

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE
ON THE ACCESSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA TO THE
EUROPEAN UNION**

**Negotiating Position
on Chapter 9
Transport Policy**

Overall Position

The Republic of Bulgaria accepts and will implement in full the *acquis* in the field of Transport policy.

As a working hypothesis, the Bulgarian Government considers that Bulgaria will become a member of the EU on 01.01.2007.

No derogation in this area will be requested.

In the field of transport legislation Bulgaria has implemented a considerable part of the *acquis communautaire*, but considers as necessary to apply for transitional periods in some fields.

As regards road transport, Bulgaria requests a four-year transitional period concerning Regulation 3118/93 (as amended by Regulation 792/94 and Regulation 3315/94) and Regulation 12/98. Bulgaria will request a five-year transitional period on financial standing, which will end on 31 December 2011. The Bulgarian side declares, that with regard to axle weight of vehicles, it will apply the schedule in Annex 5 of the Agreement between the Republic of Bulgaria and the European Community establishing certain conditions for the carriage of goods by road and the promotion of combined transport, signed in Brussels on 26 July 2000.

In the field of air transport, Bulgaria has negotiated transitional measures to the Draft Agreement for establishment of European Common Aviation Area (ECAA). The agreements reached in this respect will be reflected in the present position paper of the Republic of Bulgaria in the negotiation process for accession to the European Union.

In the railway transport sector the Bulgarian side accepts and will implement the European legislation with the exception of Council Directive 91/440 (Article 10, item 1) on the development of the Community's railways and Council Directive 95/19 on the allocation of railway infrastructure capacity and the charging of infrastructure fees. Bulgaria requests a three-year transitional period expiring on 31 December 2009.

In the remaining fields, such as maritime transport, inland waterways, combined transport, etc. Bulgaria will not request transitional periods during the negotiations for full membership in EU.

Bulgaria takes into consideration the significance of environment issues and actively works for the reduction of environment pollution from transport.

ROAD TRANSPORT

1. Legal framework

The three main Bulgarian legal acts regulating the activity in the field of road transport are the Road Transport Law (1999), the Road Traffic Law (1999) and the Roads Law (2000). The provisions of these three laws introduce the principles, as well as the texts both of European legislation and of international agreements and conventions in the sector. The three laws also arrange the functions of relevant state institution in respect to their implementation.

The Bulgaria side considers that in the field of road transport all legislative preconditions for the smooth implementation and enactment of *acquis communautaire* by the date of accession to the European Union have been created.

The Agreement between the Republic of Bulgaria and the European Community establishing certain conditions for the carriage of goods by road and the promotion of combined transport was signed in Brussels on 26 July 2000. On 13 April 2000 the Bulgarian side initialled the multilateral Agreement on occasional bus services – INTERBUS. The implementation of the provisions of these two agreements will result in further alignment with the *acquis communautaire*.

2. Administrative capacity for implementation of the *acquis*

Bulgaria has established all administrative infrastructures for the implementation of the *acquis* in the road transport sector.

The “**Road Transport Administration**” is a separate legal entity on budgetary funding under the Minister of Transport and Communications. According to the newly adopted legislation the Road Transport Administration is in charge with: the licensing of transport operators, in compliance with the criteria on access to the profession (Directive 96/26) and on market access (Regulations 881/92 and 684/92); the issuing of authorisations of technical centres to provide periodical roadworthiness test, in compliance with Directive 96/96; professional competence training and examination in compliance with Directive 96/26, Directive 94/55 and ADR; activities related to the organisation and the examination of drivers in compliance with Directive 91/439.

The specialised body under the Road Transport Administration – **State Automobile Inspectorate** – performs roadside inspections of vehicles, carrying out transport of passengers and goods and controls all relevant documents.

The Traffic Police is a separate entity to the Minister of Interior. According to the provisions of the newly adopted legislation this authority is responsible for: the issuing of driving license (since 1 January 2000 a new model, in compliance with Directive 91/439, is in process of introduction); the supply of registration plates, complying with the Annex of Regulation 2411/98 and conforming to ISO standard 7591-99; the data collection on road accidents (the statistics on accidents is held in compliance with Decision 93/704).

The Military Police is a separate entity to the Minister of Defence. Following the provisions of the Law on Defence and the Armed Forces and the Road Traffic Law this authority is in charge of regulatory and control functions as regard military drivers and traffic of military vehicles.

A specialised body, co-ordinating the activities of the state and the public authorities in the field of road traffic safety - **Joint State-public consultative Commission on Road Traffic Safety** was established to the Minister of Transport and Communications.

The **Executive Agency “Roads”** is a separate legal entity on budgetary funding to the Minister of Regional Development and Public Works. It is the competent authority for the issuing and control of permits for transport of freight, exceeding the maximum allowed norms, and for the collection of road charges.

3. Transitional periods

Bulgaria considers as necessary to request the following transitional periods in the field of road transport:

Cabotage – Regulation 3118/93 and Regulation 12/98.

According to the provisions of the Road Transport Law foreign operators shall be permitted to carry out transport operations between two points on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria in case this has been arranged in an international agreement, i.e. all legislative preconditions for fulfilling the requirements of the EU Regulations have been created.

As regards Regulation 3118/93 (as amended by Regulation 792/94 and Regulation 3315/94) and Regulation 12/98 Bulgaria requests a four-year transitional period. The provisions of the above-mentioned Regulations will enter into force for Bulgaria on **1 January 2011 at latest**. During that period non-resident operators would not be allowed to perform national road haulage services (cabotage) on Bulgarian territory.

If before the target date, a schedule for liberalisation of cabotage has been agreed upon and entered into force, the above transitional period should be relevantly modified.

Access to the profession – financial standing (Directive 96/26, last amended by Directive 98/76)

Bulgarian legislation transposes the principles of these Directives in the Road Transport Law. The specific requirements on access to the profession have been introduced for:

- **carriers, operating national road haulage services in Regulation № 33;**
- **carriers, operating international road haulage services in Regulation № 3.**

As regards good repute (for the undertaking) and professional competence (for the undertaking's transport manager) requirements, Bulgaria applies the same criteria as defined in the European Directives.

Concerning financial standing for international operators at present Regulation № 3 requires minimum capital and reserves, which are not in full compliance with those in Directive 98/76.

Bulgaria declares that with regard to **carriers operating international road haulage services for passengers and goods** will apply a step-by-step approach for implementation of financial standing quantitative parameters of Directive 98/76 in the national legislation. The parameters defined in the Directives will enter into force after a five- year transitional period, **i.e. at latest on 1 January 2012.**

Since 1 January 2003, with respect to national operators, Regulation № 33 introduces requirements for minimum capital and reserves, which are lower than those in both Directives.

Bulgaria declares that with regard to **hauliers performing transport operations between two points on the Bulgarian territory** will make use of the provisions of article 2 of Directive 96/26.

The direct implementation of financial standing requirements from the date of accession will have an extremely unfavourable impact on approximately 80 % of the Bulgarian road enterprises, operating with one to three vehicles.

Maximum authorised dimensions and weights - Directive 96/53

In the field of technology and safety, Bulgaria has reached an agreement to apply upon the date of accession to the EU, the requirements related to maximum authorised axle weight for all main transit routes in the country with some exceptions (Council Directive 96/53 on maximum authorised dimensions and weights).

At present the requirements of Directive 96/53 are fully reflected in the existing Tariff № 14, except for the axle weight of 11,5 tons/axle, which according to the European Agreement on International Motorways (AGR – 1975) and the standards applied in Bulgaria is 10 tons/axle.

The transposition of Council Directive 96/53 in the Bulgarian legislation is revealed in:

- the Road Traffic Law
- the Agreement between the Republic of Bulgaria and the European Community establishing certain conditions for the carriage of goods by road and the promotion of Combined Transport, signed in Brussels on 26 July 2000.

According to Annex 5 of the Agreement, Community vehicles conforming to Council Directive 96/53 could transit Bulgaria without paying any special charges as follows:

- **Since 1 January 2000:**

E 79 (E 83)	section "Botevgrad - Sofia "
E 80	section " Sofia - Plovdiv - Orizovo"

- **Since 1 January 2002:**

E 79	section "Sofia - Kulata"
E 80	section "Federal Republic of Yugoslavian border - Kalotina - Sofia"
E 80	section "Orizovo - Haskovo"
E 80 (E 85)	section "Haskovo - Svilengrad"
E 83	section "Biala - Pleven - Botevgrad"
E 85	section "Rousse - Biala "
E 85	section "Svilengrad - Greek border"

- **Since 1 January 2005:**

E 79	Section "Vidin - Botevgrad"
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- **Since 1 January 2008:**

E 85	section "Biala - Veliko Turnovo - Stara Zagora - Haskovo"
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As regards axle weight Bulgaria shall apply the above-mentioned schedule.

4. Transport of dangerous goods by road

In 1995 Bulgaria has joined the Europe Agreement concerning international carriage of dangerous goods by road (ADR).

The provisions of Directive 94/55 (as regards transport operations carried out between two points on the Bulgarian territory), Directive 96/35 and Directive 95/55 are laid down in the Draft Regulation on carriage of dangerous goods to be in force up to mid 2001.

AIR TRANSPORT

1. Overall position

Since 1997 negotiations for signing of the multilateral agreement for the Establishment of a European Common Aviation Area (ECAA) have been opened with the EC, represented by the European Commission, and ten associated Central European Countries.

Draft Protocol on transitional arrangements between the European Community and Bulgaria to the above mentioned Agreement has been initialled. The transitional period for preparation of the Republic of Bulgaria for full membership in the European Common Aviation Area is divided into two phases: the first phase shall run until 31 December 2003; the second – until 31 December 2005.

The specific areas, in which the Bulgarian side envisages the application of transitional measures are given under item 2.

Up to present twenty-nine secondary acts have been adopted in total, stemming from the Civil Aviation Act (1999). Those regulations transpose the provisions of the air transport *acquis*, ICAO standards and recommended practices, the requirements of Joint Aviation Authorities - JAA and the requirements of Eurocontrol as well.

Since 9 May 2000 the Directorate General “Civil Aviation Administration” of the Republic of Bulgaria has become a member of the Joint Aviation Authorities (JAA).

The harmonization of about 10 additional secondary acts is forthcoming. Their enforcement is envisaged until the end of the year 2001, which will also coincide with the eventual entering into force of the Agreement.

2. Transitional measures

In compliance with the Draft Protocol, the Republic of Bulgaria will use transitional measures in respect of the implementation of the following EC acts: **Regulations 2407/92, 2408/92, 2027/97 and 3922/91 (2176/96) and Directive 92/14/EEC.**

Regulation **2407/92** – the Bulgarian side avails of the provision of Article 16 allowing a three years transitional period to the existing carriers who may continue to operate with a valid AOC instead of holding operating licenses, i.e. until the end of 31.12.2003. Exemptions from the financial criteria will also be applied to small air carriers i.e. those engaged in operations with aircraft of less than 10 tones MTOW and/or less than 20 seats. The Regulation will be applicable without exemptions to newly established commercial air transport operators.

Regulation **2408/92** - Bulgaria envisages the following transitional measures: for the first phase on routes between Bulgaria and a Member State of the Community an increase of 3 percentage points in the capacity share is accepted; for the second phase – 5 percentage points, compared to the situation during the previous corresponding season

However, carriers licensed by Bulgaria and air carriers of the Community may on routes between Bulgaria and a Community Member State in any event claim a capacity share of 60 per cent.

Regulation **2027/97** - Bulgaria shall only apply this Regulation to air carriers operating services to/from other contracting parties to the Agreement.

Regulation **3922/91** - until the end of the first phase Bulgaria will not apply the technical requirements (JARs) of the Joint Aviation Authorities and during the second phase they will be only applied to JAR certificated aircraft types.

Directive **92/14/EEC** – until 2005 the operation of aeroplanes covered by Part II, Chapter 2, Volume 1 of Annex 16 to the Chicago Convention to/from third countries airports, i.e. countries outside Common European Area, will be allowed.

3. Administrative capacity for implementation of the *acquis*

The Republic of Bulgaria has already established the institutions necessary to enforce the *acquis* in the field of air transport.

Directorate General "Civil Aviation Administration " is a separate legal budget-supported entity, directly subordinated to the Minister of Transport and Communications

At present DG"CAA" issues:

- air operator certificate, in compliance with JAR-OPS;
- aviation personnel licenses, under the Ordinance on aviation personnel licensing (in compliance with Directive 91/670);
- licenses for airport companies and airport handling operators, under the Ordinance 20 (in compliance with Directive 96/67);
- licenses for aircraft maintenance and repair organizations, under the Ordinance 145 (in compliance with JAR 145).

DG "CAA" will start issuing operating licenses in 2001, in compliance with the provisions of Regulation 2407/92.

A budget-supported unit is envisaged to be established, directly subordinated to the Minister of Transport and Communications, which will perform activities related to enforcement of Ordinance 13 on investigation of civil aviation aircraft accidents (Annex 13 of ICAO and Directive 94/56).

Directorate General "Air Traffic Services Authorities" /ATSA/ is a legal entity, not supported by the budget. DG ATSA is an administration structure within the Ministry of Transport and Communications which performs state and specific organization functions and air traffic services. It is a complex structure, equipped with technical devices, technologies and highly qualified personnel for the provision of safe air traffic services.

MARITIME TRANSPORT

1. Legal framework

Bulgaria has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Code of Conduct for Liner Conferences, which is the basic international convention adopted before **Council Regulation (EEC) 4055/86**. Bulgaria is also Party to the main IMO conventions relevant to safety of navigation.

The basic European Regulations and Directives in the field are transposed in the recently adopted Law on Maritime Spaces, Inland Waterways and Ports in the Republic of Bulgaria (promulgated in State Gazette, February 2000)

The Law on the amendment of the Merchant Shipping Code is in process of adoption by the National Assembly. The draft is expected to be adopted in the beginning of 2001.

2. Freedom to provide services in maritime transport

Council Regulation (EEC) 4055/86 is the major European act regulating the provision of services in maritime transport. The provisions of the existing Merchant Shipping Code grant full freedom to operators from the EC Member-States to provide transport services to and from the Bulgarian sea ports. Bulgaria intends to liberalize the regime for provision of cabotage services for European operators in 2006. (Council Regulation (EEC) 3577/92).

3. Maritime safety

In general Bulgarian legislation complies with the requirements for safety of navigation and is currently in process of alignment with the EC standards. Following the adoption of the Law on the amendment of the Merchant Shipping Code several EC Directives and Regulations will be transposed:

Directives 79/115 (Order of State Shipping Inspectorate), Regulation 613/91 (Ordinance of the Minister of Transport and Communications), Directives 93/75 (Ordinance of the Minister of Transport and Communications), Directives 94/57 (applied; the elaboration of an Ordinance of the Minister of Transport and Communications is envisaged), Directives 98/18. Directives 92/29 is applied, the ratification of ILO Convention 164 is forthcoming. The provisions of the remaining European legal documents in the field of maritime safety are already implemented. Bulgaria does not envisage applying Decision 92/143 on the radio-navigational system for Europe (LORAN-C) due to the development of the satellite navigation systems. The aforementioned Directives and Regulations will be transposed in the Bulgarian legislation by the end of 2006.

In order to improve maritime safety, the Bulgarian Maritime Administration has launched the following activities:

- Bulgaria initiated the establishment of Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control in the Black Sea Region (Black Sea MoU). The MoU aims at the gradual eradication of substandard vessels in the Black Sea.
- A vessel traffic control system (VTS) is currently being introduced along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast. The project is jointly financed by the Government of the Netherlands, the PHARE Programme and the Bulgarian Ministry of Transport and Communications.
- A training programme for PSC inspectors is currently developed.

NAVIBULGAR was certified under ISO 9002 by Germanischer Lloyd Certification in 2000.

3. Administrative capacity to implement the *acquis*

Executive Agency “Maritime Administration” is the institution responsible for all issues related to maritime and inland waterway transport. Special attention is placed on the strengthening of Flag State and Port State performance (Directive 95/21 EC and Directive 94/57 EC). Stricter control of compliance with the conventional requirements will be exercised on foreign flag vessels, calling at Bulgarian ports.

Executive Agency “Port Administration” (established by Decree 212/99 of the Council of Ministers) is the institution responsible for the security and safety in ports, for keeping of

registers, for collecting statistical data. It ensures compliance with the requirements for free access and equal treatment of operators (free competition).

State Aids

Currently, State aids are not provided to the maritime transport in Bulgaria. Draft programmes, complying with the provisions of the Community Guidelines on State Aid to maritime transport (97/C/205/5) and the Law on protection of competition are in process of elaboration. Emphasis is placed on the following issues:

- measures to improve the fiscal conditions for shipping companies;
- social measures to improve competitiveness;
- investment aid for structural reform, including privatization.

The aforementioned measures will be reviewed following the adoption of the Law on the amendment of the Merchant Shipping Code.

INLAND WATERWAY TRANSPORT

1. Legal framework

The Danube river directly links Bulgaria to some European Union member states. The Bulgarian side is aware of the importance of all issues related to inland waterways transport safety, improvement of qualification level of carriers, etc.

The adopted **Law on Maritime spaces, Inland Waterways and Ports** provides for the application of *acquis communautaire* in this sector. With the adoption of the Draft Law on the amendment of the Merchant Shipping Code the provisions of Council Directive 82/714 EEC and Council Directive 96/50 EEC will be transposed.

The above mentioned laws and the forthcoming enactment of relevant secondary legislation will harmonized completely Bulgarian legislation with *acquis communautaire* in the field of inland waterway transport.

2. Administrative capacity to implement the *acquis*

The regional offices of Executive Agency “Maritime Administration” in Rousse and Lom are the competent administrative bodies, controlling the safety and security of inland waterway navigation, technical requirements for inland waterway vessels (Council Directive 82/714 EEC), harmonisation of the conditions for obtaining national boatmasters’ certificates for inland navigation (Council Directive 96/50 EEC), as well as for pollution protection of the river.

Executive Agency “Study and Maintenance of the Danube” functions according to the national and international law on the study and maintenance of navigation conditions along the inland waterways of the Republic of Bulgaria. Its major subject of activity is to provide proper navigational situation and maintenance of the fairway on the Danube from km 374,100 to km 845,650 in the common Bulgarian – Rumanian part of the river.

Bulgarian legislation will be in fully conformity with the requirements of *acquis communautaire* in the field of inland waterway transport upon the date of accession of our country to the European Union

RAILWAY TRANSPORT

1. Legal framework

The Law on railway transport (and on combined transport) was adopted by the National Assembly on 15.11.2000.

Preparatory work aiming at elimination of limiting factors in the railway sector and implementation of liberalized rules has been made. The account separation of infrastructure from transportation activities that took place on 01.01.1999 is in full compliance with the requirements of Directive 91/440. The enactment of the Law on railway transport (and on combined transport) in 01.01.2002 will ensure the institutional separation and will eliminate the state monopoly on the transportation of passengers and goods by rail.

The Law also arranges public relationships with regard to the national railway infrastructure, its legal status and financing fully comply with the requirements of Directive 91/440.

2. Administrative capacity for implementation of the *acquis*

The Law on rail transport (and combined transport) envisages the establishment of a specialised body, Executive Agency "Railway Administration".

In 2002 the institutional separation of the infrastructure will be accomplished with the establishment of the National Company "Republican Railway Infrastructure", subordinate to the Ministry of Transport and Communications.

The access to infrastructure has been arranged by the introduction of a licensing system for railway operators (Directive 95/18), based on the requirement for availability of safety certificate, as well as on introduction of user charges on railway infrastructure. The accumulated funds from these charges will be allocated for maintenance, construction and operation of the national railway infrastructure.

The Law takes into consideration the issues related to assignment and fulfilment of public service obligations, as required by Regulation 69/1191.

The provisions of the following Community legislative acts are already effectively applied in the national legislation:

- Council Decision 82/529/EEC on the fixing of rates for international carriage of goods by train;
- Council Decision 83/418/EEC on commercial independence of the railways in the management of their international passenger and luggage traffic.

In the process of preparation for accession to the EU Bulgaria is ready to undertake the necessary measures by the end of 2001 for implementing the requirements of the following Council Regulations:

- Council Regulation 2830/77 on the measures necessary to achieve compatibility between the accounting systems and annual accounts of railway undertakings;
- Council Regulation 2183/78 on uniform costing prices for railway undertakings.

Transitional periods

Bulgaria will be in a position to implement the requirements of Council Directive 91/440 till the end of 2006, with the exception of Article 10, item 1. The provisions of this article should come into force from 1 January 2010.

During the transitional period Bulgaria expresses willingness to continue the application of the rule for granting access to the national railway infrastructure of international railway undertakings on the basis of international agreements to which the Republic of Bulgaria is a Party.

Bulgaria's request for **a three-year transitional period** is justified by the necessity of continuing the process of restructuring, commercialization, privatization and granting on concession of some activities in the railway sector.

Higher service level requires renewal of rolling stock and application of higher standards when buying relevant equipment.

The requested transitional period also takes into account the time needed for achievement of positive results from the capital investments made and from the process of restructuring the railways. It is expected that the first positive results from the investments of the privatization process and granting on concession of some activities and infrastructure sites will be attained not earlier than the end of 2009.

Bulgaria requests a transitional period for complete implementation of the provisions of Article 10, item 1 of Directive 91/440 and due to the above-mentioned justification presumes that it will not be able to fulfill the requirements of Directive 95/19.

Bulgaria will implement Directive 95/19 from 1 January 2007 only in respect to that part of the infrastructure to which access will be provided upon accession. With regard to the other railway lines Directive 95/19 should be applied since 1 January 2010.

HORISONTAL ISSUES

Development of transport infrastructure

In compliance with Decision of the European Parliament and the Council 1692/96/EC on Community guidelines for the development of the Trans-European network – TEN, the Bulgarian Government undertook the commitment to realize a number of projects, located along the routes of the Pan-European Transport Corridors.

- A four-year **Middle-term National Investment Program for the period 1998 – 2001** has been adopted. The Program clearly determines the obligations of the State Budget for development of the country's infrastructure, including the transport sector;
- An **Investment Program for Development of the Transport Infrastructure of the country** has been elaborated. The Program includes 32 national investment transport projects, situated along the five Pan-European Transport Corridors, passing through the territory of the country (IV, VII, VIII, IX and X) and the investments necessary for their construction, amounting to approximately **US\$ 5 Billion**. It is expected that the funds needed will be provided by the state budget and other financial sources such as: taxes on liquid fuel, credits by the international finance institutions, public-private and private concessions, etc.

The legislation in the Republic of Bulgaria on financing of transport infrastructure is in compliance with Council Regulation **2236/95/EC** since it allows co-operation with international financial institutions (EIB, EBRD) and public- private partnership (PPP) in this field of financing;

- The participation of Bulgaria in the **TINA project** is a very important component for the development of transport infrastructure. Within the framework of the TINA project an assessment of the investment costs for implementation by countries and by transport modes has been elaborated.

Taking into consideration the fact that 5 out of the 10 Pan-European Transport corridors pass through the territory of the country, the Bulgarian Government has provided for 1997, 1998 and 1999 investments in the transport sector amounting to 3,2%, 2,7% and 2,42 % of the GNP, respectively.

- **A National Plan for Economic Development for the years 2000-2006** is in process of co-ordination with the European Commission. The priority development of transport infrastructure on the route of Pan-European Transport Corridors IV, VIII and IX is included as a measure for fulfilling the objectives of the Plan;
- The same principles of development of transport infrastructure are set out in the updated **Transport Sector Strategy**. A detailed analysis on the basis of various important criteria is made in the Strategy for the purpose of determining the projects of utmost priority, which could be presented for financing before the International Financing Institutions, as well as for funding under the Structural Instruments of the European Commission, especially ISPA.

In Bulgaria the preparation for implementation of high-speed trains (**Council Directive 96/48**) continues. The implemented at present safety measures and systems for automatic locomotive signaling, radio link and others comply with the requirements for high-speed movement, by the implementation of requirements for interoperability. The requirements for interoperability are in process of examination. The project for reconstruction and electrification of the railway section Plovdiv – Svilengrad - Turkish border is one of the biggest large-scale projects in the region for introduction of high – speed railway transport.

COMBINED TRANSPORT

The combined transport of goods is outlined as a priority in the transport policy of the Bulgarian Ministry of Transport and Communications.

A Program for development of combined transport in the Republic of Bulgaria until 2010 has been elaborated and its investment section is a part of the Investment program of the Ministry during the aforesaid period.

The Republic of Bulgaria, as a **Contracting party of the European Agreement on the important lines for combined transport and the related installations /AGTC/**, considers the priorities and world trends in transport sector development, all the documents issued by the EU and the ECMT, as well as the experience of the European countries in national and international transport of goods by road, river and sea. The **Protocol on combined transport by inland waterways enclosed to the European Agreement on the most important lines for combined transport and the related facilities /AGTC/** was ratified by an Act of the National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria in March 1999.

A draft Regulation on combined transport of goods has been elaborated. The Regulation will be adopted after the enactment of the Law on railway transport. The draft Regulation complies fully with the principles and requirements of Directive 92/106/EEC and 96/53/EC, as well as with the foreseen modifications of the EU *acquis* on combined transport of goods

The Ministry of Transport and Communications elaborates intensively bilateral and multilateral intergovernmental agreements on international combined transport of goods with respect to all the above mentioned directives of the European Union.

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The Bulgarian government proposes the negotiations on this chapter to be provisionally closed on the basis of the existing *acquis*.

Should new elements of the *acquis* make it necessary, Bulgaria recognizes the possibility of opening supplementary negotiations before the end of the Intergovernmental conference.