

TRANSPORT

The basic goals of the national transport policy are focused on sustainable development of the road and railway infrastructure of national and international importance, improvement of the transport safety, encouragement of maritime and inland waterway navigation, integration of national transport system in the EU transport networks, achievement of balance and development of links between different transport modes.

Achivement of these goals is a pre-condition for sustainable and balanced long-term economic growth. The improvement of existing infrastructure and the development of transport links in the direction of the Trans-European transport corridors passing through the territory of Bulgaria will increase passenger and cargo flows. This will have an immediate positive impact on the national economic development, the growth of employment and the prosperity. The development of environmentally friendly transport and the extensive construction of by-passes encircling urban settings will contribute to achieving ecological balance and enhance the quality of life in cities and regions.

Over the recent years, we are pleased to note that progress has been made in access to transport services, including by the rural population. The process of restructuring in the railway sector had a largely positive impact in this area. The strategy of the Bulgarian State Railways – Passenger Services Ltd. which reflects market trends, includes as follows:

- Quality improvement of offered railway transport services, in particular quality improvement and use of the rolling-stock;
- Volume of the transportation services, appropriated to market conditions and adequate behaviour of the operators in the conditions of a strong competition between transport modes;
- Full state compensation of the loss of the social transportation services of Bulgarian State Railways – Passenger Services Ltd.
- Fulfilment of the assigned public service obligations by the national rail carrier in order to reach a certain level of transport servicing, as well as conditions for free of charge and discount railway journeys of benefit to society (for particular social groups specified and approved in the legislative acts of the Council of Ministers, in compliance with the Public Service Obligations Contract between the State and the carrier)
- Priority development of inter-city transport;
- Development of tourist and special travels using specific rolling-stock on the railway network of Bulgaria.

The fuel price increase is the main instrument for putting the consumers under pressure for economical use of the road transport. In the last years there is a rise in the oil price on the international market, there is a significant increase of the fuels prices but despite this there has been increased consumption of fuels in the transport sector. The active measures directed at achieving energy efficiency are: fuel taxes; technical inspections; speed limits outside of the cities, etc. The removal of excise duty on biofuels, which facilitate the

usage of these types of fuels with production price far higher than diesel and petrol, is also a measure.

We can say that in Bulgaria there are already some working measures (similar to other EU countries), contributing for reduction of transport fuel consumption, namely:

- taxes on the use of liquid fuels for transport
- The excise duty and VAT are about 50% of the petrol and diesel fuel prices;
- Tax reductions for biofuels and other clean fuels – zero excise duty for biofuels and natural gas and reduced tax rates for the liquefied petroleum gas
- Obligatory regular technical inspections of the vehicles – at six months interval for the public transport vehicles and annual for the rest.

The “National long-term programme for promotion of the biofuels use in the transport sector 2008-2020” defines the national indicative targets for biofuels consumption as follows: 2008 – 2%, 2009 – 3.5%, 2010 – 5.75%, 2015 – 8%, 2020 – 10%. The wider use of biofuels in the transport sector is one of the measures for achieving the objectives of the Kyoto Protocol. It is also one of the Bulgarian instruments for lowering the usage of imported fuels and energy and as such will contribute to securing the energy supply in medium and long-term.

For Bulgaria, 2008 was the first year with a specific target for biofuels consumption in the transport sector and the usage of biofuels is still insignificant.

A main issue of the Ministry of Transport’s policy is the development of intermodal transport and logistics infrastructure. In order to create effective logistics chains there is a need for obstacle elimination, for optimum use and combination of all transport modes, for encouraging training and best practices exchange in the EU, for improvement of the standardisation and the operational compatibility between the different transport modes. The intermodal terminals are the most important part of the logistics chain and the Ministry of Transport directs its efforts towards construction of such terminals and, subsequently freight villages. The following projects are in a process of realisation: “Construction of intermodal terminal in Sofia” and “Construction and development of new container terminals at the ports of Varna-East and Bourgas-West”. The funding of the projects for construction of intermodal terminals at Plovdiv and Rousse was approved in the TEN-T Annual Programme 2007.

The Republic of Bulgaria develops an effective urban transport policy according to the Green Paper “Towards a new culture for urban mobility”, elaborated by the European Commission in 2007.

The achievement of sustainable urban mobility is a challenge for all big cities in the world. In this respect, a common policy coping with this problem is needed, a policy which will be able to respond to the people’s expectations and will reduce the negative environmental impacts.

The joining of efforts at all levels: local, regional, national and European is necessary in the implementation of transport policy.

The sustainable urban mobility should make possible the long-term economic development of the cities, the quality of life of their inhabitants and the protection of the environment.

Among the main challenges that the big cities in Bulgaria face, are : traffic congestions in towns; pollution of the environment and the noise negative effects; more efficient urban transport organisation and improvement of the accessibility, as well as raising the safety and security issues of urban transport.

In the urban transport planning and development Bulgaria conducts a policy orientated towards development of accessible infrastructure, usage of more environmentally friendly and secure vehicles, introduction of intelligent transport systems for urban traffic control, utilisation of integrated transport schemes and charging schemes for overall improvement of the urban transport.

Other important issues are the improvement of the energy efficiency in the transport sector and ensuring a more favourable impact on the environment, the air quality and climate change ect..

The only sector in which the consumption growth exceeds the GDP growth significantly is the transport sector and respectively the energy intensity as a ratio of the consumption and GDP is growing. The transport's share in the overall energy consumption has increased from 23.1% in 2001 to 28.1% in 2007.

The road transport, which uses about 90% of the overall energy consumption in the transport sector, has the greatest impact on the energy consumption,. The road transport relies mostly on oil fuels, whereas the railway transport is much more energy effective – more than half of the used energy is electric power (56% for 2007).

Taking into account these facts and the expected growth of the freight transport in the period 2000-2020 with about 50%, the policy in the area of energy efficiency in the transport sector is focused on:

- Improving the transport infrastructure;
- Renovating the motor fleet;
- Improving the organisation and enlargement of the scope of intermodal transport;
- Encouraging the share growth of energy effective modes of transport (railway, inland waterway and maritime);
- Encouraging the use of public transport;
- Improving the organisation and traffic control in the urban areas;
- Encouraging the use of biofuels;
- Improving the professional competency of the vehicle drivers.

The state policy concerning the energy efficiency in the transport sector is implemented in accordance with the Energy Efficiency Law and by the realisation of: energy efficiency orientated programmes in the transport sector – “First national energy efficiency action plan 2008-2010”, “National long-term programme for promotion of the use of biofuels in the transport sector 2008-2020”, etc.

The legislation on the effective control of the vehicle efficiency concerns:

- Routine inspections on the technical roadworthiness of the motor vehicles – obligatory technical inspections and emissions control of the vehicles. Due to high average age of the motor fleet in Bulgaria, the maintenance and the repair of the vehicles has direct impact on the reduction of the fuel consumption. The inspection is done in special stations for technical examination and public transport vehicles are checked at every 6 month; the rest of the vehicles are checked annually. The inspection includes control of the technical condition of the main systems of the vehicles and the permitted level of the CO₂ emissions and smoke in the exhausted gases;
- Approval of new types of motor vehicles according to the permitted level of noise and the type of the exhaust system;
- Approval of new types of vehicles with diesel engines in terms of the permitted level of the exhausted emissions;
- Approval of new types of motor vehicles according to the permitted level of air pollution by emissions from engines.

In the transport research development we carry out a policy focused on the cooperation with the Bulgarian Academy of Science, as well as with many universities, institutes, associations and branch organisations in the country.

Science and research sector representatives take an important part in the activities, related to the high-technologies, research issues, as well as in the European and international climate change policies. We organise regular meetings and discussions with the participants of branch organisations, syndicates, non-governmental organisations and associations dealing with current transport sector topics. A favourable business environment was created and a constructive dialogue was achieved in the elaboration of the legal base in cooperation with participants from different branch organisations.

Two Framework Agreements for cooperation between the Ministry of Transport, the University of National and World Economy and the University of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy were signed in 2008. These agreements are a good basis for cooperation with Bulgarian science representatives in the development of a policy in the field of research and transport technologies.

The main goals underlined in the European Commission's Seventh Framework Programme in which the Ministry of Transport performs coordinating functions are related to the achievement of a technological and operational progress on the European transport policy, the development of integrated, safe, greener and more modern Trans-European transport networks for the benefit of all citizens.

The intermodal transport development is one of the main factors for the increase of the competitiveness by modes of transport. The intermodality is the most universal and perspective transport system which combines the advantages of the transport modes and in this respect the system provides benefits for the individual participants as well as the society in general. The intermodality is the basis of the present transport logistics and plays a key role in the urban mobility development in Europe. It is related to the achievement of other significant goals as the environmental protection and the security of the energy supplies.

The development of the urban transport is very important for the performance of a sustainable transport policy in relation to decreasing of vehicles utilisation and promoting the utilisation of environmentally friendly vehicles. The road congestions are the main obstacle to urban transport development and have negative effect on economy, lead to increase in costs, pollution and loss of time.

The main measures to mitigate congestions are related to the improvement of the management and utilisation of the existing capacities, changing systems implementation, adding capacity where it is needed. We consider that a close cooperation between transport authority, industry and private sector is needed in order to elaborate a strategic approach to deal with the congestions.

In March 2009 the Council of Ministers of Bulgaria adopted a new directive promoting clean and energy efficient road transport vehicles. The directive aims at stimulating the market for clean and efficient vehicles and at prompting development and investments by the industry.

The uniform standards and the introduction of strong environmental criteria for purchase and exploitation of transport vehicles stimulate supply and demand of alternative and energy efficient technologies.

Another possible measure directed at energy conservation in the transport is the development of on-ground and underground public transport. The project for extension of the Sofia underground is included in one of the priority axis of the Operational Programme on Transport. The realisation of this project started in the end of 2008 and its successful completion will improve the environmental situation and the traffic in the city.