTRI Training Centre, received their internationally recognised diplomas. They were handed by Mr. Martin Marmy.

The Executive Board of the Scientific-Technical Union on Transport (STUT) awarded AEBTRI's Secretary General Plamen Tzalkov with a Golden badge and honorary diploma-I class of the Federation of the Scientific-Technical Union for its personal contribution and special merit to the development and strengthening the STUT and deepening the collaboration between AEBTRI and the union. The prize was bestowed by the Chairman of the union Mr. Kiril Ermenkov.



The winner in category over 20 trucks - SO MAT PLC



The best coach operator - Eurolines Bulgaria Eurobus Ltd.



Mr. Martin Marmy and some of the graduates of the IRU Academy



Mr. Tzalkov receives the Golden badge and honorary diploma of STUT



Road transport

Joint Bulgarian Croatian Commission on international road transport

On 13-14 May in Sofia was held meeting of the Joint Bulgarian-Croatian Commission on road transport. Both delegations exchanged statistical information on the trade exchange between both countries during the period of 2000-2003. They stated that there is an increase during the past years but there is still room for improvement.

Both parties agreed the quota of permits for 2004 and the preliminary quota for 2005.

It was confirmed that the two regular bus lines between Bulgaria and Croatia operate without problems. As regards to the occasional passenger transport, both countries apply the INTERBUS agreement and occasional transport will be carried out according to it.

European Parliament and spokesman of Regional policy, transport and tourism Committee Mr. Bryan Simpson paid a visit to Bulgaria

Minister of Regional Development and Public Works Valentin Tserovski received the member of European Parliament and spokesman of Regional policy, Transport and Tourism Committee Mr. Bryan Simpson.

Mr. Bryan Simpson paid his visit on the invitation of Chairman of Local Self-Government, Regional Policy and Urban Development Committee Remzi Osman.

During the meeting Minister Tserovski emphasized the national priorities in the sphere of road and water supply and sewerage infrastructure and the role of attracting private investments. He presented the Ministry's policy for the development and construction of Bulgarian motorway's infrastructure as well.

Dutch invest EUR 15 million in logistics terminal in Sofia

The international logistic concern Royal Frans Maas Group has started the largest Dutch green-field investment in Eastern Europe. The company's president Hank Benjamins turned the first sod of the modern 50000-square meter logistics terminal in Sofia. The terminal, worth EUR 15 million, is located near Sofia Airport. It is expected the construction works to be completed by the end of 2004.

According to Prime Minister Simeon Saxe-Coburg, who attended the ceremony, with this project the Netherlands heads the list of investors in Bulgaria.



*PM Simeon Saxe-Coburg (C),
Transport Minister Vassilev (L)
and Mr. Hank Benjamins(R)*

Bulgaria liberalizes railway market

Deputy Prime Minister handed a termless license to Bulmarket DM Ltd. for freight haulage along the 100 km railway section Ruse - Kaspichan. The Russe-based company is first licensed private company in Bulgaria, which breaks the state monopoly on the market.

The price of license amounts to 10000 BGN. The company will also pay an annual infrastructure fee. The Bulgarian financial-industrial group Ray Holding is among the companies, willing to be granted concessions maintaining and exploitation of secondary railway lines.

The Reconstruction of the Oryahovo-Mizia road has commenced

Mr. Valentin Tserovski, Minister of Regional Development and Public Works and Mr. Christof Stock, Second secretary of the Delegation of the European Commission to Bulgaria turned the first sod of reconstruction of the Oryahovo-Mizia road.

The project "Rehabilitation and partial reconstruction of road II-15, section Mizia-Oryahovo (Bulgarian-Romanian Border)" is financed under the PHARE programme - Cross-Border Co-operation Bulgaria-Romania. The total amount of the contract is EUR 3 125 354.21. The 16.5 kilometre road leading to Oryahovo-Beket ferryboat, will be reconstructed. The project will be completed within 15 months. The deadline is 30 June 2005.



Railway transport



Roads



**Bus
transport**

New Sofia's bus station officially opened

The modern building of Sofia's bus station has officially opened doors, just next door to the central train station.

The non-stop operating facility, facing the Princess Hotel, is designed for service of all in-country destinations and those abroad too.

The brand-new bus station, spreading on an area of 7,500 sq. m, is compliant

with the European standards, President Georgi Parvanov said at its opening on 8 June.

About 50-60 buses will leave for Bulgarian and foreign destinations every day.

The bus station, worth of BGN 15 million private investments, will operate non-stop, with security guards and permanent telephone lines available for the convenience of travellers. Owners plan to launch an Internet ticket-sale system till the end of this year.



Meeting on passenger road transport between Bulgaria and Austria

On 26-27 May in Sofia was held meeting on international passenger road transport between delegations of Bulgarian Ministry of Transport and Communications and the Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovations and Technologies. Both delegations exchanged information on the passenger road transport between both countries during 2003, regular bus lines in operation and the commenced procedures for new bus lines.

Both parties agreed to apply the INTERBUS Agreement for occasional transport as of 1 June 2004. They also agreed the quota of permits for shuttle transport. Occasional transport out of the Agreement will be submitted to permit regime. Both sides considered the drafts of Agreement on regular bus passenger transport and Agreement on passenger transport other than with regular bus lines. Also the problems with the own account transport of passengers were discussed.

The Austrian delegation provided information about the introduced system for collecting road infrastructure charges and the duties/taxes for the foreign companies on passenger transport.

The National Assembly adopted the amendments to the Civil Aviation Act

The concession of coastal Burgas and Varna airports is expected to attract investments of nearly EUR 130 million over the next couple of years.

The Parliament has finally adopted the amendments to the Aviation Act, which regulate the airport concession procedures.

Bulgarian transport infrastructure, including highways, ports and railways, as well as airports' logistical terminals, will also be tabled for concession to foreign investors.

The MPs ruled also that the license for Bulgarian air carrier will be termless.



**Air
transport**

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