

NOTES

1. The Dictionary of Bulgarian Language (4th ed., 1995) gives the following definition to this concept: social decay, depravity, bribery. This definition matches the meaning of the Latin word *corruptio*, which means spoiling, outworn or bad condition, or (figuratively) deceitfulness, impairment, bribery.

Corruption is a negative phenomenon which finds its most straightforward manifestation in bribery. Corruption and bribery are alike, though not identical. Corruption is a wider concept, which also includes bribery. For that reason a bribe would have all features of corruption and any bribe constitutes corruption but the reverse is not true. Both corruption and bribery result in obtaining illicit benefits, but in the case of bribery those benefits are tangible or financial items only. Corruption might involve one or more persons aiming to obtain personal benefit through the use of an official position, whilst bribery always involves at least two persons who enter in a *sui generis* deal. A bribe is a crime driven by self-interest whereas corruption is multi-faceted and is much more detrimental to society. A bribe is always a legal phenomenon. Corruption is a social phenomenon which might turn into a legal one by way of exception.

The widely spread understanding of the concept of corruption is that it covers the misappropriation of property entrusted to someone, smuggling, illicit trafficking, etc. There is even a term “corrupt criminality” – a concept which has been in use for some time though it is devoid of any scientific or legal value.

Corruption is equally typical of civil servants and public figures: in both cases the person concerned receives advantages that are either prohibited by law or socially unjust or immoral. Corruption is also typical of all levels of State governance. Thus it is at least inaccurate to connect it exclusively or primarily with the low levels of power. Quite the contrary, in Bulgaria and in other countries, regardless of their specific stage or degree of economic development (fully-fledged market economy, transition from a totalitarian to market economy, or totalitarian economy), corruption – in its best manifested forms, largest dimensions and most unambiguous disrespect of any legal and moral values - is emblematic of the highest levels of power.

2. According to Michael Johnston, transborder corruption is manifested in a wide range of forms: from suspicions political donations and financing of election campaigns to improperly stringent bank secrecy, offshore banking operations or the establishment of free-zones in which capitals of dubious origin are accepted, etc. (see Michael Johnston. Cross-border corruption: points of vulnerability and challenges for reform, In: Corruption and Integrity Improvement Initiatives in Developing Countries, UNDP/OECD Development Center, p.15). In the present study attention will be focused mainly on corruption linked to economic smuggling.
3. In strictly legal terms, smuggling qualifies both as a crime and as an administrative offence. While in the first case criminal liability is envisaged under the Criminal Code, in the second case administrative liability is sought in accordance with the Law on Customs (State Gazette, issue 26, 1968). As far as the crime is concerned, its elements are provided in s. 242 of the Criminal Code. The objective elements comprise the transfer of goods through the country's border without the knowledge and authorisation of the customs authorities. The goods could be fairly different and criminal liability in each particular case depends on their type and quantity. In all cases of smuggling

the object in question is confiscated for the Exchequer regardless of whose property it is. If the object is missing or has been alienated, the convict is liable to pay an amount equivalent to its retail price. The vehicle used to transport or carry such goods is also subject to confiscation for the Exchequer, irrespective of its intended use and of whether it is owned by the perpetrator or by a third party. It is also important to ascertain whether the vehicle of transportation or transfer has been used to commit the crime of "smuggling". An exception to the general rule is made when the value of the vehicle clearly fails to match the seriousness of the crime of "smuggling".

It is worth noting that smuggling is one of the rare examples in the Criminal Code of the Republic of Bulgaria where a penalty is provided for an *attempted* smuggling "in particularly great dimensions" representing a "particularly grave case" or where the perpetrator is a customs official. Likewise, criminal liability lies against the perpetrator if the crime is not completed for reasons beyond his or her control. The attempt is punishable in the cases explicitly laid down in the Code and is connected with the type of goods (narcotic drugs) or their quantity (a particularly grave case), or the job description of the perpetrator (a customs officer). Smuggling would only exist if committed by a person able to understand the nature and the consequences of their acts and intended to achieve the criminal result, *i.e.* direct intent is required. Failing this, there would be no crime.

It is well-established case-law that if an act involves narcotic drugs the value and the quantity of the drugs are not of the essence in order to qualify that act as smuggling. Value and quantity in this case are of secondary importance.

The crime of smuggling may be committed by any Bulgarian or foreign person. It suffices for the goods to be transported or carried across the border of Republic of Bulgaria without the authorisation of the customs.

Where the smuggling represents a case of minor importance, the sanction envisaged is fine imposable in administrative proceedings. In such cases, the act qualifies as one of "minor importance" within the meaning of s. 93, point 9 of the Criminal Code, which reads: "A case of minor importance is any case where the crime committed, in view of the lack or insignificance of the harmful consequences or in view of other extenuating circumstances, reveals a lower degree of threat to the society by comparison to the ordinary crimes of the respective type".

Where there are no harmful consequences or these are clearly insignificant, the person has not been sentenced before, has not been confronted with an administrative penalty and has committed no other such act, the authority imposing the administrative sanction - *i.e.* the customs authority - is competent to assess whether the case is one of minor importance (see Interpretative Decision No. 53 of 11 April 1986, General Assembly of Criminal Colleges at the Supreme Court).

By virtue of the amendments to the Code of Criminal Procedure in effect from January 1, 2000, the investigation of the crime of smuggling and of the administrative offences involving smuggling falls entirely within the competence of the customs administration. This legislative solution has vested the customs administration with the entire responsibility to control the compliance with the legislative requirements for the transfer of goods across the border and to investigate the offences committed in this context. Thus, the indispensable legislative, organisational and structural prerequisites have been put in place to improve the efficiency of that administration.

4. It should be emphasised that customs control is always selective. The customs administration of every country is endowed with operational independence guaranteed by the existing regulatory framework. In other words, the examination and control of exported and imported goods are based on expedience. It is objectively impossible to carry out full physical control of all goods crossing the border of a country. The Bulgarian Law on Customs proclaims the right of the customs administration to judge if a customs check should be conducted or not and if the consignment crossing the border corresponds to the documents produced to the customs administration.
5. Those practices were at odds with the country official import for the embargo. The Council of Ministers and other Bulgarian institutions passed the following instruments in respect of Bulgaria's commitment to that international effort:
 - Regulation No. 90 of 7 May 1993 on fulfilment by the Republic of Bulgaria of Resolution No. 820 of the United Nations Security Council of 17 April 1993 (State Gazette, issue 41 of 1993);
 - Regulation No. 241 of 30 November 1992 on fulfilment by the Republic of Bulgaria of Resolution No. 782 of the UN Security Council of 16 November 1992 (State Gazette, issue 99 of 1992);
 - Decree No. 16 of 24 July 1991 on imposing embargo on the supplies of arms, munitions and military equipment for the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (State Gazette, issue 62 of 1991);
 - Regulation No. 94 of 5 June 1992 on fulfilment by the Republic of Bulgaria of Resolution No. 757 of the UN Security Council of 30 May 1992 (State Gazette, issue 47 of 1992);
 - Regulation No. 125 of 7 July 1992 amending and supplementing Regulation No. 94 of 1992 on fulfilment by the Republic of Bulgaria of Resolution No. 757 of the UN Security Council of 30 May 1992;
 - Regulation No. 164 of 25 August 1992 amending and supplementing Regulation 94 of 1992 on fulfilment by the Republic of Bulgaria of Resolution No. 757 of the UN Security Council of 30 May 1992 (published, State Gazette, issue 47 of 1992, amended and supplemented, State Gazette, issue 58 of 1992);
 - Ordinance No. 3 on the customs clearance of goods in accordance with the Rules of control of the UN Sanctions Committee adopted on 26 April 1993 (issued by the Ministry of Finance, State Gazette, issue 53 of 22 June 1993).
 - Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria and WEU on assistance in the implementation of the sanctions along the Danube.
6. In 1995, the notorious criminal boss Ivo Karamanski, in a scandalous interview for the Bulgarian media, directly accused some economic structures of having privatized the border services: "I also give bribes of USD 100 000 but my cisterns could well stay at the border for a whole month, while those of other groupings immediately cross the border check points".

Through the hundreds of deals violating the embargo against Yugoslavia Bulgarian organized crime developed matchless mechanisms of corruption, while taking over the heritage of the previous State-organized smuggling channels. Of course, all this inflicts enormous damage on Bulgaria's economy.

7. According to data announced by Mol, some 240,000 tons of sugar were imported through the illicit import channel via the port of Burgas. The sugar was sold on the domestic market. According to Mol, again, that channel had been monitored by senior officers from the Secret Services and even by deputy ministers in the BSP Government. Two officers from the Regional Unit of the National Security Service and 16 customs officers from the customs office in Bourgas were also accused of involvement in the case. Though no direct evidence of bribery was submitted, the channel had been clearly monitored by the Secret Services for two years and no measures whatsoever had been taken to cut it off. That proof of the patronizing attitude of the controlling authorities *vis-a-vis* certain illicit practices intensified the suspicions about corruption mechanisms operating both horizontally and vertically within the State power.

At the beginning of 1999, a channel for the import of spirit through several customs offices was detected. It had also been in operation for a number of years. Officially, from 1994 to 1998 not even a single ton of ethyl alcohol had been imported in the country with fully paid customs dues and the vast majority of the Bulgarian producers of alcoholic beverages used mainly smuggled spirit. The fact that an entire industry in the country had worked with smuggled raw materials could only be attributed to the involvement of the customs administration in that illicit traffic.

8. It should be recalled that the introduction of restrictive regimes (quotas) for the export of a particular group of goods has the additional effect of restricting the free turnover thereby inciting the export of these goods in violation of the existing rules. This necessarily entails corruption of the officials authorising the respective quotas for the different companies and of the customs officers keeping track of the quantity and quality of exports within the limits of a quota.
9. Data provided by the Specialized Investigation Service.
10. Data provided by the Specialized Investigation Service.
11. See Report Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by Member States of the Council of Europe (Monitoring Committee). Rapporteurs: Mr. David Atkinson, United Kingdom, European Democratic Group and Mr. Henning Gjellerod, Denmark, Socialist Group, p. 19.
12. The writ signed by Mr V. Mikhailov, Prosecutor at Sofia City Prosecution Office, disproved some of the findings, which had been announced in Mr Dimitrov's audit file.
13. For example, the volume of "suitcase" trade with Turkey varies, with its value booming to USD 800-900 million in the early 90s. The import of Turkish goods through this method exceeds 20 times the Bulgarian "suitcase" exports (the Bulgarian goods exported this way are primarily meat and meat products, cigarettes, alcohol, etc.). The market in Dimitrovgrad functions as the main marketplace for the smuggled goods.

The turnover of the "suitcase" trade with Macedonia and Yugoslavia is lesser, the total annual figures hardly exceeding DEM 100 million. As a rule, the goods of Bulgarian origin prevail in these regions, in other words the exports are larger (their volume even doubled during the "embargo" years). (Data provided by National Statistical Institute.)

In 1998, the National Assembly ratified a free trade agreement between Bulgaria and Turkey, which shrank the "suitcase" trade between these two countries. The phenomenon has not been completely eliminated since the agreement enables Bulgaria to protect over 3,500 goods the tariffs for which were

not abolished on January 1, 1999 but will be gradually removed until 2002 (oil products, paper, textiles, clothing, shoes, refrigerators, ferrous metals, etc.). These products form roughly 35 per cent of the Bulgarian exports to Turkey. The protection list of Turkish products is far shorter: it contains 35 goods only, i.e. 10 per cent of the Turkish exports to Bulgaria.

It is hard to believe, however, that the practice in question will soon be totally effaced since the Turkish Government has recently embarked on a series of measures aimed at reviving the "suitcase" trade. According to Turkish statistical data, its total volume in 1996 was USD 8.8 billion, while the turnover dropped to USD 5.8 in 1997. The year 1998 saw a further slump of 20 per cent. At the same time the official Turkish information shows that nearly 50 per cent of the Turkish customs revenues derive from "suitcase" trade.

14. In the view of Dr Alessandro Politi, Advisor to the Italian Minister of Defence, the geography of organized crime and drug trafficking is marked by the following key elements:

- three gravitation centres of criminality, viz. Italy, Russia and Turkey;
- 10 regional support centres: Albania, Croatia, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Macedonia, Greece, Romania, Slovenia, the Dniester region, Ukraine;
- two states facing the risk to experience a failure (Yugoslavia and Russia), six other states having gone through different stages of such failures (Albania, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Slovenia);
- two isles forming "grey zones" with varying degrees of control exercised by organized crime (Cyprus and Sicily);
- two large producers of narcotic drugs (Morocco and Russia) and three smaller producers (Albania, Lebanon and former Yugoslavia);
- two large drug trafficking routes: the Balkan corridor and Russia;
- two large territories penetrated by the drugs (Russia and Turkey);
- one large corridor for illicit trafficking in people by sea (Montenegro/Albania - Italy) and four land corridors (Sarajevo - Croatia - Slovenia - Italy/Austria; Istanbul - Ukraine - Poland - Germany; Istanbul - Romania - Hungary - Slovakia - the Czech Republic; Istanbul - Greece - Macedonia - Italy/Austria);
- one large regional financial off-shore center (Cyprus).

The main narcotic drugs are cannabis, heroin and ATS, with an ever rising share of cocaine. (Alessandro Politi. Organized Crime and Regional Cooperation in South-East Europe, paper prepared for the Conference on Regional Cooperation and Reconstruction in South-East Europe, Rome, 29-30 October 1999, pp. 16-17).

15. Data provided by the General Customs Directorate and by the Sector of Drug Trafficking at the National Service for Combating Organized Crime.
16. Data provided by the Sector of Drug Trafficking at the National Service for Combating Organized Crime.
17. Data provided by the Border Police.
- 18 This figure forms only a part of the total number of people who left the country after the abolition of the previous restrictions on travelling and work abroad. According to some estimates, Bulgaria's population has decreased by 8-9 per

cent in the course of the 90s. The country has been left by nearly 700 000 Bulgarians, many of them young people.

19. Koumanova A., Dimitrova R., The Hidden Economy Through Expert Eyes, *Statistika Journal*, No. 2, 1998, pp. 64-75.
20. For details see Koumanova A., Manolov V. The Concept of "Hidden Economy" – Basic Statistical Approaches. *Statistika Journal*, No. 2, 1996, pp. 51-62; Koumanova A., Antonova Y. Hidden Economy, *Statistika Journal*, No. 1, 1997, pp. 68-74; Koumanova A. The Hidden Economy and Some Methods for Its Measurement and Assessment, *Statistika Journal*, No. 2, 1997, pp. 67-80.
21. ACE-PHARE P95-2030-R; Mintchev V. Les échanges de biens industriels entre la Bulgarie et l'Union Européenne 1990-1995, *Revue d'études comparatives Est-Ouest (RECEO)*, 1999, No 4.
22. Mixed methods also exist as part of direct methods which are combined with marketing assessments of specific markets and official sources of information. An example of this for two kinds of goods is cited below.

Indirect methods include:

- (a) Balancing resource and use. This method is based on the disparity between income and expenses. It is linked with the three ways of measuring the GDP: production, elements of end use and elements of income. The first focuses on the material flows of the production system, the second is linked with the cash flows of the economic system on the expenses side, and the third views them on the incomes side. This traditional method of balancing the GDP has not been especially created for the assessment of the hidden economy. It is disputable whether the differences between the three approaches are due to absence of reporting and to what extent this phenomenon may be described as "hidden" activity. Other ways to assess the hidden economy should also be used before applying this method. Although not universal for all countries in transition, it is applied in the Czech Republic, Bulgaria and some other states.
- (b) Monetary approach accounting for the movement of banknotes and commodity circulation in the country and, respectively, the level of inflation. This approach uses methods, based on indices in the sphere of money circulation. They are among the most widespread ones and aim to capture the traces left by hidden economic activity in the sphere of monetary circulation. The general assumption here is that activities within the hidden economy are determined by the use of ready money. On the other hand, the amount of cash needed for the production and turnover of the GDP tends to be stable in the short and medium term (especially with regard to normally functioning economies). The comparison between real money supply and the one needed for the turnover of the GDP is linked with the fact that the difference between them is accounted for by the "hidden economy" and may be used as an index for its intensity.
- (c) Method based on discrepancy between real and official employment, assuming that the official employment rate differs (is smaller) than the real one in the national economy. The resulting difference is due to the functioning of the hidden economy, which is characterized by undeclared jobs. A different state with a similar economic structure or a specific year in which the hidden sector is considered not to have existed (or to have had a lower relative share) is used as the basis for comparing the share of employed people. The theoretical objections to this method and the difficulties of calculation restrict its use. A modified version of this method is the

so-called "Italian method" which essentially consists in comparing employment assessments provided in questionnaires measuring production activity with additional sources of information about employment and, more specifically, from manpower monitoring and censuses. This method takes account both of the conscious lowering of taxes by registered production units and the assessment of general labor expenditure in the national economy, thereby calculating the value added created in unregistered economic units. The additional assessment for correcting the lowered reported figures received from small enterprises is made on the basis of the so-called method of Franz. The Italian method is used in Poland, Romania, Lithuania, Macedonia and Slovenia.

- (d) The Hungarian method is based on the fact that the reported wage and remuneration figures are lowered in order to avoid paying social security contributions (a considerable burden in many countries in transition). Because of this the first step is to correct the officially reported figures even by state-owned companies. The second step is to assess the value added of private companies and sole traders (engaged in the same activity) by using the corrected figures from the official reports and information from the business register about the number of private companies and small enterprises in the "Household" sector which are often left uncorrected. The main focus here is on value added, rather than on production, the assumption being that remuneration in the private sector is considerably higher (3.5 times) than in the state sector. Assessments show that more than one third of the incomes of the Bulgarians are not declared. No wonder that the Prime Minister pointed out that 728,000 working Bulgarians are not paying social security contributions, and another 300,000 who work in the private sector pay social security only on the minimum wage. These and similar methods are used in Bulgaria and Poland.
- (e) Method assessing the household production. Assessments of the production of households for their own consumption were made even in the balance of the national economy, i.e. this is nothing new for our domestic statistics. This method assesses only the part that is being sold. The main sources of information are the monitored household budgets, the balances of agricultural products and price statistics. A large part of the production of households is either used by them or sold between households. Part of the production may be bought for intermediate consumption or, if it is an object – sold to tourists and be regarded as export. To some extent this method is applied by almost all countries in transition, and on a larger scale in Romania, Poland, Estonia and Lithuania.
- (f) Method based on household expenses. Using monitored household budgets with regard to expenses for buying goods and services, rather than resources, is another method for measuring unregistered activities. The information provided by household budgets is somewhat distorted, even NSI specialists admit, citing the wrong methodology used for collecting information in the country as the main reason. Until now only 3,000 households provided information about their monthly incomes and expenses. They were given 2,500 old leva a month to describe them on a daily basis. In practice, only the poorest households recorded these figures in the household budget books. Starting this year, the number of monitored households will be doubled to 6,000, but if the figures are to be reliable the monitored households must replicate the panel of households in the census. The most obvious and widespread type of informal activity is the rise in the number of small shops. An attempt has been made to use household

budgets to determine the proportion between purchases in big (including state-run) stores and private shops in order to assess the scale of their activity, assuming a comparable level of prices and surcharge in both kinds of shops. Presumably, big stores sell mainly local produce, whereas small shops sell mainly imported goods. This approach is primarily used to assess retail trade.

- (g) Method of polling, also known as the method of expert assessments. Its aim is to collect full information about the different aspects of the studied phenomenon: reasons for its appearance, sources and scope, spread among economic operators, methods of assessment, ways to counter it, etc. Regardless of the fact that these observations are not representative, polls enable comparisons of the assessments of the hidden economy, depending on the opinions of the polled experts and the estimates obtained with other methods.
 - (h) Method of mirror statistics. It is linked to the control of import and export registration, i.e. a comparison of goods exported according to Bulgarian documents to Russia, for example, with the Russian import documents, and vice versa. Although promising, this method requires close cooperation between the customs authorities. In addition to comparing information on the basis of national statistics, the daily exchange of information and entry into registers enables the Bulgarian customs officers and those in neighboring countries to directly compare information about vehicles carrying risk goods crossing the border. This kind of customs mirror statistics is already used between Bulgaria and Romania. It was revealed that about 100 vehicles transporting cigarettes or other excise goods were not registered by either country between 1995 and 1997. The main kinds of customs frauds discovered this way are linked with: (1) fictitious export of goods from Bulgaria. For example, a truck with cigarettes figures as being exported from Bulgaria, but has not been recorded in all the necessary registers. At the same time, it is not registered anywhere in Romania, meaning that the goods have remained in Bulgaria. The company uses a tax credit, no excise duty is paid on export goods and huge sums are saved of which the budget is deprived; (2) documentary fraud when trucks carrying excise goods (e.g. cigarettes) are recorded in the Bulgarian outgoing registers. In Romania these trucks are recorded as carrying toilet paper, electric light bulbs, or something of the kind (see Item 2.2. for more details).
 - (i) Monitoring of the press. Rather than measuring the concrete size of the hidden economy, this method helps to describe the phenomenon and includes information furnished by journalistic investigations of the problem, especially regarding the drug business, prostitution, illegal emigration, etc.
 - (j) Monitoring of town and country retail and wholesale markets. In practice this method covers a sector of the hidden economy, which is linked with "trade" and "agriculture". So far official statistics have been unable to account for the entire production in agriculture, for which the inadequate register of farmers is also to blame. The monitoring of town and country markets can therefore to a certain extent also provide an answer as to the size of the hidden part of the above-mentioned sectors.
23. The trend of extending the scope of application of administrative penalties and coercive administrative measures is well visible in a number of laws: the Customs Code (SG, No. 15 of 02/06/1998), the Law on Control of Narcotic Drugs and Precursors (SG, No. 30 of 04/02/1999, in force since 09/03/1999),

the Law on Measures against Money Laundering (SG No. 85 of 07/24/1998), the Law on Foreign Exchange (SG, No. 83 of 09/21/1999, in force since January 1, 2000), the Taxation Procedure Code (SG, No. 103 of 11/30/1999, in force from 01/01/2000), etc.

24. The law also referred to a number of state institutions and persons (Article 3, paragraphs 2 and 3), which are obliged to take measures to identify persons, collect, store and disclose information about operations and transactions. The Implementing Regulations of the MMLA (SG No. 119 of 10/14/1998) stipulate the establishment of a special body – the Financial Intelligence Unit – as a special Ministry of Finance team for keeping, studying, processing and disclosing information, received from persons under Paragraph 3 of the MMLA. The Implementing Regulation of the MMLA creates criteria for identifying suspicious operations, or deals and clients, established by the Minister of Finance.
25. At GCD level, the Inspectorate Division consists of two departments: “Disciplinary Proceedings” and “Internal Control of Customs Activities”. The officials have no disciplinary powers. A written proposal is made in each concrete case to the GCD chief. During the last two years the Inspectorate Division has conducted over 70 checks in customs departments and considered dozens of complaints by citizens and companies, which received an answer within the legally established term. During the same period disciplinary sanctions (including “dismissal”) were imposed on more than 80 customs officials and large sums were collected for the national budget.
26. See Clean Future, Anti-Corruption Action Plan, S., 1998, pp. 24-29
27. Ibidem, S., 1999, p. 11
28. See International Acts for Combating Corruption, S., 1999
29. See Agreement on Cooperation to Prevent and Combat Trans-Border Crime, p. 3
Bulgaria is also a party to a number of other multilateral agreements:
 - Black Sea region: the Ministry of Interior, National Border Police Service and National Service for Combating Organized Crime perform their obligations within the context of the Agreement between the governments of the participant countries in Black Sea Economic Cooperation in the struggle against crime and especially against its organized forms, signed on October 2, 1998 in Kerkira, Greece, and primarily maintain constant contact and, if necessary, exchange information with the border security and control services of countries in the Black Sea region.
 - Agreement on cooperation between the government of Bulgaria, the government of Romania and the government of Turkey in the fight against terrorism, organized crime, traffic of drugs and psychotropic substances, money laundering, arms traffic, trafficking in people and other grave crimes, signed in Antalia on 04/16/1998. Section III, Article 23 of the Agreement provides for the creation of a Supreme Committee made up of experts of the three countries, which establishes subcommittees in the areas envisaged in the Agreement and coordinates their activity.

Such subcommittees are envisaged in articles 11 and 12 (discovering false identity papers in border crossings and other crimes in the border zone, as well as the exchange of operative information between the ministries’ intelligence divisions.)
 - Protocol on increased tripartite cooperation in the struggle against crime and cross-border crime in particular, signed by the foreign ministers of

Bulgaria, Greece and Romania on September 8, 1998. In accordance with Article 3 of this Protocol, a Joint Commission responsible for its application has been established. In this connection, Bulgaria proposed the inclusion of a National Border Police Service representative in the Joint Commission for the purpose of coordinating the activity of border authorities in the struggle against cross-border crime. In practice, the NBPS has established direct contacts with representatives of the police detection services of Romania, Greece and Turkey, and exchanges information in specific cases (false IDs, smuggling of vehicles, trafficking in people, arms and materials hazardous to the public, involving citizens of the mentioned countries).

30. At present, the Republic of Bulgaria has signed inter-governmental agreements on readmission with 20 states (Poland, Switzerland, Germany, Slovakia, Greece, France, Spain, Portugal, Denmark, the Czech Republic, Sweden, Slovenia, Austria, Italy, Finland, the Benelux countries, Hungary and Norway). Framework projects for signing readmission agreements with another 9 countries have been exchanged: Croatia, Great Britain, Ireland, Latvia, Estonia, Ukraine, Romania, Russia and Georgia.

The practical implementation of readmission agreements is largely realized by the bodies of the National Border Police Service (NBPS). NBPS cooperates with analogous structures in the neighboring countries and member states, including the area of illegal migration, on the basis of bilateral and multilateral agreements.

Republic of Greece

Cooperation is realized on the basis of an Agreement between the Governments (dating from 1995):

1. Meetings of the Central Joint Bulgarian-Greek Border Commission (CBGBC) are held every year on an exchange basis to discuss issues of security and control of the state border. The 61st regular CBGBC meeting was held in Sofia in June 1999.
2. Meetings of the joint sector border commissions are held regularly. Border commissioners also work actively.
3. A Protocol on cooperation and exchange of information in the sphere of police detection has been signed between representatives of the Ministry of Public Order in Seres and the District Border Service in Petrich.
4. A Cooperation Program signed by representatives of the border security and control bodies of the two countries is being implemented.
5. Constant and effective contact is maintained with the respective bodies (consular service, military attaché, police attaché) at the Greek embassy in Sofia.

Romania

Cooperation between the two border services is realized on the basis of a Convention between the Governments (of 1973):

1. Meetings of the leaderships of the two border services are held every two years on an exchange basis; the last meeting was held in Sofia from 14 to 18 July, 1999. (Since July 1, 1999, after the reform of the old structure, a new border security and control structure is functioning in Romania: the Chief Border Police Inspectorate with the Romanian Interior Ministry.
2. The joint sector border commissions and border commissioners work actively.

3. A Protocol on cooperation and interaction in the area of police detection for struggle against trans-border crime has been signed (Giurgiu, 03/10/1999).

Republic of Turkey

Cooperation is realized on the basis of an Agreement between the Governments (of 1967):

1. The joint sector border commissions meet regularly and border commissioners work actively.
2. No Central Joint Bulgarian-Turkish Border Commission has been set up.

FR Yugoslavia

Cooperation is realized on the basis of an Agreement between the Governments (of 1965, amended in 1982):

1. Meetings of the Central Joint Bulgarian-Yugoslav Border Commission are held every two years on an exchange basis. The last meeting was held in Sofia in 1998.
2. The joint sector border commissions did not meet during the hostilities. The border commissioners held meetings only in extremely important cases and extraordinary circumstances.

Republic of Macedonia

1. After Macedonia became a separate subject of international law, cooperation is realized only at the level of sector border commissions and border commissioners.
2. An agreement between the two governments is needed for fully-fledged cooperation between the border security and control bodies of the two countries.

Bilateral government agreements with countries in the region (Georgia and Russia):

- In accordance with signed agreements, cooperation with the Federal Border Service of the Russian Federation and the Border Troops of Georgia increases particularly in respect of border control and countering illegal migration.
 - The Budapest group (Budapest process), the International Center for the development of migration policy – Austria – Bulgaria through its special bodies takes an active part with its representatives in international conferences organized by the Center.
31. The establishment of a Fund to stimulate customs officers to fight against corruption was announced within the framework of cooperation between the Bulgarian and French customs. It will be funded along PHARE lines and by revenues from customs checks (Sega Daily, 02/22/2000).