



**Road
transport**

Annual meeting of Intergovernmental commission (IGC) TRACECA

The Fifth Annual Meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission (IGC) TRACECA was held in May. The conference ended with the signing of Memorandum of Understanding between the International Road Federation (IRF) and TRACECA IGC, the adoption of a Sofia Declaration and the Final Resolutions on all decisions made during the session. On all issues on the agenda the participating countries reached an agreement and adopted as follows:

- the budget of the organization for 2007;
- the members and rules regulating the work of the audit group that is to exercise control over the budget implementation;
- amendments to the Rules of Procedure of TRACECA IGC with a view to introducing an observer status and associated membership for international organizations;
- TRACECA's Strategy for Development of International Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia for the period up to 2015;
- decisions on the further institutionalization of TRACECA IGC and its development as an international organization;
- projects under the 2006 Action Plan of EU TRACECA programme, which includes 4 projects worth EUR 13,5 mln.

Ministers Mutafchiev and Berchanu discussed the project Danube Bridge II

The Agreement between the Government of Rumania and the Government of Republic of Bulgaria regarding the cross-border traffic of individuals, transport means, equipment, and materials in the process of constructing and putting into operation of a new combined (railway and road) bridge between the two countries on the river Danube will be signed in August this year. This was negotiated by the Minister of Transport Peter Mutafchiev and his Rumanian colleague Radu Berchanu during a meeting, which took place in Vidin today. The expectations are the parliaments of the two countries to sign the agreement in September. The tenders for project executor will be opened on September 15, 2006, and in the period May-June 2007 the construction of the bridge must be started.

The both ministers discussed also the cooperation on the initiative for building of air space functional bloc (BULROM FAB). The date, September 20-30, 2006, for the 9th session of the mixed intergovernmental Bulgarian-Rumanian commission for economical and scientific-technical cooperation was also negotiated. During the meeting the accomplishing of projects for navigation and shipping improvement on the river Danube was also matter of discussion.

Minister Mutafchiev offered a meeting with their colleague, the transport minister of Greece in the autumn of 2007, on which the building of the Pan-European corridor IV should be discussed.

New requirements for type approval and vehicle initial registration

In connection with the engagements undertaken during the negotiations for the Accession of Bulgaria to the European Union, an introduction of requirements in the Bulgarian law, for type approval and initial registration is imminent. According to these necessities all newly produced vehicles must be equipped with engines adequate to ecological standard "Euro4". This is a must to produce, sell, or register a new vehicle and do not concern second hand vehicles, which have been already registered.



By order of the Minister of Transport Peter Mutafchiev, in order all interested persons to be informed, the director-executive of executive agency “Automobile administration” sent an information letters to:

- the chief of the Traffic Police Alexi Stratiev;
- the chairman and the director-executive of “Association of Automobile Importers in Bulgaria” Stoian Jelev and Stefan Hadjinikolov;
- the branch organizations of the automobile sector.

Over EUR 2 bln are needed for the construction of the Bulgarian motorways

Over EUR 2 bln are needed for the construction of Struma, Maritsa, Black Sea and Hemus motorways, says a report on the economic feasibility of the implementation of Public-Private Partnership in the implementation of infrastructure projects in the Transport Sector. It was discussed at the session of the Council of Coordination, Control and Implementation of Infrastructure Projects of National Significance, chaired by Prime Minister Sergei Stanishev. The analysis of the Ministries of Finance and of Regional Development and Public Works say that Maritsa motorway (114 km long) will cost about EUR 361 mln. Part of the motorway has been constructed with budget funding and it is better to have it finalised with national co-funding and EU funds. Under the government’s programme, Maritsa motorway is scheduled to be ready in 2009.

Struma and Hemus motorways will preferably be constructed through Public-Private Partnership, says the report. Pre-investment research has been carried out for Struma motorway. According to expert assessments, about EUR 600 mln will be allotted for the construction of the motorway. It is scheduled to be finalised by the end of 2012.

Hemus motorway also has pre-investment research, and over EUR 1 bln will be channelled into its construction.

Pre-investment research has been carried out for Black Sea motorway. The authorities have assigned the drafting of its Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The project’s indicative cost is about EUR 400 mln. The motorway will be ready in 2017.

New section of Trakia motorway was opened for traffic

Prime Minister Sergei Stanishev inaugurated a section of Trakia motorway in Stara Zagora district. The newly opened part of the motorway is 15,640 km long. It has been constructed under the project for Further Construction of Trakia motorway.

The Prime Minister was welcomed by Minister of Regional Development and Public Works Assen Gagauzov, Stara Zagora District Governor Maria Neykova, and Mayor Evgeni Zhelev. The event is not only of regional importance, but of national one, said Sergei Stanishev in his opening speech. Without the necessary infrastructure we can hardly talk about attracting foreign investors and about comfortable transport for Bulgarians. The government is making active efforts to draft a comprehensive strategy and I can tell you that within the next two weeks, it will present in public the draft document projecting the construction of 700 km by 2015.



Prime Minister Sergei Stanishev inaugurated a section of Trakia motorway

Our shared goal is the construction of good environment for citizens and the business, the Prime Minister pointed out. Minister Gagauzov, for his part, expressed his conviction that the next stage in the construction of the project will be implemented within the deadline and according to quality standards.

The improvement of road conditions will enhance road safety and the comfort of citizens. The implementation of the project will reduce the distance, the journey time and transportation costs for those who use Trakia motorway, which is a factor for the development of the economy and tourism in the country.



Railways

Bulgaria launched its biggest infrastructure project

The biggest infrastructure project was launched in Bulgaria, accounting for EUR 340 mln, for the design and construction of a railway line and the electrification of Krumovo-Purvomai stretch. This is the first stage of the project for the Reconstruction and Electrification of Plovdiv-Svilengrad railways – Greek/Turkish border and its optimisation for 160km/h. The project is of great importance, because it covers parts of Pan-European Transport Corridors 4 and 9.

The effective implementation of the works under the contract with Greek company Terna started after the successful finalization of preliminary procedures and requirements.

Considerable progress has been made under the project for the construction of a new combined bridge over the Danube River at Vidin (in Bulgaria) and Calafat (in Romania). After the Delegation of the EC to Sofia approved the tender file for the appointment of contractors, on 16 May 2006, today the five applicants were invited to submit their offers. The short-listed participants are: Hochtief, Germany - OHL, Spain; FCC, Spain; VINCI, France - Glavbolgarstroy, Bulgaria - Moststroy, Bulgaria; Zublin, Germany - Alpine Mayreder, Austria - Eiffel, France; Bouygues, France - Trasstroy Varna, Bulgaria - Rizzani de Eccher, Italy.

The offers are to be submitted by 15 September 2006, and will be opened on 18 September 2006.

This is one of the biggest and complex infrastructure projects implemented by the Ministry of Transport. The project's total value amounts to EUR 236 mln; EUR 226 mln of the funds will be allotted for the construction works, while EUR 10 mln – for the design analysis, design and consultations. The project is also funded under the PHARE and ISPA Programmes of the EU, the European Investment Bank (EIB), the KfW, the French Development Agency (AFD) and Bulgaria's state budget.

The Minister of Transport has to appoint a committee for the evaluation of the offers, in accordance with the Delegation of the EC to Bulgaria. The construction works are scheduled to be launched in May 2007. The facilities are expected to be constructed for 38 months. The new bridge is part of the regional infrastructure projects of the Stability Pact and its construction will remove one more hindrance to the development of Pan-European Corridor 4. The construction of the bridge at Vidin-Calafat is among the government's top priorities.

An Agreement on the establishment of a modern railway network in Southeastern Europe

Within the meeting of the SEECP heads of state and government, held in Thessaloniki, an Agreement on the establishment of a modern railway network in the region was signed. Bulgaria was represented by Minister of Transport Petar Mutafchiev, member of the government delegation, headed by Prime Minister Sergei Stanishev. The Agreement, approved at the cabinet's session on 27 April, regulates the cooperation between Southeastern European countries in the field of railway transport. It provides for the establishment of a high performance railway network, consisting of 16 railway lines for passengers and freights. Five of them include Bulgarian routes, through several Bulgarian cities – Sofia, Plovdiv, Stara Zagora, Varna, Burgas, Gorna Oryahovitsa, Vidin and Rousse. This network will offer faster, competitive railway transport of better quality for less time. The Agreement concerns the railway lines in the region that are of good enough quality to join the high performance network, as well as lines representing part of the Pan-European network, the Pan-European Corridors or the Southeastern European lines; by 2020 trains in the region will move at a speed of 160 km/h. In some stretches, it will reach 220 km/h.

The document outlines measures for the improvement of the quality of services in railway transport, as well as the application of measures and actions for the reduction of the time needed for border procedures, with a view to facilitating the movement of trains at border checkpoints.

The Agreement regulates the establishment of a steering committee, including representatives of the countries as well as representatives of their national railway organisations. It defines, coordinates, lends assistance, enables and monitors the implementation of actions necessary for the achievement of the goals.



Roads



Water
transport

EA “Maritime Administration” an the Maritime and Coastguard Agency of the United Kingdom signed an Agreement Memorandum

The Executive Agency “Maritime Administration” and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency of the United Kingdom signed an agreement memorandum.

The last meeting of the administrative committee was on theme “Putting into operation of a complete system for quality control in Executive Agency “Maritime Administration” and its implementation has been started in 2003 with the support of PHARE Program.

The project aims to strengthen the functions of EAMA, so that an adequate application of the common European law to be ensured, before the planed accession of our country to the European Union in 2007.

The goal is to put into operation a computerized system for quality control, in order to achieve the measurable quality indexes, required from the European Union. All activities to the project were successfully accomplished in accordance with the time table. The successful audit carried out by SGS in May this year is indicative for the achievement of the targets of the initiative.

The Minister of Transport attended the signing of the agreement memorandum. The agreement aims to widen the cooperation between the two countries for achievement and preserving high standards of maritime safety.

With the international and the European forums EAMA and MCA strives for the introduction of improvements in the field of shipping safety, in order to reduce the number of the casualties and to avoid the contamination of the sea environment.

BILATERAL AGREEMENTS



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Bulgarian-Russian Joint Committee on International Road Transport

The eighth meeting of the Bulgarian – Russian Working Party for Transport within the Intergovernmental Bulgarian – Russian Committee for Commercial-Economic and Scientific-Technical Co-operation was held on 11-12 May 2006 in Moscow.

The exchanged statistic information confirmed the steady tendency for increasing the volume of goods transport by road.

The Working Party for Transport proposed the intergovernmental committee to discuss the opportunity for facilitation of the procedure for issuing visas for Bulgarian and Russian drivers of trucks carrying out international transport operations.

It was decided that in case of claims by the international road carriers concerning their infringements the Ministries of Transport of both countries would provide duly exchange of data, as well of information about the changes in the border, customs etc. requirements and procedures.

Bulgarian-Latvian Joint Committee on International Road Transport

A meeting of the Bulgarian Latvian Joint Committee on International Road Transport was held on 15 and 16 June 2006 in Sofia. The delegations came to an agreement about the final contingent of permits without payment of road charges. A decision was taken for liberalization of the bilateral and transit transport operations as from 1 January 2007. The Latvian delegation gave a comprehensive explanation about the implementation of Regulation 684/92/EEC of the EU in their country.

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

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