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## **1. EUROPEAN INTEGRATION**

Bulgaria is rapidly harmonizing its practices, rules, procedures and national legislation with those of the EU. Our country is a candidate, and not yet a member of the EU and for this reason the participation of the State Telecommunications Commission in the different committees and working groups of the European Commission (EC) is limited. In 2000 the Commission inter-worked with EC structures and mostly, with General Directorate "Enlargement" (working on the matters for accession of the countries, candidates for joining the EU), General Directorate "Information Society" (on matters, related to telecommunications and the use of the radio frequency spectrum) and with General Directorate "Industry" (on matters related to radio equipment and terminal devices).

During the year, the State Telecommunications Commission, together with the Ministry of Transport and Communications, collaborated with EC General Directorate "Enlargement" for setting up the short-term and mid-term priorities in the National program for adoption of *acquis communautaire*, reporting of work done and the overall implementation. Jointly with the Ministry of Transport and Communications, expert staff of the Commission provided information which was incorporated in the regular reports on Bulgaria and assisted in the opinion making of the EC on the progress achieved in the preparation for membership in the EU. Representatives of the State Telecommunications Commission participated in the regular meetings in Sofia with representatives of the EC (twice a year), and then published a report containing assessment of the progress of Bulgaria on its way to EU accession.

At the end of 1999 the State Telecommunications Commission launched preparation for applying before General Directorate "Information Society" for a project, financed from EC PHARE Program funds. Following elaboration and co-ordination of the required documentation in the framework of the STC and the EC Delegation in Sofia, at the beginning of summer 2000 the project for institutional strengthening of the State Telecommunications Commission obtained the approval of the EC and was incorporated in the EC PHARE 2000 National Program. The project for which work will continue well through 2001-2003 with the assistance of experts from EU member states, aims at reinforcing the STC to become a modern, efficient, effective and operating national regulatory body, in compliance with *acquis communautaire* and the Bulgarian legislation. Representatives from the STC attended the seminar "Struggle for Frequencies" held in February in Brussels and the "Information Society" Conference of European Ministers, conducted in April in Warsaw.

The State Telecommunications Commission collaborates with the EC General Directorate "Industry" mainly through the newly established by the EC committee for conformity assessment and market surveillance – TCAM. The STC receives materials issued by TCAM in relation to implementation of Directive 1999/5/ÅÑ regarding radio equipment and telecommunications terminal devices and the mutual recognition of their conformity. It is envisaged that during 2001 experts from the STC will participate directly in the work of the Committee.

Various task forces and committees operate to the Council of Europe (CE), and because of the specifics of issues placed at these forums for discussion, the STC (together with representatives from the NCRT) took part solely in the work of the standing committee dealing with the issues on trans-border television (T-TT Committee).

## **2. INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS IN TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

Taking into account the global character of telecommunications, the State Telecommunications Commission strives to develop its international relations in a way to foster the Bulgarian regulatory system and make it comparable with the European models. To achieve this goal, during 2000 the STC participated actively in the work of the international organizations for telecommunications.

### **2.1. International Telecommunications Union ITU**

ITU is an international organization with a relatively complex organizational structure, on the one hand, due to obligations in the sphere of technical and network problems, radio communications and the development of telecommunications, and on the other - due to the co-operation between the public and the private sector. The State Telecommunications Commission is represented in ITU with the statute of a related administration. As a member of the ITU, the Commission receives all documentation in an electronic way, on a CD-ROM or paper carrier from the respective sectors of the ITU.

- *Sector "Radiocommunication" ITU-R*

The "Management of Radio Frequency Spectrum" Directorate of the State Telecommunications Commission still at the beginning of 2000 made steps towards co-ordination of 178 Bulgarian VHF stations and obtained approval for 42. Approval was given also to 5 Bulgarian television stations. At the same time, applications were received from foreign administrations for the co-ordination of 52 VHF stations (from Romania, Ukraine, Russia), 47 from which gained approval. Ten applications for approval of television stations were submitted (from Romania, Ukraine, Russia and Moldova), of which 7 obtained approval. During the year, the State Telecommunications Commission, together with the Ministry of Transport and Communications and the Scientific Research Institute for Communications (SRIC), carried out a significant amount of work for the preparation and presentation of the official statement of the Republic of Bulgaria before the World Radio Conference in May-June of the same year. The Chairman of the STC participated in the work of WRC 2000 in Istanbul.

- *Sector "Standardization" ITU-T.*

In preparation for the World Assembly for Standardization, held in September in Montreal, Canada, the State Telecommunications Commission, the Ministry of Transport and Communications, the State Agency for Standardization and Metrology

and the Bulgarian Telecommunications Company established a working group, which formulated the official statement of the Bulgarian administration in relation to the documents issued for the assembly. The statement was presented by a Bulgarian delegation, led by the Deputy Chairman of the STC.

- *Sector "Development" ITU-D*

ITU-D regularly organizes world conferences dedicated to development, in which the member states and the sector members co-ordinate the strategic priorities in the policy for sector development. In this regard, the State Telecommunications Commission participated actively in the work of the regional meeting of ITU-D in November in Sofia, convened in preparation for a World conference on the issues of development.

## **2.2. Conference of the European Post and Telecommunications Administrations (CEPT)**

CEPT radio conferences constitute the highest forum, at which industry in the sphere of radio communications makes a meeting with the regulators from the continent. STC took part in the work of the 9<sup>th</sup> CEPT conference held in Lisboa, Portugal.

The State Telecommunications Commission, in its capacity of a regulatory body on the issues of telecommunications, participated in the work of two from all three committees to CEPT – ERC and ECTRA, in the work of the European Radiocommunications Office (ERO) and European Telecommunications Office (ETSO).

### **2.2.1. European Radio communications Committee (ERC)**

The State Telecommunications Commission actively participated in the work groups and the project teams of ERC for development of an uniform European position on issues pertaining to radio communications and frequency harmonization. Officials delegated by the STC took part in the activity of the four major working groups established to ERC – assigned to "Frequency management", "Spectrum Engineering" and "Radio Regulation" and CPG. Throughout the year 2000, the Commission was represented at 12. of the main meetings of those groups, addressing specific problems of interest to the STC.

### **2.2.2. European Committee for Telecommunications Regulatory Activities (ECTRA)**

The State Telecommunications Commission is a member of ECTRA, in that way integrating itself in the process for taking regulatory decisions on an European level, and also receives information, prepared and distributed by ECTRA structures. The majority of tasks undertaken by ECTRA are studies on behalf of the EC, aiming to assist the elaboration of directives and above all, the European directives for conformity. The STC participates in the work of ECTRA, and that has played an important role in striving to achieve liberalization in communications on home ground

– through carefully planning the relevant changes in the normative and legal framework on the way of Bulgaria towards joining the European Community. In 2000 officials from the STC participated in the work of 4 meetings of ECTRA, which were of interest for the activity of the regulatory body.

### **2.3. European Telecommunications Standardization Institute (ETSI)**

Decisions in ETSI are reached by consensus, or in other words, minority interests are respected. In such occasions two procedures are applied, which allow to weigh each single vote. The first procedure involves weighted national voting, where the Bulgarian administration has one vote, and it is assigned to the STC. The other procedure is individual voting, Where all members have one vote each, proportionally weighted against their annual contributions.

In each of the European member states ETSI has a partner in the capacity of the so called National Standardization Organisation (NSO), such as STC for Bulgaria. In fulfillment of this role, the STC regularly organizes national public enquiry (PE) and voting (OP and VOTE) for the EN European standard drafts issued by ETSI. The Commission participates also in the member voting (MV), where all remaining documents of ETSI are subject to.

Table 27 shows the data, indicated for the 2000 enquiries and votings, as well as the published newly approved documents (PU), issued and distributed by ETSI.

**Table 27. Data for ETSI activity**

<b>Procedure</b>	<b>PE</b>	<b>VOTE</b>	<b>OP</b>	<b>MV</b>	<b>PU</b>
Number of procedures	34	34	42	18	each week
Number of processed documents	197	250	276	31	1670

Fulfilling its functions of a National Standardization Organisation, the State Telecommunications Commission receives and keeps the quarterly issued CD-ROMs, containing the texts of all approved standards and other documents by ETSI. The STC, took part in the highest ETSI forum – the work of the 35<sup>th</sup> and 36<sup>th</sup> General Assemblies, in April and November 2000.

### **3. BILATERAL CO-OPERATION**

The structures authorized to regulate telecommunications in the neighboring countries have not yet been set up (Macedonia, Yugoslavia), or are being currently established (Turkey), which gave rise to initial official talks in view of launching a number of meetings with the regulators in the framework of bi-lateral co-operation. High-level meetings were held with representatives from Romania and Turkey. The first contacts with the management of the Romanian and the newly operating Turkish administration were made at WRC'2000 in Istanbul, where also certain concrete agreements were reached. Following these first steps, The STC took part in the work of the 14<sup>th</sup> session of the joint inter-governmental Bulgarian-Turkish Committee for Economic and Technical Co-operation, convened in November 2000 in Ankara. As a

result from the visit, an agreement was reached for a visit by high level officials from the Turkish administration to Bulgaria in the first quarter of 2001, followed by expert level work. In parallel, in October the Ministry of Transport and Communications launched the first meeting of the joint working group "Bulgaria – Romania" on the issues of strategy, development, regulation and operation in the sphere of telecommunications. Following that, the changes made in the top level Romanian management delayed the process. During the regional symposium of ITU-D in Sofia were established contacts with representatives from the respective ministries in Yugoslavia and Macedonia, which demonstrated an interest for the Bulgarian experience, related to the forthcoming set up of national regulatory bodies in both countries. Because of the ongoing negotiations for the sales of the Bulgarian Telecommunications Company in 2000, no attempts were made for arrangement of meetings with the Greek administration.

The contacts with our neighboring countries have a main focus directly upon the resolution of certain issues, related to the co-ordination of radio and television broadcasting, fixed and satellite services and mobile and terrestrial services, co-ordination of the national frequency plans for effective use of the radio frequency spectrum by the various types of services, as well as issues relating to EMC. During those meetings information of mutual interest is exchanged (amount and manner of determining tariff rates for performance of telecommunications activities, etc.

Upon invitation by the Ministry of Transport and Communications, in December the STC participated by representation of its experts in a meeting in Sofia of a joint working group "Posts and Telecommunications" in the framework of the Bulgarian-German Council for Co-operation. At this meeting, the telecommunications regulatory framework was reviewed and issues from the policy of Germany were presented and discussed for development of an Information society and Internet, for its numbering capacity (principles, tariff rates and charges), as well as the similarity in characteristics of the numbering plans of both countries. The representatives of the German regulatory body invited experts from the STC to visit Germany during 2001 in view of continuation of the discussions on issues of mutual interest.

