



## Cooperation in Strengthening Border Control

Bulgarian government approved drafts of agreements, with Serbia and Montenegro, and Macedonia, on cooperation between their border defence bodies.

Bulgaria will cooperate with the two countries in combating cross-border crime, as well as in tightening the control on the border. The cooperation will focus in particular on fighting illegal migration and related criminal offenses, and crimes related to security, public order and corruption.

The projects regulate also the order and conditions for a mutual exchange of information in the field of cooperation, as well as the rules for its protection.

In its position declared on 15 October 2003, upon closing Negotiation Chapter 24 Cooperation in the Field of Justice and Home Affairs, the EU pointed out that our country should take the commitment to tighten border control on the Union's external borders, the western border with Serbia and Montenegro and Macedonia in particular. This priority area has been constantly stressed in the course of the monitoring carried out by the European institutions.

The approval of the documents was envisaged in the National Action Plan for adopting the Schengen acquis for 2005, Part Border Control, Section Crossing External Borders.

The agreements are to cover a period of five years.

## Lessovo-Hamzabeyli Border Checkpoint Opened

Prime Minister Simeon Saxe-Coburg and his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan opened a new border checkpoint at Lessovo-Hamzabeyli. It is part of the Trans-Balkan corridor Lessovo-Yambol-Shoumen-Silistra. Lessovo-Hamzabeyli border checkpoint is the first checkpoint to be opened in Bulgaria for the last 16 years. It is the third crossing of the country with Turkey, along with Captain Andreevo checkpoint and Malko Turnovo checkpoint. The new facility exemplifies the priorities in Bulgaria's foreign policy, channelled into the construction and development of regional infrastructure, linking SEE countries.

In his speech at the opening ceremony, Prime Minister Simeon Saxe-Coburg pointed out that this was an emblematic event for the enhanced development of the bilateral relations between Bulgaria and Turkey, and outlined its significance in the context of the efforts made for the European future of the two countries.

We hope that the new border checkpoint will contribute to strengthening the exchange of goods between Bulgaria and Turkey. We hope that it will ease mutual visits. I am convinced that the productive efforts, made by the Bulgarian and Turkish authorities for the construction of this significant infrastructure site, will be seen by the population of the border regions, said the Bulgarian Prime Minister.



*Prime Minister Simeon Saxe-Coburg and his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan*



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transport

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan also elaborated on the importance of the new border checkpoint, which is evidence for the excellent cooperation between the two countries. He defined Lessovo-Hamzaleyli as the new symbol of friendship between Bulgaria and Turkey.

Bulgaria is planning to open another 15 border checkpoints by 2015 with its neighboring countries. In early May 2005, the cabinet adopted a Concept for opening new checkpoints with neighboring countries. The modernization of existing checkpoints and the gradual construction of new ones is the country's long-term national priority

The facility is estimated at EUR 6 m. It is totally funded within the state budget.

The construction of the road between Edirne and Hamzabeyli as well as the buildings of the checkpoint are finished at the Turkish side of the border. The construction and the extension of the existing road network is a priority now, enhancing the transport communication to the border checkpoint. The opening of the border checkpoint will considerably facilitate the traffic on the basic connection between Bulgaria and Turkey - which is Captain Andreevo border checkpoint. It is expected to establish favourable conditions for passengers and trucks. 100 trucks and 130 cars and buses will be able to cross daily Lessovo-Hamzabeyli border checkpoint.

The implementation of the next stage of the project will enhance the capacity of the border checkpoint up to 250 trucks

### **Bulgaria tenders contract for construction of Lyulin motorway**

Bulgaria's Road Executive Agency has invited bids for the construction of the 19 km Lyulin motorway after the tender documents were approved a week ago by the European Commission. Bids will be accepted until noon on October 11. The offers will be unsealed in the presence of the candidates 2 hours after the receipt deadline expires. According to the procurement notice posted on the website of the Bulgarian regional development ministry, the new motorway will provide a link between the Sofia Ring Road and the E-79 and E871 highways at the Daskalovo junction near the town of Pernik.

The new motorway will consist of 2 lanes in each direction with a central reservation and emergency hard shoulders. It will be constructed to a design speed of 100-110 km/h and maximum cross fall of 5 %. Reflecting the hilly terrain, the project will comprise the construction of significant number of main structures including: bridges, tunnels, overpasses, etc, says the procurement notice. The price per kilometer - 7 to 8 mln euro, is three to four times higher than the EU average due to the anticipated cost of tunnels and other route features required by the rugged terrain. The 148.45 mln euro motorway project will get 111 mln euro in EU grants and 37 mln euro in local co-financing.

The tender procedure is open for participation to member states of the European Union and Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey, Albania, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia-Montenegro.

### **7 firms shortlisted for Plovdiv-Svilengrad railway supervision contract**

Seven companies have been shortlisted for the contract to supervise the electrification of Bulgaria's Plovdiv-Svilengrad railway, said the transport ministry.

The line-up is as follows: Scetauroute S.A. (Halcrow, Patinvest Engineering J.S.C.); Consulgal Consultores de Engenharia e Gestao SA (Intecsa-Inarsa SA, Getinsa-Gabinete de Estudios Tecnicos Ingenieria SA); Obermeyer Planen+Beraten GmbH (INOCSA Ingenieria S.L, HYDER Consulting Ltd., PLANET S.A.); Transurb Technirail S.A. (Ingenieria y Economia del transporte S.A., ITALFERR SpA., Metropolitana Milanese SpA., Tecnica SpA., Holland Railconsult bv, Tractebel Development Engineering SA); Mott MacDonald Ltd.; and Tecnica y Proyectos S.A. (TYPSA) (Louis Berger SAS, SYSTRA, SGI Trademco, Rubicon Engineering Ltd.).

The 340 mln euro Plovdiv-Svilengrad rail upgrade is the biggest local project financed by EU's ISPA program. EIB has lent 150 mln euro to the venture with 153 mln euro coming



Roads



Railway  
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from ISPA and 37 mln euro from Bulgaria's state budget.

The European Commission has capped off the project supervision costs at 13 mln euro.

The commission has approved the selection of Greek construction company Terna S.A. to electrify the 37.7 km Krumovo-Parvomai section of the railway, finance minister Milen Velchev said recently but the transport ministry specified that the procedure is classified and the name of the contractor will be revealed only after pen is put to paper.

### **New terminal at Sofia International Airport to be ready by fall**

Austrian company Strabag, hired to build a new passenger terminal at the Sofia International Airport, will be able to hit the launch target specified in the building contract which is August 2005, said Bulgarian transport minister Nikolai Vasilev on Wednesday, June 15, after touring the construction site.

The new runway that is also under construction will be ready in October, said Vasilev.

The new terminal will house 32 check-ins and the offices of 29 airlines. The facility will double the hourly traffic of passengers to 2,000. The 110 mln euro terminal is co-financed with 60 mln euro by EIB.



The schedule for the construction works was threatened by delays on several occasions as Strabag twice demanded that the implementation costs are updated. However, Dutch company NACO, commissioned to consult the project, rejected the cost revisions.

The Bulgarian side will not acknowledge any contingency expenses claimed by the contractor, deputy transport minister Sofia Kasidova said on Wednesday. Strabag can take any possible claims to an arbitrator, said the official.

NACO is yet to present to the transport ministry its conclusive findings about the defects in the runway tarmac detected last year.

The ministry will soon sign a 12 mln lev contract with local company Moststroy for the construction of the road linking the city with the new terminal.(Dnevnik)

### **Bulgaria grants concession for Somovit port**

Varna-based Oktopod-S won on Thu, June 23, the concession contract for the Somovit terminal of the Rousse port, on the Danube. Under the 30-year arrangement, Oktopod-S will invest 2 mln levs in the first 2 years of the concession and 7 mln levs in the first 10. The average annual cargo turnover target for the first 10 years is 362,500 tons. In related news, the government decided to award a 35-year concession for the Silistra ferry terminal.

### **Bulgarian-Slovenian Joint Meeting on International Road Transport**

On the 14th and 15th of June 2005 a meeting of the Bulgarian-Slovenian Joint Committee on International Road Transport was held. Both delegations exchanged information and statistical data concerning the development of the road transport and the economic relations between both countries for the period 1997-2004. According to the statistical data presented it was established that a constant increase in the trade exchange has occurred and that this fact has significant influence on the transport flows between both countries. Upon request of the Bulgarian side the quota of permits for road transport of goods for the years 2005 and 2006 was increased. The Slovenian delegation asked the Bulgarian delegation for information with regards to the safety and security issues in the field of road transport within the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria as well as for the competent enforcement bodies in this field. The Bulgarian delegation informed in detail regarding the competent enforce-



ment bodies in the field of road transport security and safety on the Bulgarian territory as well as for their activities aimed to improve considerably the safety and security on the roads. Both delegations stressed on the importance of this issue and agreed to continue to discuss the security and safety issues in the field of road transport as well as to strengthen their cooperation in this aspect.

### **Bulgarian- Czech Joint Meeting on International Road Transport**

On the 8th and 9th of June 2005 a meeting of the Bulgarian- Czech Joint Committee on International Road Transport was held in Prague. Representatives of both transport administrations noted positive developments in the field of bilateral trade. The delegations agreed the quotas of permits for passenger and goods transport and expressed readiness to reconsider the amount of the quota and its eventual increase upon request of one of the parties. It was confirmed that the expiration date of validity of the permits for the respective year is 31 of January of the next calendar year. Both delegations noted that they hadn't been informed by their hauliers for serious problems in the transports between the countries. A detailed review was made of the operating regular bus lines between Bulgaria and the Czech Republic. It was stressed that the occasional transports of passengers are carried out in accordance with the Agreement INTERBUS.

### **Bulgarian- Hungarian Joint Meeting on International Road Transport**

On the 6th of June 2005 a meeting of the Bulgarian- Hungarian Joint Committee on International Road Transport was held in Sofia. On the basis of the statistical data it was stated that the circulation of goods between Bulgaria and Hungary had been increasing continuously and the share of the Bulgarian goods transport operators is considerably higher. The Bulgarian party submitted information for the problems of the Bulgarian hauliers when they pass through the Hungarian border crossing points and the cases of non-compliance on behalf of the border officers of the joint instruction of the IRU and the Hungarian Customs. The representatives of the Hungarian Competent Authorities committed themselves to carry out checks and to inform their colleagues of the results.

### **Additional Turkish Licenses Have Been Negotiated**

Turkey will provide 7,000 additional licenses for return cargo for Bulgaria this year. This was a statement made by the Deputy Minister Anelia Krushkova after the end of her visit, which took place within the framework of the Bulgarian-Turkish Intergovernmental Commission, gathering in Ankara.

This additional quota will increase the total number of Turkish licenses for return cargo for 2005 to 13,000.

The 2005 quota of 6,000 licenses for return cargo has already been exhausted and the negotiation of additional licenses was more than necessary for the automobile market in Bulgaria.

The Deputy Minister Krushkova and the representatives of the Turkish Delegation agreed to hold a meeting of the Joint Bulgarian-Turkish Commission on Transport in July this year in Sofia - it should start the preparation for bilateral liberalization of return transportation.

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