



Road transport

Bulgarian transport legislation in conformity with the EU requirements

The consultations of EC experts on the EU Monitoring Report on Bulgaria's progress in its preparation en route to EU membership, held on 28 September in Brussels, reached the conclusion that Transport sector is not a problem area, and that the European requirements concerning Chapter 9 Transport Policy have been fulfilled to a large extent by the Bulgarian legislation.

A full access to the EU transport market can be granted once the *acquis*, including social, technical, fiscal and environment law, has been fully adopted and applied.

In road transport, the social law covers mainly the requirements for becoming a passengers and freight car driver. The candidates have to meet the criteria for financial stability, professional competence and trustworthiness, which will guarantee the quality and safety of the transport services.

A four-year transitional period has been set for the Bulgarian drivers in order to enable them to achieve the necessary competitiveness and thus secure their financial stability.

Another major aspect of the social law in road transport is the necessary rest. If the drivers become aware of the need of rest and stick to the rules regulating it, this will no doubt improve road safety, quality of the services and the working conditions. Bulgaria has also negotiated a 7-year transitional period for harmonising its national road network with the European requirements.

Bulgaria has already met the EU fiscal criterion by introducing the toll system for its republican roads. The revenues from the collected charges are intended to cover major infrastructure spending channelled for maintenance, rehabilitation, modernisation and reconstruction.

In September this year the government adopted amendments to the Act on roads which exclude the possibility to impose vignette and toll charges on heavy goods vehicles for the same section of the republican network. With a view to the fiscal alignment in road transport, an amendment to the Act on local taxes and fees is to be adopted. The amendment relates to the vehicle tax and the fee for the use of the road infrastructure, which is to be paid on the principle of justice and non-discrimination.

The government's major goal in the sphere of railway transport aims to improve the functioning of the railway sector in the new market conditions. Since 2000 the regulatory framework has been completely changed. 25 regulatory documents outline the main activities by introducing the European requirements for liberalisation and equality in the access to the infrastructure, clear safety rules, licenses, etc. The top priorities in the sector till 2012 include reforms in the railway sector, liberalisation and development of the transport market, integration with the European railway transport system, training of staff, etc.

A significant progress has been made in the area of air transport. As of now, 9 licenses have been issued to air carriers. An independent body that will investigate air accidents and will apply the EU air law has also been set up.

New governing body of Ministry of Transport and Communications

After the elections for 40th National Assembly in September has been appointed new governing body of the Ministry of Transport and Communications. Here we present brief biographical evidence of the new Minister and his deputy in charge of road transport.



Minister of Transport and Communications

Mr. Peter Vasilev Mutafchiev is born on 10 April 1961. He graduated the University of Chemical Technology and Metallurgy in 1988, major: Metallurgy.

His professional career started as vice-manager and general manager of Brake Equipment Works in 1988. Till 1997 he was chairman of the Municipality Council in Parvomai town. From 1997 up to 2005 Mr. Mutafchiev was elected Member of Parliament in the 38th, 39th, and 40th National Assembly. During that time he worked as:

- Secretary of the Parliamentary group of Coalition for Bulgaria
- Member of the Committee for Local Government, Regional Development, and Public Works
- Deputy Chairman of the Committee for Transport and Telecommunications in the 39th National Assembly
- Chairman of the Parliamentary Friendship Group with

Jordan in the 39th National Assembly

- Deputy Chairman of the Parliamentary Friendship Group with the People's Republic of China in the 38th National Assembly

This year he was appointed Minister of Transport and Communications.

Mr. Mutafchiev is Member of the Supreme Council of the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP) and chairman of the BSP District Council - Plovdiv. He is married with one child.



Deputy Minister of Transport and Communications

Mr. Georgi Danailov Petarneichev is born on 23 April 1949.

He graduated the National Sports Academy in 1989, first major: Motor sport, second major: Pedagogy.

His professional career started as a mechanic in the state road transport enterprise, Peshtera town in 1970. Later on he joined the traffic police in Pazardzik town where he worked as an inspector on roadworthiness tests. As of 1973 Mr. Petarneichev worked as an inspector in State Autocarriage - Road Transport Enterprise in Pazardzik city and afterwards in State road transport enterprise Peshtera city consecutively as head of sport-technical center, deputy director and director in Peshtera Transport as director. After graduation till 1992 he worked as a manager of Dafko Trans Ltd. In 1992 he was appointed as mayor of Peshtera city municipality. Up to 2005 he was chairman of the Road transport Hauliers Union. This year after the elections for the 40th

National Assembly he was elected as a Member of Parliament and member of the Committee for Transport and Communication, and after that was appointed Deputy Minister of Transport and Communications in charge of Road Transport.

As of 1994 Mr. Petarneichev is Member of the Managing Board of AEBTRI.

He is honoured master of motor sport and was motor sport champion of Bulgaria for 7 years. Mr. Petarneichev is married with two children.

EC approved the documents of supervision over Lyulin motorway

The delegation of the European Commission to Bulgaria approved the documents of the international tender for independent construction supervision under the project for the construction of Lyulin motorway. The tender announcement is expected to be published on the EC's web page. Afterwards the Roads Agency at the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works will start collecting application forms.

The financing memorandum provides for the funds for the construction of the 19-kilometre highway section and for the independent construction supervision.

In June 2005, the procedure for collecting offers for the construction of Lyulin Highway was launched. The deadline for filing offers is 26 October 2005.

Lyulin Highway is part of transport Corridor No IV and is connected with Sofia's ring road.

The project's value is EUR 148,45 m. EUR 111,338 m of the sum is a grant from the EC's budget, and EUR 37,112 m comes from Bulgaria.



Roads



EC approved the shortlist of the contractors for Danube Bridge 2

The European Commission approved the short list of the companies applying for the planning and construction of the Danube Bridge 2. The tender documents on the construction of the Bridge are to be approved by the financing institutions. In line with the EC's procedures, the short-listed companies will be informed in due time about their tender files. The contract with the selected contractor will be signed by mid-2006. The deadline for the construction of the bridge is 38 months.

All financing institutions have so far provided the necessary funds for the construction of the Bridge. The expropriation procedures are also over and the necessary construction permits have been acquired. The tender files for the construction and supervision of the Bridge, revised in compliance with the EC's recommendations, have been prepared and sent for approval.

The supervision tender is expected to start by mid-November 2005 and the contract signed by mid-2006. The construction and supervision contracts concerning the relevant road and railway infrastructure are planned to be signed as early as the end of 2006. The construction of the adjacent infrastructure is expected to take 2 years and will be completed at the same time as the construction of the Bridge - in 2009.

Vidin (Bulgaria)- Calafat (Romania) Danube Bridge Project is one of the biggest and most complicated infrastructure projects managed by the Bulgarian Ministry of Transport. It includes the planning and the construction of the bridge with four lanes and one railroad, as well as the construction of the adjacent road and railway infrastructure. The latter includes the construction of a new freight railway station and a new 7 km railway line.

The project totals EUR 236 m, EUR 226 m of which goes for the construction works and EUR 10 m are channelled for pre-project research, planning and consultative support. It is financially supported by PHARE and ISPA Programmes of the European Union, the European Investment Bank, KfW Bankengruppe (KfW banking group), the French Agency for Development (AFD) and Bulgaria's state budget.

Bulgaria to receive EUR 33 m for cross-border cooperation with Greece, Romania and Turkey

At its session, the European Integration Council (EIC), chaired by Prime Minister Sergei Stanishev, approved projects under the PHARE programme for 2005 related to cross-border cooperation with Greece, Romania and Turkey. They amount to EUR 33 m.

EUR 20 m of the funds will be channelled into cross-border cooperation with Greece, EUR 8 m - with Romania, and EUR 5 m - with Turkey. Bulgaria's financial participation consists of co-funding under the projects with investment component. For the cross-border cooperation with Greece it amounts to EUR 4,050 m, with Romania - EUR 2,05 m, and with Turkey - EUR 950 000.

The funds will be channelled into the improvement of transport infrastructure, employment, social policy and education, environmental protection, economic activity and cross-border relations on local level through a joint fund for small People-to-People projects.

The projects mainly aim to enable social and economic cohesion and the development of neighbouring countries, encouragement of employment in border areas, improvement of cooperation and contribution to stability and security, strengthening public and cultural relations.

European Affairs Minister Meglena Kuneva acquainted the members of the EIC with the meetings and consultations of the EC in Bulgaria related to the Monitoring Report. She pointed out that she had introduced the EC representatives to what had been done in any of the 5 areas in which shortcomings had been indicated and she had explained to them that the Bulgarian parliament worked at a fast rate to adopt the laws needed for our EU membership.

The development of 2006 Action Plan at the Strategy for Accelerating Bulgaria's Accession to the EU has to be priority, said Prime Minister Sergei Stanishev. He believes that this will give another piece of evidence for the cabinet's major priority - the EU membership on 1 January 2007.



Roads

EUR 12,3 m granted to Bulgaria under Phare for recovery from the floods

The PHARE Managing Committee in Brussels approved the financial draft under PHARE National Programme 2005 Part III - programme for the recovery from the damages caused by the floods in Bulgaria. It amounts to EUR 12,3 m. The funds are granted by the European Commission in relation to the Bulgarian government's request for assistance on the part of the EU within the PHARE Programme and the Solidarity Fund.

The sum of EUR 12,3 m will be channelled into two projects, developed by the Bulgarian administration, based on the assessment of flood damages and the conclusions of the EC expert mission, held from 26 to 29 July 2005.

The first project - grant scheme for the recovery from the floods, is of EUR 9,150 m total value, and will be co-funded by the state budget with EUR 3 m. The scheme will directly assist local authorities and public organisations in the recovery of transport infrastructure - roads, bridges, railways; environmental protection technical facilities - embankments, water supply and sewerage systems; and public infrastructure - schools, nurseries and medical centres.

The second projects, Sustainable Crisis Management on Local and Central Level, is intended to strengthen the capacity of newly established Ministry of Disaster Management Policy and the Civil Protection Agency in the prevention and management of crises and natural disasters.

BILATERAL AGREEMENTS

Bulgarian - Serbian Joint Committee on Road Transport

Bulgarian - Serbian Joint Committee on International Road Transport was held on 13 and 14 October 2005 in Sofia. A decision was taken to increase the quota of permits and to transfer the bilateral and transit permits into universal. The Serbian Party announced that actions have been undertaken for regulating the problem with the implementation of radioactivity controls. At the border crossing points Horgos, Batrovci and Gradina they are already working 24 hours. It is foreseen that till the end of November the radioactivity controls will be carried out 24 hours at all border crossing points from Customs officers and the charge for the check will be unified and considerably lower, as there won't be intermediaries as up to now. Serbian Authorities informed that the list of "risky" countries, in which according to them, the influence of the Chernobyl accident is the biggest will be revised and eventually removed, and the list of goods subject to radioactivity control - decreased with about 80 %. It is expected that at the beginning of next year local devices for radioactivity checks are to be introduced, which will accelerate border passing of vehicles.

Bulgarian - Polish Joint Committee on Road Transport

Bulgarian - Polish Joint Committee on International Road Transport was held on 8 and 9 September 2005 in Sofia. The exchanged statistical data for the period 2000 - 2004 confirmed the continued increase of trade between Bulgaria and Poland, which had a strong influence on international transport.

Both delegations specified the requirements for the documents, which are to be presented when using hired vehicles or vehicles on lease.

The Polish delegation explained that on entering of vehicles at the territory of Poland from another country - member of EU there is no restriction for the quantity of fuel in the manufacturer's tanks of the vehicles. In other cases there are restrictions of 200 litres for goods vehicles and of 600 litres for buses. There are three active regular bus lines and there are no serious infringements in their exploitation.

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