

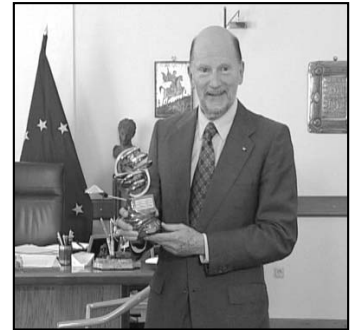


IRU

Bulgarian Premier became an honorary member of International Road Transport Union (IRU)

The International Road Transport Union (IRU) awarded Bulgarian Prime Minister Simeon Saxe-Coburg Gotha with its supreme sign "Golden badge" as an honorary member of IRU for his extraordinary contribution to the development of international road transport of goods and passengers.

Mr. Plamen Tzalkov, Secretary General of the Association of the Bulgarian Enterprises for International Road Transport and the Roads (AEBTRI) bestowed officially the prize on the Prime Minister on 24 September, together with the honorary statue "Best haulier of the year". For its 56 years of history IRU awarded for the first time a Bulgarian statesman with the Golden Star.



Simeon Saxe-Coburg Gotha

The Premier held a meeting with IRU's Secretary General Marten Marmi last year when a large part of pending problems regarding cargo transiting through Bulgaria was solved.

The IRU Road Safety Charter for transport operators signed by 45 transport companies

A seminar "European integration of Bulgaria - challenges and perspectives before Bulgarian road hauliers" took place in Peshtera town. Six unions participated in the forum, organised by the National Transport Chamber, the Union of Road Hauliers and the Association of the Bulgarian Enterprises for International road Transport and the Roads (AEBTRI). During the event 45 transport companies signed the IRU Road Safety Charter for transport operators, Georgi Petrov, Chairman of the Executive Board of AEBTRI announced.

Transport Minister Nikolay Vassilev presented Bulgarian transport legislation state in Brussels

Minister of Transport and Communications Nikolay Vassilev met Loyola de Palacio, EU Commissioner on Transport and Energy and Vice-President of the European Commission in charge of relations with the European Parliament, during his two-day visit in Kingdom of Belgium.

Minister Vassilev presented her the progress achieved by the Ministry of Transport and Communications in terms of the harmonisation of Bulgarian legislation in the field of transport with the requirements of the European Union.

During his visit in Brussels Transport Minister had a meeting with Secretary General of UNICE (Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederations of Europe) Philippe de Buck.



Minister Vassilev



Road
transport

Official visit of Minister of Transport Nikolay Vassilev to Armenia

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Transport Nikolay Vassilev met his Armenian counterpart Andranik Manukyan within framework of the official visit of the Bulgarian President Georgi Parvanov to Armenia.

The two transport ministers discussed the opening of a direct flight route Sofia - Erevan during their meeting. Regular flights between Bulgaria and Armenia are likely to start in April 2005. This has been agreed by the both sides.

Bulgaria is ready to start a ferry-boat line Varna - Port Caucasus - it became clear during the talks between the two ministers. The final decision of Armenia is being expected.

Nikolay Vassilev and Andranik Manukyan discussed the possibilities to accelerate the development of the transport relations between the two countries due to the exceptionally large exchange of goods between Armenia and Bulgaria. For the last three years Bulgarian export to Armenia has an increase of over a hundred times.

New multi-lane road connects Bulgaria and Greece

The Kulata border checkpoint, connecting Bulgaria and Greece, was reopened after overhaul of the road system.

A total of 16 lane lead to and from Bulgaria, and the road is equipped with four truck, one bus and three automobile lanes. The passengers' traffic will be monitored by 24 video cameras, able to identify for three minutes.

The ministers of finance Milen Velchev and of Interior Georgi Petkanov inaugurated the new facilities at the Kulata border checkpoint.

The construction on site was launched in the beginning of the 90s, but seven years later was frozen due to lack of financing.

Balkan Transport Corridor section envisaged for concession

A joint Bulgarian-Serbian Committee on the construction of the highway connecting Bulgarian capital Sofia and Serbian Nis held its second session on 4-5 October in Belgrade.

Participants agreed that the fastest way to construct the Balkan-situated of the European Transport Corridor 10 section is to be granted on concession.

European and Japanese funds are eager to finance the infrastructure project. Italian and Turkish companies have shown interest in the construction under concession. The expected cost of 60 km section on Bulgarian territory amounts to approximately EUR 190 million.

Bulgaria Offers Highways for Concession

Bulgaria has decided to offer two of its biggest highways for concession. The concession of the Hemus and Trakia highways will be given by the end of 2004, according to Regional Development Minister Valentin Tserovski.

Tserovski explained that at present the government is working on the Trakia highway concession contract. The European practice in that field and especially the French model are being thoroughly explored by the Bulgarian authorities.

BGN 170 million granted for national road network

Approximately BGN 170 million will be invested by the end of the year for the rehabilitation of 300 second and third class road sections in Bulgaria. That was announced by the Regional Development Minister Valentin Tserovski during the opening of newly rehabilitated 4.5-km section in Pernik on 30 September. The Ministry provided BGN 1.4 million for the project.



Roads



Roads

Minister Tserovski presented forthcoming road infrastructure projects

During the Bulgarian-Greek business forum Minister Tserovski presented possibilities for participation in road projects of mutual interest. He underlined that both countries should have common vision for the development of the trans-european transport corridors running through their territories and for construction of a homogeounous road infrastructure.

Together with the mutual projects which are under construction, Minister Tserovski informed the participants of the forthcoming projects, such as Lulin and Struma motorways along Trans-European Corridor 4 and the rehabilitation of Hainboaz pass on corridor 9 which will be finalised by the end of this year.

In the forum participated the Greek President Stefanopolus and the Bulgarian President Parvanov.



Direct freight train on the Balkans

The railway administrations of Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro, Bulgaria and Turkey agreed to put in operation first direct freight railway line Ljubljana - Istanbul - Ljubljana. The document for the opening of the line along the European Transport Corridor 10 was officially signed by the heads of the railway administrations in Slovenian capital on 30 September.

During the experimental period of 3 months the train East Express will travel once a week. According to the schedule the destination of 1450 km will be covered for 60 hours

Bulgaria opens an airports concession tender

Bulgaria invited a tender for concessions of Black Sea coast cities of Varna and Burgas. All candidate concessionaires will be required to deposit a EUR 300,000 bank guarantee and present an investment rating from an agency. The investment offer will be evaluated by the following criteria: Investment Proposal, with 40 percent relative weight, Business Proposal, with 30 percent relative weight and Concession Fee Proposal, with 30 percent relative weight.

The concessionaires will collect all airport fees, use airport properties and operate the site's exploitation and management, excluding the Air Traffic Authority Service. Concession contracts are expected to be signed before the start of the busy summer season in 2005. The 35-year contract will have an option for a 15-year extension. The concessions on the airports in Varna and Burgas will be granted to a single candidate.

Joint Bulgarian-Hungarian Commission on road transport

On 7-8 September in Budapest was held meeting of the Joint Bulgarian-Hungarian Commission on road transport. According to the statistical information submitted by the delegations there is a permanent increase of the trade exchange between both countries during the last few years. Both sides agreed the final quota of permits for 2004 and a preliminary quota of permits for 2005.

Hungarian delegation informed that Hungarian competent authorities check up strictly all heavy vehicles for permits in accordance with the requirements of ECMT resolutions.

Joint Bulgarian Romanian Commission on road transport

On 27 September in Sofia was held a meeting of the Joint Bulgarian-Romanian Commission on international road transport. After exchanging statistical data about road transport between both countries transport permit regime was considered. Both sides agreed a preliminary quota of permits for 2005.

Bulgarian delegation put a question about the limited number of points in Romania where weekly vignettes can be bought. Romanian side committed itself on eliminating the present difficulties.



Railway
transport



Air
transport



New road traffic fines in force as of 1 October 2004

1. For exceeding the speed limits the fines are the following:
 - up to 20 km/h - 5 BGN
 - from 20-30 km/h including - 10 BGN
 - from 30-40 km/h including - 20 BGN
 - from 40-50 km/h including - 30 BGN; for a repeated offense - depriving of the right to operate motor vehicle for a period of 3 months and a fine of 150 BGN.
 - over 50 km/h - 70 BGN; for a repeated offense - depriving of the right to operate motor vehicle for a period of 3 months and a fine of 150 BGN.
2. A fine amounting to 40 BGN is imposed on a driver for:
 - 2.1. irregularly passing though the pedestrian path;
 - 2.2. irregularly passing along a stop of vehicles for public passenger transport or along stopping or stopped bus\coach;
 - 2.3. passing in spite of the fact that the traffic lights signal does not allow the passing;
 - 2.4. driving a vehicle that is not a motor vehicle without the necessary light reflection appliances;
 - 2.5. driving the motor vehicle with worn-out or torn-out tyres;
 - 2.6. using mobile phone while driving of the vehicle, unless the driver uses hands-free device,
 - 2.7. not complying with the requirement to use safety belt or helmet;
 - 2.8. irregularly staying or parking in the zone of the pedestrian path, a bus/coach stop for public passenger transport or on junction;
 - 2.9. staying or parking as a second row in the active lane of traffic next to stopped motor vehicles along the traffic direction.
3. A fine amounting to 20 BGN is imposed on a passenger for not complying with the obligation to use safety belt or helmet.
4. In case of infringements of minor importance, which are found at the moment of their performance the driver could be sanctioned on the spot with a fine up to 50 BGN. If the driver contests the infringement or does not agree with the amount of the fine imposed or refuses to sign the relevant document of the fine a statement is made up.

In case of a violation of traffic regulations committed by foreign drivers of road vehicles, when additional procedures are required (proving of drinking alcohol, guilty causing of an road accident etc.) the penalty is to be paid on the spot.

In cases, when such procedures are not required the police officer draws up a statement and puts a stamp to the driver's passport next to the last stamp for the entry in the Republic of Bulgaria. The stamp represents a rectangle (dimensions 20 mm x 10 mm), within which is placed the name of the respective police office and the distinguishing number of the police officer - holder of this seal followed by the amount of the penalty imposed. These amounts are collected at the border crossing points. According to article 33, paragraph 5 of the Regulation for the Border Crossing Points from 05.05.1997, last edition from 12.01.2001 "TIR - Tourist Information and Registration" is authorised to collect these penalties.

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