

Statement by Mr Kristian Krastev, Deputy Minister of Transport, Information Technology and Communications of the Republic of Bulgaria at the Second Ministerial Meeting “Making the Euro-Asian Transport Network Operational (Geneva, 26 February 2013)

**Mr. Chairman,
Dear Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I personally find it incredibly remarkable to familiarize myself with the ideas that have been presented at today's Ministerial conference as they are directed in a particularly sensitive area - the modernization of the railway and its entry in the wider context of economic development.

You are all well aware that the development of rail transport is a priority in the policy of the European Union as an alternative to road transport mode, transport which creates less negative impact on the environment. In this respect the intent of member states, including Bulgaria is to build a consistent strategy to redirect a significant proportion of freight to rail transport. Only this way contemporary society could meet the challenges due to globalization processes, in particular - pollution, congestion of the road infrastructure leading to huge traffic and emissions, as well as general road transport situation.

In this short statement it is difficult to cover the major trends in the development of rail transport in Bulgaria, as well as major infrastructure projects and sources of funding.

Let me introduce you our national policy in the field of rail transport. As a first priority in transport policy for the next years we aim improving the rail transport. A very important condition for the implementation of this priority is the continuation of reform in the Bulgarian railways, including reformation and financial restructuring of companies in the sector. The efforts by the Ministry of Transport to make a modern transport and logistics infrastructure in the most important areas of European and national importance, are dictated by our desire to successfully integrate into the European transport system and to create optimal conditions for the mobility of people, goods and services.

In the Republic of Bulgaria's territory are passing five transport corridors - IV, VII, VIII, IX and X. They are defined by the Pan-European Conference of Transport Ministers in Crete (1994) and Helsinki (1997). The focus on the transport routes are of major importance for Europe crossing the territory of our country requires the provision of significant investment to improve and maintenance the existing infrastructure and to complete the missing links.

The main course now is to facilitate cross-border traffic through optimization of border procedures and reduce waiting time trains at border posts and approximation of legislation in the railway sector. This will increase the competitiveness of rail compared to road transport and create conditions for the development of highly efficient rail transport over long distances.

Thank you for your attention!