

TEMPLATE

To be used by Member States on a voluntary basis for the reporting to the Commission on progress at national level regarding the implementation of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy in accordance with National Sustainable Development Strategies

TEMPLATE
EU SDS MEMBER STATES' INPUT

1. General Information/Introduction

- Name of Member State/ coordinating body/ contact information etc.
The Republic of Bulgaria
Coordinating Institution: Ministry of Economy and Energy
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2. SDS Policy Guiding Principles

The defined leading principles of the National Strategy for Sustainable Development are as follows:

1. Support and defence of the fundamental rights – putting the individual in the center of the EU's policies, defence of the fundamental rights by fighting discrimination reducing poverty and social exclusion;
2. Solidarity in and between the generations – identifying the needs of the current generation without limiting opportunities for future generations to meet their needs;
3. An open and democratic society - guaranteeing citizens' rights of access to information and ensuring equal rights;
4. Inclusion of citizens – increasing citizen participation in the decision-making process. Supporting education and implementing the principles of sustainable development;
5. Inclusion of business and social partners – increasing the social dialogue, Public-Private Partnerships;
6. Coherence between politics/policies and administration – increasing the mutual connections between the policies of the EU and actions on a local, regional and national levels;
7. Integration of policies – achieving full utilisations of the relevant instruments for better regulation;
8. Using the best available knowledge: policies being based on the best available knowledge and need to have a solid economic motivation/be based on cost-benefit analysis;
9. Caution Principle – when there is no certain scientific evidence, it is necessary to implement assessment procedures and relevant preventative measures to reduce threats to human health and the environment;
10. Polluter pays – the poluter pays for the damages that he has caused on human health and the environment.

3. Progress on EU SDS key challenges

3.1. Climate change and clean energy

3.1.1. EU SDS implementation

3.1.1.1. Kyoto Protocol Agreements

Bulgaria is committed to fighting global warming by implementing the UN Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol. As a member country of the UN Frame Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol, Bulgaria has agreed to reduce its emissions of Greenhouse Gases by 8% of the 1988 levels during 2008-2012.

Thanks to the consistent government policy for sustainable transition to a market economy, the completed restructuring and removal of direct and indirect subsidies, as well as the

implementation of the Action Plan for Climate Change in 2000 has achieved significant reduction by 56% of the green house gas emissions compared to the base year (1988).

Even though our country has a significantly lower volume of emissions than the allowed emissions' rate, it has a good potential to even further reduce green house gas emissions. This potential could be fulfilled through the utilization of policies for emissions reduction, which promote a speedy introduction of additional policies and measures. Currently, there are a number of joint implementation projects. Those are aimed at reducing emissions of greenhouse gases through the gasification of the Sofia and Varna Municipalities, the cities of Veliko Turnovo, Gorna Oryahovitsa and Lyaskovets, the application of energy efficiency measures, rehabilitation of district heating systems etc. The utilization by the Republic of Bulgaria of the flexible mechanisms of the Kyoto Protocol - "Joint Implementation" and "International Emission Trade" allow not only to attract foreign investment into the most intensive, as far as greenhouse emissions are concerned, industries, but also to invest national capital into environmentally sound technologies. In order to gain the maximum benefit, the country also encourages measures for household reduction of greenhouse emissions, which are cost efficient, and in many cases does not require additional expenses. These reduced emissions can also be sold on the international market.

3.1.1.2. Achieving a market based energy policy to a market based economy

The main priorities of the Bulgarian Energy Policy are perfectly in line with those of the EU's Energy Policies for the development of **market based energy markets, guaranteeing the security of energy supplies while protecting the environment and reducing the climate change factors**. The priority measures and activities, comprising the Energy Strategy of the country aim for an integrated and balanced method of ensuring a market economy for the Bulgarian economy and energy, solving the problems related to guaranteeing the security and continuation of energy supplies on affordable for society prices, and implementation by the country goals of reducing the risk factors that have a negative impact on the environment and on climate changes

3.1.2. Specific national / NSDS actions in this field

3.1.2.1. Achieving a market based energy policy to a market based economy

Until recently, the energy sector was a closed monopoly, but as a result of the liberalisation process, that took started in Europe during the 90s, electricity can be traded across borders in the framework of an open and competitive market. Competitive activities in this sector include: electricity production, supplies and trading, despite the network activities – transmission and distribution – are regarded as a natural monopoly, which has to be operated within a regulated environment.

Bulgaria actively participates in the development of the Regional Energy Market in South East Europe. The foundation for the formation of the Regional Energy Market in South Eastern Europe is the Treaty for the Establishment of the Energy Community. The Treaty is a follow-up of the initiative establishing the Regional Energy Market in South East Europe, the so called "Athens Process", which started with the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding of the Regional Electricity Market in South East Europe and its integration into the internal electricity market of the European Community on November 15, 2002 and continued with the Memorandum of Understanding regarding the Regional Energy Market in South East Europe, signed on December 8, 2003 in Athens. Bulgaria's effective participation in the formulated single European Energy Market, to a large extent depends on the construction of the relevant interconnections in the power as well as the gas sector. In this regard, a number of projects on regional and on multi-national level have been initialized.

3.1.2.2. Security of Energy Supplies

The country's energy dependency on energy imports is 48% for 2005, which is slightly below the typical level for the EU. The main reason for this high percentage is the import of liquid fuels and natural gas. The share of the imported energy resources in the production of power and heat for 2007 is expected to be around 29%. Bulgaria is relying on one main supplier for energy resources – the Russian Federation. This is why our country, through long-term contracts with the

Russian Federation, is guaranteed through market prices primary resources (natural gas) for the operation of the energy system.

Bulgaria is among the main countries-participants in the implementation of the priority for the EU gas pipeline project "NABUCCO", which will ensure Bulgaria and the EU's access to the significant gas resources of the Caspian Region and the Middle East, and accordingly reduce our dependence on our current and only supplier for natural gas imports. The second strategic project, which our country is putting a strong emphasis on is the building on the Black Sea Side or another suitable location, of a Regional Regasification Terminal for Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) to ensure diversification and ensure the security of gas supplies for Bulgaria and the countries in the South East Europe.

On the other hand, the Burgas-Alexandropolis and Burgas-Vlore oil pipelines, the construction of energy infrastructure along Corridor №8 (Bulgaria-The Republic of Macedonia-Albania-Italy), the gas pipeline Dupnitsa-Dimitrovgrad-Nish, construction of an interconnecting power line with Macedonia and a second interconnection with Greece, ensure the security of energy supplies and competitive prices in the South East Europe region and the EU.

The power and heat balance of the country is well structured from the perspective of diversifying various types of primary energy resources, but the simultaneous dependency on imports of the above mentioned is 25% for 2006. The only significant local energy resource is the low calorie lignite coal with a high sulphur content. For the purpose of lowering import dependency of energy resources on one hand, and at the same time reducing the harmful effects of global warming and climate change on the environment on the other, the utilisation of local energy resources is the main objective of the country's energy strategy. The main efforts are geared towards the encouragement of investments for the optimum use of renewable energy sources and for the introduction of environmentally sound technologies for the modernisation of existing and for the increase of new electricity generating capacities on local lignite coal.

Bulgaria lacks quality coal, oil and natural gas. Oil imports from Russia for 2006 were around 3 billion Leva, and nuclear fuel imports 80 million Leva. Bulgaria has nuclear fuel reserves which will be sufficient for our needs for at least twenty years. There is a positive effect from the low price dependency of electricity energy by nuclear plants to variations in the price of nuclear fuel, because its share in the price cost is not higher than 20%. This is why when it comes to guaranteeing security of electric supply, which would contribute to reducing external dependency on energy supply imports, mitigation of climate changes, the sustainable market development of nuclear energy is crucial. Nuclear energy has a significant contribution in a number of Member Countries, as it contributes to the security of electricity supply, as well as limiting green house gasses in the fight against global warming and the reduction of SO₂, NO_x and dust. In this regard, the building of Belene Nuclear Power Plant is a guarantee for energy independence from imports of fossil fuels not only for the country but for the South East Europe Region, with the assumption of the anticipated regional electricity deficit and the lack of regional electricity generation capacities.

3.1.2.3. Sustainable Energy Development:

Renewable energy sources

In the period 1997-2005 the share of renewable energy sources in the gross consumption of fuels and energy increased from 2,2% to 5,6% and the used sources were biomass (wood for heating), hydro and wind energy. In the Global energy balance for 2005 the National Statistic Institute also took account and used geothermal energy data. The recorded increase of RES is due to the rise of biomass consumption by 200% and hydro energy by 71% for period 1997-2005.

Generation of electricity from RES

Bulgaria pursues a consistent policy aimed at encouraging the generation and consumption of energy from renewable energy sources (RES). In the Energy law the requirements of EU Directive 2001/77 have been completely transposed and encourage mechanisms for all producers of electricity energy from RES, as: obligatory off-take of the whole quantity of electricity produced from RES, priority construction of new capacity, preferential price-building for period of 12 years,

opportunity for signing long term 12 year contracts for electricity purchase. In 2006 electricity produced from RES in the country amounted to 4254 GWh. Taking into account the fact that 97,2% from the produced RES electricity is by hydro plants (for 2006) and the rest 2,8% is by wind, and the generation is strongly influenced by climate conditions. This was the main reason for Bulgaria to set indicative objectives for generation of electricity from RES. Bulgaria has adopted an indicative goal of 11% of electricity produced from RES in the gross domestic consumption of electricity by 2010, as 10% is considered quite realistic in case of unfavorable climate conditions. In 2005 and 2006 an 11% goal was achieved thanks to the considerable amount of rain.

The fulfillment of indicative objective in 2010 is possible in case of favorable weather conditions and the realization of projects using RES.

Special credit lines have been created to assist the initial investments in technologies for electricity generation from RES. The utilization of the potential of local RES has been integrated as priority into the National Strategic Referent Frame for the period 2007 – 2013. Separate operations are included in the Operative programs “Competitiveness of Bulgarian economy”, “Regional development”, “Rural regions development” program.

In 2006 legislation was developed aimed at encouraging the use of renewable energy sources, alternative energy sources and stimulation of biofuels’ utilization, alternative energy sources (AES) and biofuels and a higher security for investors. This legislation regulates the social relations regarding electricity generation and consumption stimulation, heat and/or energy for cooling from RES and AES as well as the biofuels generation and consumption.

The legislation was adopted by the Council of Ministers with Decision N 881 of 19 December 2006 and was adopted at first reading by the National Assembly (NA).

Biofuels

The legislation encouraging the utilization of the renewable energy sources, alternative energy sources and biofuels reflects the requirements of Directive 2003/30/EU for stimulating the utilization of biofuels. The draft legislation provides development and suggestion of adoption of national indicative objectives for encouraging the utilization of biofuels in the transport sector. At the present moment working group for elaboration of National long term program for consumption of biofuels in transport sector 2007-2020 in which national indicative objectives for stimulation of biofuels use in transport sector.

Currently, NSI does not provide statistic data for the biofuels consumed in the country. It is expected that such data will be included in the Global energy balance of the country for 2006.

Energy efficiency

On the Final energy consumption (FEC) level Bulgarian economy is among the most energy intensive economies in the EU. For 2004 the energy efficiency of the Final energy consumption in Bulgaria, compared to the average European level, was about 40 % lower. Bulgaria boasts a well developed industry and a well structured energy sector. This characteristic impacts the national energy efficiency indexes on Primary energy consumption level. Currently, Bulgaria utilizes about twice as much primary energy sources for output of a unit GDP (calculated by the parity method for buying power). Despite the relatively poor energy efficiency of the Bulgarian economy and taking account of the fact that our country has considerable potential for the implementation of economically viable energy-savings measures, the consumption of energy is beginning to increase, following a period of stagnation. This trend is especially evident in the transport sector. This is very unfavorable in view of the fact that Bulgaria imports more than 99 percent of the oil needed and about 1/3 of trading deficiency in 2005 was caused by that import.

Expert analyses show that in an environment of limited investment possibilities and the current fuels prices, the economic effect of EE measures would be higher than the effect of renewable technologies implementation in the short-term. Therefore from the perspective of the sustainable development of energy consumption it would be much more economically justified for

Bulgaria in the next few years to focus its efforts upon measures aimed at decreasing the consumption of conventional fuels through energy efficiency and economically effective renewable technologies (production of heat from wood, hot domestic water from solar collectors, etc.).

A relatively favourable environment for improving energy efficiency respectively competitiveness of all economical sectors is created through the current Energy efficiency law, sublegislation and the relevant programs in Bulgaria. The concept of the Energy efficiency law is based on the view that liberal processes in a market environment should be supported by implementation of measures and actions for implementing the formulated national priorities and objectives.

A number of projects under the “public-private partnership” scheme are being implemented in order to support the policy for energy efficiency improvement in our country. Examples of such partnerships are: (1) The Bulgarian Energy Efficiency Fund (BEEF), created in accordance with the Energy Efficiency Law, specialized in financing of energy efficiency measures on commercial principles; (2) credit lines in the area of energy efficiency and renewables, partially financed with resources from Kozloduy International Fund and credit sources participation of EBRD and EIB, oriented toward small projects involving households users, private companies and energy efficient projects in the municipal and private sector.

Currently, the first three-year plan in line with the requirements of Directive 2006/32/EO for EE at end-users’ level and energy utilities level is being prepared. Bulgaria will set out additional measures for EE improvement in that plan, as well as indicative targets for energy savings, that will have to be reached by the end of 2010.

Bulgaria takes an active part in projects for research and development activities and technological innovations as well as in developing policies, programmes and strategies, incl. for social culture and knowledge improvement in the area of energy efficiency and renewables in the frameworks of European Community energy programmes – the Seventh Framework Programme and Intelligent Energy – Europe.

Greenhouse gases emissions

It is necessary to take into account that in the process of its development during the recent years a number of measures were implemented in the Bulgarian energy sector conducive to stabilization and reduction of greenhouse gases emissions (GHG). Based thoroughly on the market principles, the energy sector vastly contributed to decreasing greenhouse gases emissions in other sectors.

The GHG emissions in our country have been reduced by 56 percent as only in the energy sector they have been reduced by 25 percent.

The European GHG emissions trading scheme and requirements of Directive 2003/87 have been transposed in the Bulgarian legislation through the Law for Environmental Protection, the sublegislation thereto and the National Allocation plan for the participation of R Bulgaria. The Scheme covers all the energy companies in Bulgaria. The Bulgarian emissions trading scheme set a common framework for the energy sector development and it might turn out to be the most powerful incentive for investments into measures improving production efficiency and reducing GHG emissions.

3.2. Sustainable transport

3.2.1. EU SDS implementation

3.2.1. EU SDS implementation

The accession of the Republic of Bulgaria in the European Union and the need of integration of its transport infrastructure within the European transport network resulted significant efforts in the implementation of European standards for modern, environment friendly and safety transport.

The specific goals of the national transport policy are sustainable development of the national and international road and railroad infrastructure, improvement of the safety of transport, development of maritime and inland waterways transport, integration of the national transport network in the transport network of EU, balance between the different modes of transport and development of intermodal links.

The achievement of these goals is pre-condition for sustainable economic growth. The improvement of the existing infrastructure and the development of Trans-European transport corridors through Bulgaria will increase significantly the passengers and cargo traffic. This will have a direct positive effect on the national economic development, employment and general improvement of the national welfare. The development of environmentally friendly transport and the provision of by-pass routes of the urban areas will supplement for the improvement of the eco-balance and will improve the quality of life in the country.

3.2.2. Specific national / NSDS actions in this field

The main goal of the process for sustainable development of the transport is the constant modernization of the transport infrastructure and the different types of vehicles. The lack of investments in the maintenance in the previous decades and the increased demand of transport services require new and improved, long term planning of its future development. There is certain period of time needed for the creation of modern transport infrastructure, as well as for the long term planning that should ensure the constant flow of financial resources and support from every national and private stakeholder involved in the process. In accordance with the public policies and the partnership principals, it is very important to be provided improved conditions for participation of the private sector in the transport infrastructure development, including options for different forms of public-private partnership.

3.2.2.1 Promotion of usage of motor vehicles corresponding to the contemporary environmental requirements

Due to the increase usage of lead free fuel during the last years, the harmful lead emissions generated by the road transport were decreased to a large scale in comparison with previous periods and brought to an end in 2004. However the air pollution produced by the road transport in the so called “hot points” of the country is increasing due to the constantly increasing number of automobiles.

This problem is complicated additionally by the large number of old vehicles. Around 24 % of the motor vehicles are 16 to 20 years old, and almost 39 % are over 20 years old. That causes significant environmental problems.

There are positive trend in the renovation of the cargo vehicles and the new registered motor vehicles are in accordance with the requirements for harmful emissions and noise. Currently there is a state policy, encouraging the production and usage of bio-fuels for the transport. The aim is to achieve 5.75 % market share in Bulgaria up to 2010.

3.2.2.2 Modernisation of the road infrastructure

The modernisation of the road infrastructure is one of the main requirements for the provision of sustainable development of the transport sector. The completion of the national motorways is a high priority. That includes the construction of 717.14 km motorways. It has started in 2006 (starting date for “Liulin” motorway and completion of “Struma”, “Trakia” and “Maritsa” motorway), as follows:

- **“Trakia” Motorway (Kalotina – Sofia bypass road “Northern arc” – Burgas) – A1** (section of Trans-European corridors IV, VIII and X) – total length 446 km. 200 km are already in exploitation, 58 km in construction, 188 km to be completed;
- **“Maritsa” Motorway – A3** (section of Trans-European corridors IV, IX and X) – total length 114 km. 20 km are already in exploitation. 20 km in construction;
- **“Struma” Motorway - A6** (section of Trans-European corridor IV) – total length 156 km. The first 19 km. from the remain are already under construction;
- **Sofia bypass road “Southern arc”**– total length 28 km – 4 km already in exploitation;
- **“Liulin” Motorway - A5** (section of Trans-European corridors IV and VIII) – total length 19 km;
- **“Hemus” Motorway - A2** – total length 456,3 km. 151,3 km already in exploitation, 25 km in construction, 280 km. The motorway is of European and national importance and connects the capital with the biggest Bulgarian port; it connects all regions of North Bulgaria.
- **“Black Sea” Motorway - A4** (section of Trans-European corridors VIII) – total length 102 km, 8 km already in exploitation.

3.2.2.3. Sustainable development of the railway transport

The future railway infrastructure improvement will be focused on achievement of the EU quality standards and ensuring interoperability through the planned investments and especially speed restrictions removal; increasing of the infrastructure productivity in order to reduce the infrastructure costs (respectively reduction of the infrastructure charges); introduction of EU legislation and Best practices in the field of contracting with the operators in order to develop well adapted time-tables; improvement of the railway links with the neighbour countries; reduction of the time needed for border crossings, according to the Geneva recommendations; improvements in the railway stations attractiveness; introduction of appropriate infrastructure and conditions for the container and combined transport and keeping high quality standard related to the railway network safety.

With the inter-city transport services there exists good potential for growth in the forthcoming years along with railway infrastructure improvement and refurbishment of the rolling stock. Higher speed and the offer of better and more effective services to the clients shall lead to greater transportation volumes. In this segment, the railway transport sector shall have commercial interests and will strive to enhance the scope of the offered transport and other concomitant services through increase of the number of “inter-city” trains till the year 2012, when the national network of inter-city trains will be built. Regular connections between 40 of the biggest cities, in which 56% of the population of the country live, shall be established;

In the year 2005, 25 new Desiro DMUs worth 67 million euro have been purchased. In 2007 another 15 three-car and 10 four-car EMUs which have already been contracted will be delivered. They will serve the suburban and regional lines. Altogether by the end of 2012 the railway sector envisages investments of 250 million euro and refurbishment of the passenger car fleet by 862 cars* along with delivery of 130 new passenger cars for international trains, recycling of 212 cars for Intercity transportation services as well as modernization and delivery of 520 cars for Inter Regio transportation services.

3.2.2.4 Sustainable development of the public transport

There is a tendency for general decrease in the usage of public transport, obviously because of the increase in the usage of private vehicles. The structure of the transportation is itself subject to change. While the electro transport keeps almost the same levels of usage (16,8 % less in 2005, than in 2000), the usage of bus transport decreases with 41.5 %. And the relative weight of the electro-transport reaches 38.3 % in 2005.

The promotion and development of environment friendly public transport is a common policy in every big city. The strategic goal is to promote the usage of public transport and thus to decrease the constant increase in the private motor vehicles. The electro-transport is preferred because of it is more environment friendly.

3.2.2.5 Decrease in the number of road accidents

The decrease in the number of road accidents is a primary goal of every institution and body engaged in the road transport sector, both on national and local level. With some minor decrease in 2001, the average number of road accidents is constantly increasing. However it should be noted that the increase in the road accidents is not equivalent to the rate of the increase of the motor vehicles and the transport services. The number of light vehicles has increased with 22.4 % for 2004 compared with 2000 and the number of cargo vehicles increased with 24.6 %. For the same period the number of road accidents has increased with 10.5 % and the number of victims (death) has decreased with 7 %. The number of wounded (15 %) is similar compared with the other Member states and the structure of the road accidents is also close to the average European – around 72 % from the road accidents generated by light vehicles.

This is result of constant efforts in the control and normative activities of different organizations and institutions. For example Ordinance 32 for the periodic examinations for checking of the technical condition of the motor vehicles, which implements Directive 96/96/EC amended by Directive 2003/27/EC and Regulation 1882/2003/EC, imposes more strict requirements on the technical condition of the motor vehicles.

The state regulations related to the approval of new motor vehicles, trailers, systems, components, separate technical meetings (74 in total), are related mainly to the improvement of the active and passive safety as well as the environment friendly engines of the new motor vehicles.

The aims are to be continued the trend for relative decrease in the road accidents compared with the constant increase in the motor vehicles, as well as to be reached double reduction in absolute figures of the victims to such accidents in 2010, compared to 2000.

3.2.2.6 Sustainable development of the intermodal transport

The implementation of modern schemes for management of the transport consist mainly in the development and management of intermodal transport system. There is such system in Bulgaria and it is in the process of modernisation and further development. The intermodal network should be planned on international level, giving the option to the carters to operate on longest possible routes for combined transport. The terminal network should serve the national business centres of each country. Basically the Bulgarian intermodal system is in accordance with these requirements, but it needs further technical modernization in order to benefit completely from the opportunities coming from the increased demand for transport services in the region, as well as to develop sustainable transport system.

At present, one block-train is processing twice a week on the existing container terminal ‘Sofia’ (container block-train Sofia-Thessaloniki-Sofia), along with other containers as coach shipment in national or import-export communication (60-100 TEU per week). An increase in the motion frequency of the trains up to 4-6 per week is forthcoming. The existing equipment and infrastructure of the Sofia container terminal is insufficient for processing of more combined units and trains. For the period 2008 – 2010, a construction of a new container terminal near Sofia should be planned. Until then, with relatively small investments in the present container terminal in Sofia, in the existing infrastructure and equipment, more trains could be processed and therefore more combined trains could be run.

Currently the combined transport market in Bulgaria is under development. Most containers are loaded or unloaded in Varna Port itself and not transported as container transport further into Bulgaria. There is a limited flow of road transit containers and also a limited number of containers on rail. Currently there is only the single direct train / shuttle for containers or combined transport, Sofia/Thessaloniki, which was inaugurated in 2003. Other container flows exist between Plovdiv and Burgas, Varna and Maritsa Iztok.

3.2.2.7 Sustainable development of the waterborne transport

The European transport policy emphasises the development of intra-Community maritime transport and inland waterway transport, two key components of intermodality, which should provide a means of coping with the growing congestion of road and rail infrastructure and of tackling air pollution. Until now these two modes have been underused. These transport modes should be supported through the development of better inland waterway services, promotion of the short-sea shipping (establishment of Motorways of the sea) and more efficient port services.

Danube River is the only domestic inland waterway. The Bulgarian section of the Danube River is situated in the lower flow of the river. The transport functions of the Danube River are of great importance for the development of the adjacent river regions. Danube River has been included in the general scheme of the European Inland Waterways (Pan-European Transport Corridor VII), on the meetings of the European Transport Ministers, held in Crete, 1994 and Helsinki, 1997. The Rhine, Main and Danube Rivers connect Western and Eastern Europe by the Rhine-Maine-Danube Channel, thus giving excellent practical opportunities for direct navigational links between the Black Sea and North Sea with and a convenient waterway access to many of the European countries and their industrial centres. The increased interest in this important European inland waterway was confirmed in the report of the High level group on the trans-European transport network, 27 June 2003 (Van Miert report) and in the Decision (EC) 1692/96 revised by the Decision (EC) 884/2004. The Danube River was identified as priority axis № 18.

The Republic of Bulgaria develops sustainable policy for improvement of the navigational conditions on the Danube River. There is currently a project under implementation that aims to ensure the recommended parameters of the fairway (to improve the navigation way) in the two most critical sections of the Danube River. It will secure the international navigation and ensure the passage of vessels throughout the whole year in these sections.

The project should improve the river bed and the banks, including islands which will control the river flow, in a way that will secure free navigation in two of the most critical bottlenecks in the joint Bulgarian-Romanian section of the Danube River, namely in the section between km 530 and 520 – Batin and the section between km 576 and km 560 – Belene. The location of the two sections (the two sub objects) is within the section, which is under the maintenance of the Bulgarian side (km 610 – km 375).

In order to execute an adequate safety and environmental control of the navigation in the Bulgarian maritime spaces the Republic of Bulgaria has started the establishment of Vessel Traffic Management Information System since 1998 and at the current moment the system is already functioning. VTMIS is a system of harmonized informational services for the maritime shipping. The VTS information exchange between the ships and the coast based operators leads to higher level of maritime safety in the Bulgarian territorial waters, increased pollution response capacity, creation of instrument for effective traffic management and information services, support of the SAR operation implementation, overall facilitation of the maritime transport.

It is calculated that the increase in the Vehicle/Kilometer in the inland waterways for the period 1998 – 2010 is going to be over 30 %. The general growth in traffic between Member States is expected to double by 2020 (Foreword to “TEN-T Priority Axes and Projects 2005” by Jacques Barrot – Vice President of the European Commission, with Responsibility for Transport). The Danube corridor (TEN-T Priority Axe 18) is increasingly congested due to sharp increase in the volume of traffic, which is expected to continue. One of the instruments that should solve this problem is the River Information Systems. Currently its under implementation. The River Information Services concept, which represents the most substantial change in the sector in several decades, aims at the implementation of information services in order to support the planning and management of traffic and transport operations. The implementation of RIS will not only improve safety and efficiency in traffic but simultaneously enhance the efficiency and security of transport operations.

3.3. Sustainable consumption and production

3.3.1 Eco-effectiveness

3.3.1.1 Environmental-friendly technologies

During the last years operators of industrial instalations and facilities have planned and made considerable technical changes in production instalations and facilities, as result of environmental legislative control implementation, and increasing requirements of the market regarding prime cost and the quality of the manufactured products. Ministry of the environments and water controls this process mainly by instruments for preventive control: decisions, solutions and licenses.

Complex licences until 30.10.2007 have been issued to the operators of all valid instalations in the range of Appendix №4 of the Environment Preservation Law, and operative instalations should work with the issued complex licences. From 2003 r. complex licences have been issued to all new instalations in the scope of Appendix №4 of the Environment Preservation Law, and the new instalations are built and operate in conformity with their issued complex licences. In 2006 124 complex licence procedures have started, specific criteria for receiving of eco-marking of two product groups have been confirmed with an order of the minister of the environment and waters which subserves preventive instruments for non-admission environment polution development and implementation. Special attention was given to the education of the competent authorities and enterprises for adoption of the procedures connected with the complex licences, environment effect estimation and environment management.

3.3.1.2 Wastes

The main objective which Bulgaria sets in the waste sector is diminishing their amount and adoption of modern management schemes. The principals “polluter pays” and “producer’s responsibility are entirely implemented in organizing and financing in waste activities. There is an organization of regional initiatives in planning, constructing and infrastructure operation for residential waste treatment and enhacement the role of the public sector in the service supply in the area of gathering, treatment, use and elimination of wastes.

In 2006 in the sphere of waste management improvement the work was focused on construction of effective working system for divided waste gathering and building of regional waste depots. System creation and instalations construction for plastic packs waste use, treatment of out of use motor vehicles, residential equipment and electronic machinery. The municipalities of Karlovo, Dobrich, Russe, Troian and Sliven were stimulated to implement divided waste gathering through resources given by the Enterprise for environmental safeguard activities management at the Ministry of environment and water. Contracts for implementation of divided pack-waste gathering

have been signed with the municipals of Vratza, Montana, Dupniza, Pleven, Bankia, Pavel bania, Burgas-Sozopol, Pomorie and Kiten, RC “Albena”, Turgoviste, Gurmen, Hagidimovo, Satovcha, Samokov, “Pancharevo” and “Studentski” regions of Capital municipality.

During the same period 55 regional daily-waste depots were gradually constructed, set in the National waste management programme

Sustainable consumption

In the area of energy effectiveness in final consumption two operations to operative programme “Regional development”

- Social infrastructure operation: Audits for energy consumption and measures for energy effectiveness for all projects in public institution’s buildings, connected with the social, cultural, educational and health infrastructure (for example heat insulation, joinery change, local links to the centralized heating system, gas supply or renewable energy sources).

- Residential policy operation: Social infrastructure operation: Audits for energy consumption and measures for energy effectiveness for all projects in residential buildings, connected with the social, cultural, educational and health infrastructure (for example heat insulation, joinery change, and local links to the centralized heating system, gas supply or renewable energy sources).

Sustainable production

In rational energy use area in Operative programme “Economy competitiveness development” an operation is provided, which stipulates activities for energy-saved technologies implementation stimulation in enterprises and provided grant scheme for non-payment help for energy-saved technologies implementation in the companies.

In agricultural area. The mid-term evaluation of the SAPARD programme in Bulgaria shows that SAPARD supported agricultural holdings and companies that are net employment creators; only 24% had a reduction of number of employees after the investment while more than 75% increased their labour force after the investment. 88% of them have increased their average salaries.

Although at this stage the projects on the infrastructure measures are yet to be completed, the global objective that was planned in NARDP (National Agriculture and Rural Development Plan), i.e. to improve the quality of life and to increase job opportunities in rural areas, remains to be achieved in the future.

As far as the natural resource management and safeguard of the environment is concerned, the SAPARD’s direct contribution to the protection of the environment and the management of natural resources cannot be assessed as positive. This is due to a number of different reasons, including the cancellation of the measure on water resource management and the very late starting of the agri-environmental measure. In general terms it can be said that environmental protection is still seen, in the eyes of people, as a mere set of rules and limitations rather than a sustainable management practice potentially capable of contributing to the diversification of rural economy through the creation of alternative sources of income.

In terms of management of the Programme, SAPARD has represented an important challenge for the Ministry of Agriculture and the newly created structures involved in its implementation, first obviously for the State Fund Agriculture, acting as SAPARD Agency on one side, and for the MoAF SAPARD Department of the Rural Development Directorate on the other side.

In this respect, SAPARD has strongly contributed to develop the capacity, at administrative level, to implement CAP objectives and procedures. The national legislation is now fully harmonized with the EU acquis and the SAPARD Agency is undergoing the process of being accredited as Paying Agency for CAP and the Rural Development Fund.

5.4. Setting objectives, targets and milestones

As regards the post-accession period, Bulgaria have identified the following global objectives of the National Strategic Rural Development Plan (NSRDP) for the 2007–2013 period, based on the Community Strategic Guidelines for rural development, on the major EU priorities associated with

jobs creation, growth and sustainability, and in complementarily with other EU policies, and finally taking into account the socio-economic conditions in rural areas of Bulgaria:

1. To contribute to the development of competitive agriculture and forestry sector and innovations-based food-processing sector.
2. To support protection of natural resources and environment of the rural areas.
3. To improve the quality of life and job opportunities.

The first objective of the NSRDП is focused on the increasing competitiveness of agriculture, food and forestry sectors. It is to be achieved through interventions, supporting modernization and restructuring of the agri-food chain, the forestry and primary wood-processing activities. The overall strategic approach is to boost productivity and competitiveness of agriculture, food and forestry sectors.

The second objective is targeting the preservation of natural resources and the improvement of countryside. Better land management and protection of environment will secure sustainable and integrated development of the countryside, conservation of biodiversity and local breeds. It will also help for the preservation of traditional land practices and will contribute to the diversification of rural economy through the creation of alternative sources of income.

The third strategic objective aims at increasing job opportunities and improving the quality of life in rural area. To ensure long-term economic and social sustainability of rural areas, the current trend of rural areas abandonment and economic decline has to be reversed.

The strategy aims at supporting the development of rural areas by creating better living environment and creation of new employment opportunities.

Innovation is set as a horizontal priority under the National Strategy Plan. It will be achieved by measures, directly targeting innovation (i.e. support to co-operation for development of new products, processes and technologies) and through giving thematic priorities under the measures of all axes: support to innovation of products, technologies and practices of agri-food enterprises, introduction of new market outlets for agriculture (bio-fuels, bio-mass), diffusion of scientific knowledge and innovative practices through training, development of ICT infrastructure, etc.

Gender equality will be mainstreamed in the implementation of all measures. Special publicity actions, targeted to rural women, will be implemented to promote RDP funding opportunities. The gender equality principles will be strictly followed in the selection of projects. The interventions for improvement of basic services in villages (childcare) will also benefit the rural women work-life balance.

This section illustrates the links between Overall objectives, sub-objectives and Community Strategic Priorities

Objective	Sub-objective	Community Strategic priorities
I. Development of a competitive and innovation-based agriculture, forestry and food-processing sectors	1. To restructure and modernize physical potential and promote innovation	SG 1: knowledge transfer and innovation in the food chain and priority sectors for investments in physical and human capital through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - restructuring and modernization of the agriculture sector - integration in the agrifood chain - facilitating innovation and access to R&D - encouraging take-up and diffusion of ICT - fostering dynamic entrepreneurship - develop new outlets for agricultural and forestry products - improving environmental performance of farms and forestry
	2. To support adjustment of farming structures and forest holdings and their integration into the agri-food and forest-product processing chains	
	3. To promote knowledge and improve human potential	
II. Protection of environment and improvement of natural resources	1. To preserve biodiversity	SG 2: contribute to biodiversity and preservation of HNV farming and forestry systems, water, climate change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - environmental services and animal-friendly practices - preserving farmed landscape and forests - combating climate changes - consolidate organic farming - encouraging environmental/economic win-win initiatives - promoting territorial balance
	2. To protect soils, water and air from pollution	
	3. To protect and improve agri-forestry sites of high natural value	
III. Improvement of Quality of Life and promotion of alternative employment opportunities in rural areas	1. Improve quality of life in rural areas	SG 3: Creation of employment opportunities and conditions for growth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - raising economic activities and employment rates in rural economy - encouraging the entry of women into the labour market - putting the heart back to the villages - developing micro-business - training young people - encouraging diffusion of ICT - promote use of renewable energy sources - encouraging development of tourism - upgrade local infrastructures
	2. Strengthen and diversify rural economies	
	3. To reinforce territorial coherence and synergies	
IV. Reinforcing of the participation of the local communities to the initiatives for socio-economic development of their territories	1. Developing local governance and social capital	SG 4: Improving governance and mobilizing endogenous development potential of rural areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - building local partnership capacity - promote private-public partnership - promoting co-operation and innovation - improving local governance
	2. Implementing local development strategies targeting local competitiveness and quality of life	

3.4 Conservation and management of natural resources

3.4.1 Sustainable management of water sources

In the field of water policy Bulgaria aims at maintenance and ensuring of good condition superficial, underground, coastal marine waters, in accordance with Frame directive for waters 2000/60/EU, via completion of infrastructure for collecting and purifying of waste waters, elimination to maximum possible degree of precipitation of dangerous substances in water objects, stopping leading of priority substances and restriction the leading of other pollutants in underground waters. In the year 2006 the construction of waste water treatment plant of Gorna Oriahovitsa finished, on different levels of preparation for construction or construction are 12 town waste water treatment plants.

Improvement of water supply and quality of drinking water for population is also a priority. For this aim is realized improvement and expansion of water supply systems for places of inhabitation, construction of additional accumulating water reservoirs and alternative water sources for regions with crisis water supply, in order to achieve full conformity with requirements of EU for quality of drinking water. In 2006 are taken measures for improvement of water cycle, reconstruction and erection of water and sewerage networks of 15 towns, and erection and reconstruction of sewerage network in more than 17 municipalities.

Government tries to encourage rational use of water resources by economy and society in order to reduce loss of water in agricultural sector. For this aim are given stimuli for repeated and reverse use of water by industry and energy, and also encouragement of society to use practices for additional saving of water. In this connection in the year 2006, are issued, actualized, changed or reviewed 45 complex permissions of enterprises which substitute permissions for precipitation of waste waters for installations, which are issued and aim achievement of high percentage of purifying of industrial waste waters.

In recent years is observed apparent tendency towards decrease of total quantity of taken and used water sources, and increase in quantity of preserved water sources. There is also a continuous tendency towards reduction of total water use, especially in the industrial sector.

3.4.2 Sustainable management of soil resources

Soil resources of Bulgaria possess high potential of productive, regulatory and buffer functions. They are subject to anthropogenic and natural degradation, which influence negatively to functioning of ecosystems. Measures that are necessary for their improvement are most often complicated and lead to restriction of degradation processes in all ground resources. In this connection basic aims which Bulgaria has put in front are directed towards preservation and improvement of potential of ground resources and their sustainable use, and also improvement in legislative environment and policies for sustainable management of lands, and their integration and application on local level.

With the aim to achieve targets put in 2006 year National program for action for sustainable management of lands and driving against deserting of Bulgaria for period 2007-2013 year was worked out, and National coordinative council for contest against deserting was created. Meanwhile restructuring of National system for monitoring of soils was finalized.

3.4.3 Preservation and rational use of underground resources

Considering the fact that underground resources are the only non – renewable natural resource, the task of their preservation and rational use is of primary importance. On this reason this is basic legal obligation of all who seek, search, obtain and process mineral resources on the territory of the country and continental shelf and economic zone in Black sea.

Preservation and rational use of underground resources is connected with requirements for complex research and keeping of their deposits, for maximum obtaining, rational use and national balance of fixed stores and resources in bowels of the earth.

Considering this the main aims which Bulgaria puts in this sphere are: improvement of investment climate in the field of geological researches and mining production in the country, stimulating high technological obtaining, and observation of European ecological regulations, direction of investment process towards research and evaluation of technogenic and non – traditional deposits of mineral resources, and also encouragement of activities directed towards utilization of different waste products of mining and primary processing of underground resources.

In 2006 were constructed and put into exploitation modern facilities for keeping of geological information and material content – National geo fund and National rock fund depository.

3.4.4 Improvement of management and prevention of overexploitation of aqua cultures and biological diversity.

Bulgaria is one of the richest countries in Europe with its unique resources of flora and fauna. However these resources are vulnerable by the human activity, which is proven by the number of local species which disappeared in last decades, or has become vulnerable, threatened or critically threatened towards the current moment. In order to keep, protect and improve these aspects of natural heritage, we must balance preservation of nature with occasionally competing needs of industry, agriculture and tourism.

Considering this, Bulgaria works actively for preservation of its biological diversity. International categories for protected areas are perceived. Government structures for guard and management of national parks and reserves are created. The process of creation of ecological

network including protected zones which are conformable in structure and purpose with units of European ecological network NATURE 2000, has started.

In 2006 in the sphere of preservation of biological diversity Bulgaria continued its work on establishment of network of protected zones NATURA 2000. Plans for management of 6 protected zones were confirmed. 13 new protected areas were announced. In execution of National plan for preservation of biological diversity 2005 – 2010 year maintaining and restoring activities were realized in protected territories. Control was realized over activities for preservation of biological diversity, implemented inside and outside protected territories. Sustainable use of biological resources is realized via application restrictive, permitting, and regulatory regimes, licenses and concessions. National system for monitoring of biological diversity was elaborated. Researches that are connected with preparation of Red book of Bulgaria for plants, animals and habitats, covering international standards for threat, continue.

3.5. Public health

3.5.1. EU Sustainable development strategy fulfilment

3.5.2. Specific national / NSUR activities in this area

Bulgaria successfully fulfills the European strategy for fighting HIV/AIDS in the EU and the neighboring countries (2006-2009). The Government of Bulgaria has clearly shown that is in a possession of strong political will and readiness to implement the necessary measures to keep the low level of distribution of HIV/AIDS in the country. Since 2001 it is performed actively the National strategy and the National program for prophylactics and control of AIDS and of the sexually transmitted diseases for the period 2001-2007, as annually from the budget of the Ministry of health there are taken considerable funds. In the National strategy and in the program there are implemented multi-section approaches and active cooperation on different levels in order to be framed all the aspects of the problem. In the beginning of 2004, Bulgaria successfully and rapidly has increased the scope of the activities targeted towards prevention by the Program called “Prevention and control of HIV/AIDS”, which is realized with the free help of the Global fund for fight against AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. The program aims building up of the infrastructure and development of a capacity in the national response to the problems of HIV/AIDS; decrease of the risky behaviors among the vulnerable groups; and insurance of an access of the most vulnerable groups who live with HIV/AIDS to specific health services and qualitative treatment. By utilization of these two programs the country insures an integrated and balanced approach in the struggle against AIDS through prevention, diagnostics, treatment, cares and support to the people, who has caught the disease.

In accordance to the Strategy for stopping tuberculosis for the period 2006-2015 and the Targets of the Millennium for development there has been elaborated a project “National program for prevention and control of the tuberculosis in Republic of Bulgaria for the period 2007-2011”, which aim is by engagement of the political and executive power to be decreased the burden of tuberculosis in Bulgaria. With this the country guaranties the fulfillment and enlargement of the scope of the required by WHO strategy DOTS for direct observation of the tuberculosis. The necessary means for realization of the activities under the program will be insured with priority within the frames of the adopted budgets of the MH and the municipalities for the certain years. Bulgaria will also receive a free financial support by the Global fund for the realization of the activities during the first phase of the project “Improvement of the control over tuberculosis in Bulgaria” that will be realized during next two years.

The basic aims in the project “Improvement of the control over tuberculosis in Bulgaria” are the decrease of the spreading of tuberculosis and improvement of the results from the treatment. Bulgaria has ratified the Frame convention for control of the tobacco and successfully is implementing the requirements of the Convention and of the European strategy for tobacco control. The basic obligations that follow from the two documents are included in the National program for

limitation of tobacco smoking in R. Bulgaria 2007-2010, accepted by the CM in February 2007. The basic activities connected with education of lecturers in the interactive methods of education in order of their enrollment during acknowledgement of children and pupils with the dangers of smoking; elaboration and distribution of manuals for the teachers; books and other educational instruments, visualization materials; printing of health information materials for the population and for different targeted groups; training of medical specialists in implementation of the methodology for quitting of smoking; campaigns for acknowledgement of the population with the dangers of smoking and methods of quitting, producing of films and clips about the dangers of smoking, elaboration and distribution of PC games etc.

For decrease of the primarily mortality rate, illness and other consequences for the health caused by the most frequent non-communicable diseases in 8 zones in Bulgaria successfully acts the Intervention program for integrated prophylactics of the chronic non-communicable diseases. The achieved results are followed by big scale investigations every two years. There has been found positive changes in the way of nutrition of the population in the zones, improvement of the physical activity, reduction of the hypertonic disease as a risky factor.

The country has implemented a European legislation in the field of foods safety and works in accordance with the Regulations of the EU in this field.

For the implementation of the International health rules there has been adopted an Ordinance for border health control that implements in the legislation the basic requirements in it. It is coming the elaboration of a National program for strengthening of the capacities of the border medical offices. It is actualized the National immunization calendar as there are implemented new modern vaccines. For the limitation of the harmful impact of the factors of the surrounding environment upon the health of the population in Bulgaria it is successfully realized the National plan for the impact surrounding environment – health. In 2006 there has started the second revision of the Action plan, as well as the elaboration of a new section – “Children’s health and surrounding environment”, which is in accordance with the fulfillment of the decisions adopted at the Fourth pan-European Conference of the Ministers of health and surrounding environment (June 2005), as well as in accordance with the Strategy and the action plan for the surrounding environment and health of EU.

In 2006 there has been elaborated and accepted the “National strategy for implementation of the e-health in Republic of Bulgaria”. The basic target, which will be achieved by the implementation of the e-health in Bulgaria is the improvement of the health status and quality of life of the Bulgarian citizens through insurance of equal access to modern, effective and qualitative health services with the help of existing and new technologies in accordance with the changeable needs and mobility of the population. For the implementation of the Strategy for the e-health to the Minister of health has been developed a Coordination Council, which by the end of the second three months of 2007 will elaborate an Action plan for the period of 7 years (2006-2012), which will be in consideration with the Action plan for the e-health of the EC. There has been implemented and information system for documents flow “DocFlow”. By the web-site of the MH there are represented the possibility for an access in real time to registers and data bases with public information. At the Executive Agency on drugs had been developed and is operational an information system DruMS (Drug Management System). It is based on the basis of Oracle data base.

The health strategy for persons in not equal condition that belong to the ethnic minorities is and integral part of the National health strategy. It aims the achievement of higher level of health of the Bulgarian citizens in not equal conditions that belong to the ethnic minorities and termination of a part of the negative tendencies in the national health. It is paid a particular attention on the improvement of the health services of the groups in bad situation, including the Roma population, taking into consideration the health markers in comparison with the average markers for the country. For the achievement of the targets of the strategy there has been adopted an integration approach that is targeted towards reduction of poverty and unemployment; increase of the educational level; improvement of the living conditions; insurance of stable development by placing priorities of development of the backward regions and municipalities; planning the development and rendering of medical services. The strategic aims are: overcoming and termination of the negative tendencies for the health of persons in not equal conditions who belong to the ethnic

minorities; insurance of equality to the access to health services of persons in not equal conditions, increase of the medical knowledge and insurance of access to health information; overcoming of the cultural barriers in communication and all forms of discrimination tendencies; widening of the scope of the health-insured persons in non equal conditions that belong to ethnic minorities. This strategic targets and directions are planned to be performed for the period of 10 years. The period of action of the Strategy – 2005-2015 is considered also with the “The Decade of Roma accession”. The concrete actions for the realization of the strategic targets, terms, the responsible institutions and the necessary financial means are elaborated into Action plan that is shorter in term and will be updated every three years in accordance of the achieved results. After this period due to the results, the activities of the Health strategy for persons in non equal conditions that belong to ethnic minorities can be prolonged, supplemented or modified.

The realization of the policy for the mental health is represented in adoption of the National program of mental health that had been lately transformed into National program for mental health of Bulgaria and National action plan for the period 2004-2012. The main object of the present Policy for mental health is the people with severe mental disease, due to the challenges that are placed by these diseases in front of the patients, their relatives and the community as a whole. The basic priorities of the Policy for mental health of Bulgaria 2004-2012 are: insurance of equal and adequate access to psychiatric cares of all persons with mental problems; development of a system of offices for people with serious mental disease and bad social dysfunction by means of which to be insured a continuous cares and social incorporation, by guaranteeing their and public safety; elaboration of prevention strategies, prophylactics and promotion of mental health as well as for the fight against the stigma and discrimination of the mentally ill that will guarantee the decrease in the economical and social burden of the mental disease. The basic principal in leading the mental health policy is to be kept and improved the mental health of the population as well as the mental health to be taken out from the professional, organizational and political isolation, and to be included in the general system of the public health. The basic principal here is the keeping of human rights and those of the customers of psychiatric services. Keeping the human rights of the mentally ill patients is realized during the estimation of the balance between the rights of the patients and the protection of the interests of the society. In the National action plan of the Policy for mental health of Bulgaria 2004-2012, there are elaborated:

- Actualized National action plan of the Policy for mental health of Bulgaria 2006-2012, adopted by the CM;
- Basic plan “Directions for development of the public psychiatry in Bulgaria” to the tuning project BG/2004/B/02 “Support of the transition from institutional psychiatric health institutions to a model of psychiatry in the society in Bulgaria”, prepared Finish and Bulgarian experts.
- Programs psycho-social rehabilitation, including the development of skills for independent way of life in order of incorporation in the society of persons with mental disturbances and methodological instructions for services and psycho-social adaptation of persons with mental disturbances, including mental diseases;
- Programs for improvement of the life conditions and the material and technical base in the hospitals for treatment of people with mental disturbances. As a part of the initiative of the Stability pact for social rapprochement, Bulgaria suggests an elaboration of a project for “Development of regional nets and systems for collecting and exchange of social and health information.”

3.6. Social inclusion, demography and migration

3.6.1. EU Sustainable development strategy fulfilment

3.6.2. Specific national / NSUR activities in this area

1) *Social inclusion*: The main priorities of Bulgaria in the field of social protection and social inclusion are as follows:

- Reduction of the risk of poverty and social exclusion;

- Establishment of a modern, sustainable and adequate pension system;
- Improvement of the access to health care services and quality health care;
- Development of the long term care system.

In the process of implementation of these priorities the adopted strategic approach shall also be further applied. In relation to the laid objectives the policy shall be conducted in the context of the following:

- Strengthening the role of the systems for social protection and social inclusion for the achievement of the goals laid down in the Lisbon Strategy for economic growth and more and better jobs;
- Concentrating the efforts in the fight against social exclusion by means of prioritized solution of the biggest challenges facing Bulgaria;
- Improvement of the coordination among institutions and organizations involved in the process of social protection and social inclusion;
- Improvement of the follow-up process of the progress in achieving the laid objectives in the field of social protection and social inclusion;
- Active involvement of all the interested parties.

The Bulgarian social model is still in a process of further development so that it is brought in line with the European legislation, policies and social practices. In this respect certain measures were adopted for the following purposes:

- To ground the systems of social security and protection of the population on objective principles, criteria and regulators;
- To establish regulators of work incomes that are appropriate for the open market economy;
- To improve the pension model;
- To address the demographic problems by a purposeful demographic policy;
- To improve the access of citizens to rights, resources, goods and services guaranteed by law; to eliminate any discrimination;
- To create equal opportunities for all, including gender equality.

Results

- In 2006, 47 new social services were established in Community as state delegated activities. In 2005, the provided social services in Community were 87, as their service capacity was 2 351 places. In 2006 their number has increased to 134, as their service capacity was 3600 places. The most significant increase is among the protected accommodations. There are 15 new protected accommodations established, as their total number is 30. There are 141 persons placed from specialized institutions to protected accommodations. There are 31 persons from protected accommodations re-integrated in society during the same period.
- There is almost double increase in the number of centers for social rehabilitation and integration: from 14 in 2005 to 29 in 2006. The budget for financing social services as state delegated activities increased with 27 % in 2007 in comparison to 2005.
- The social entrepreneurship has been developed successfully, as the scope of persons entitled to provide social services has permanently widen up: state, municipalities, natural and legal persons registered under the Commercial law. In 2005, 544 certificates were granted to 115 providers of social services. In 2006, 667 certificates were granted to 240 providers of social services. The total number of functioning social services in community (which are state's responsibility) is 163 up to 01.03.2007. The state has insured living standard for 4 705 children and adults.
- The scope of social services for children has been increased, taking into account their rights, interests and individual needs. Within a year the following centers have been established: 5 day centers for disabled children and youngsters as well as 10 centers for social services for children and families, which consists of 3 units: Center for Social Support, Mother and baby Unit, Centers for Homeless Children. There are 3 921 persons covered up. The number of children placed in specialized institutions has decreased by 11.5%, compared to 2005. In 2006, 2653 children are re-integrated in their biological families, 1308 children are placed in

families of their relatives or friends, 32 children are placed in foster families, as 21 applicants are in process of study and assessment.

- In compliance with the National Program for Better Coverage of Pupils in Compulsory School Age, breakfast and cup of milk are provided for all students up to 4 grade with view to facilitating their access to education and preventing school drops out. The Program has been implemented in 2 335 schools. Equal opportunity is provided to 280 000 pupils regardless their social status and their parents' status as well. The Program's coverage has improved in 2006 compared to 2005 when the number of covered pupils was 270 000.
- The term for receiving social assistance benefits has decreased to 18 months. Within this period the persons should participate in measures on employment or vocational training in order to facilitate their transit to the labour market. As result of these measures the number of persons on social assistance benefits decreased with 124 206 or 5.3% and reached 2 336 917. in 2006, 264 313 persons and families were assisted by lum-sum benefits, target or monthly social assistance benefits, which 6% less compared to 2005 when their number was 280 092.
- Funding was ensured for social and economic integration of disabled people in 2006, as it is 65% higher than the one in 2005. It is the sole biggest increase in state budget means allotted to implement sector policies. 523 459 disabled persons were assisted, including 22 738 handicap children. For the same period in 2005, 447 914 disabled persons were assisted, including 17 609 handicap children.

2) *Employment*: In 2006 the efforts of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy were aimed towards the implementation of policy that contributed to the increase of employment and improvement of work quality and productivity, enhancement of social cohesion and decrease of regional disparities.

The satisfying results of the employment policy were brought by an economic growth combined with effective labour market policy and active programmes and measures targeting at particular disadvantaged groups.

In 2006 the positive trend in the major labour market indicators continued.

The **economic activity rate** for the population aged between 15 and 64 years increased from 60.7 % in 2000 up to 64.5 % in 2006. The activity rates for **young people** (aged 15-24) was 28.9 % and for **older-aged employed** (aged 55-64) – 43 %.

Economic activity rates correlate strongly with educational levels. In 2006 73.3 % of people with higher education, 66.2 % of those with secondary education, 27.8 % with basic education and 13.2 % with primary or lower than primary education were economically active.

There is a stable trend of decrease in the number of **discouraged persons** from 419.5 thousand in 2000 down to 267.2 thousand in 2006.

In the last 3-4 years a sustainable trend of growth in the number of **employed persons** in the country is observed. In 2006, the average number of employed aged 15-64 (3 071.8 thousand) increased by 11 % compared to that in 2000.

The tendency of gradual employment rate growth is retained. In 2006 the **employment rate** was 58.6 %, which was with 8.7 percentage points more compared to that in 2000.

In 2006 employment rate among **young people** (aged 15-24) was 23.2 % and its growth compared to 2000 is with 4.4 percentage points. Major increase is observed in the employment among **older population** (aged 55-64). During the reported period employment rate has increased by 18.8 percentage points (from 20.8 % in 2000 to 39.6 % in 2006).

According to NSI in 2006 there were 305.7 thousand **unemployed** and the unemployment rate was 9 %.

According to the Employment Agency data, in 2006 there were 356 054 **registered unemployed** which makes an almost double decrease in comparison to 2000 (with 337 427 persons) or with 47%. The registered unemployment rate for 2006 was 9.61 %.

The decrease of overall unemployment rate goes in parallel with the dropping down of the unemployment rates for all monitored groups on the labour market. As in 2006 in comparison to 2000 the long-term unemployed decreased by 21 % (or 53 431 people) and their number reached 203 812, the unemployed above the age of 50 decreased with 12 % and were 110 161, and the unemployed women – by 44 % or 24 606 persons. The unemployed young people up to the age of 29 were 82 004 in 2006 and their number decreased 2.5 times in comparison to the year 2000.

The main instrument for achieving the goals of employment policy is the National Action Plan for Employment which covers the main targets, priorities and actions related to the employment policy; the target groups at which the active employment policy is aimed; the main challenges on the labour market, as well as the projects, programmes and measures that will be implemented, the types of incentives and their amounts – for employers as well as for participants in the subsidized employment.

In 2006 in pursuance of the National Action Plan for Employment 138 708 persons were included in employment and 47 376 in vocational training.

3) *Demography*: In 2006 in the Republic of Bulgaria was adopted a National Strategy for Demographic Development for the period 2006 - 2020.

The basic goal, stated in the adopted in 2006 National Strategy for Demographic Development of the Republic of Bulgaria for the period 2006 - 2020 is slowing down the speed of the decrease in the number of population with a trend to make it stable in a long-term plan and providing high quality of the human capital, including people with their health status, education, abilities and skills. The achievement of this goal is realized through implementation of a set of measures and activities and through providing resources in operational plans for implementing the National Strategy for Demographic Development of the Republic of Bulgaria for the period 2006 - 2020.

There were conducted two nationally representative sociological researches about the orientation of young people in the Republic of Bulgaria to create families and to give birth of children and about the attitudes of young people to emigrate abroad and to accomplish their strategic lifelong aims and intentions.

There were elaborated and adopted two annual plans for the implementation of the Strategy – for 2006 and 2007. Basic financial instrument is the sector programme budgeting on the main directions of the National Strategy for Demographic Development.

There was established an interinstitutional working group for planning, coordination and reporting of the implementation of the National Strategy for Demographic Development and the annual plans to it. In this group are included representatives of all institutions of the executive power, representatives of the National Association of the Municipalities of the Republic of Bulgaria, the National Social Security Institute, the National Statistical Institute, etc. There was held a national conference on raising the awareness of the civil society and of the administrative capacity for work on the basic directions of the National Strategy for Demographic Development.

There were conducted series of media events to spread the National Strategy for Demographic Development.

3.7. Global poverty and sustainable development challenges

Poverty eradication, sustainable consumption establishment, protection and management of natural resources as base of economic and social development are key challenges facing sustainable development. At the Meeting of the Millenium in 2000 body politic leaders of the UNO's politic leaders adopted Declaration of the Millenium, taking the engagement establish global partnership for poverty eradication and enunciated eight objectives with realization dead line 2015, become popular as Millenium's development objectives.

The global partnership for sustainable development rests on international agreements gained on important UNO forums. In January 2005 was published the report of Jeffrey Sachs on the problems of development, entitled "Make investments in development: practical plan for Millennium's objectives achieving". According to the report the aims are real and feasible within the next 10 years. The Millennium aims are closely connected with the matters of international peace and security because poor societies are much more amenable to instability and show of violence, so they should be in the centre of international fetches for ceasing of conflicts, getting over instability and struggle against terrorism.

The national governments have leading role for implementation of assumed decisions. They are to formulate national strategies for sustainable development. The implementation of engagements as well means working out of clear and effective legislation in maintenance of sustainable development, as well bigger engagement of society in these processes. International collaboration should support specific needs of developing countries and global institutions as UNO, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization, etc. to assist positively in the process of implementation.

3.3. Good governance

Good governance is a transparent and accountable management of human, natural, economic and financial resources for the purposes of fair and sustainable development in the context of such a political and institutional background that supports human rights, the principles of democracy and the rule of law. This is a governance which achieves unarbitrary results without abuse, corruption, involving maximum people and organisations.

The Ministry of State Administration and Administrative Reform (MSAAR) was established with a Decision of the National Assembly (NA) of the Republic of Bulgaria from 16 August 2005.

The strategic goal of MSAAR in accordance with government priorities is the development of an effective, efficient, competent and motivated state administration, by performance of the following **main priorities:**

The main priorities of the MSAAR are:

- **Modernisation and organisational development of the state administration**

The MSAAR has been working actively on the implementation of the priority related to the **optimisation of administrative structures. The objective is to:**

- Avoid overlapping structures and functions
- Merge structures where possible and appropriate
- Achieve a not larger, but better organised, effective and politically neutral administration

A 3.4% optimisation of administrative structures and secondary authorities disposing of budget credits under ministers, involving 5,327 staff numbers, was carried out in 2006.

The MSAAR drafted the Law amending and supplementing the Law on Administration which was adopted by the NA.

The amendments to the Law regulate:

- Clear distinction between the political and administrative levels in the state administration
- Stronger role for the inspectorates. The major procedural rules for control and preventive measures are clearly defined
- Clear definition of the policy-making process. The functions of the political cabinets with reference to the development of strategic objectives and priorities are defined

- Optimisation and overall availability of the presented public information through integration of the Register of Administrative Structures and Instruments of Executive Authorities and the Register of civil servants into a Single administrative register.

The **Ordinance on the terms and conditions for keeping the Administrative register** was endorsed in June 2006. It provides the establishment of a new web-based administrative register, integrating the **Register of Administrative Structures** and the **Register of Civil Servants**, on the “under one roof” principle.

The objective of the new register is to contribute to the achievement of enhanced transparency and accountability in the State Administration. The web-based administrative register will guarantee **free access for citizens and business** to the entire database on the functioning of the administration.

- **Training and development of human resources**

For implementation of this priority an Act amending and supplementing the Civil Servants Act was adopted.

The major amendments and supplements to the Civil Servants Act cover the following aspects:

- Improvement of the competitive recruitment procedure in the state administration in order to achieve higher transparency and openness. The possibility of a centralised competition for junior experts and the establishing of a reserve list of candidates who have successfully passed a civil servants competition is introduced, aiming to promote the image and the attractiveness of the state administration, as well as the recruitment of highly qualified young people
- Introduction of the mobility principle in the state administration
- Focus on the importance of civil servants’ training.

For the implementation of the newly adopted Act Amending and Supplementing the Civil Servants Act, as well as for meeting the recommendations of the European Commission and the White Paper on the achievements and challenges ahead of the Bulgarian state administration, the following secondary legislation, regulating civil service and civil servants status was amended and supplemented:

- Ordinance on the Terms and Procedures for Attestation of the Employees in the State Administration
- Ordinance on the Organisation of the Recruitment Competitions for Civil Servants
- Ordinance on the Official Status of the Civil Servants
- Decree 137/2005 of the CoM on the Salaries in the State-Funded Organizations and Activities
- Single Classifier of the Positions in the Administration.

The Strategy for Human Resources Management in the State Administration for the period 2006 – 2013 and the Action Plan for the period 2006 – 2009 have been developed in compliance with the priority of the MSAAR to build an effective, competent, responsible and motivated state administration.

The Single information system for human resources management in the state administration was established under a PHARE project at the end of 2005. It represents a database, containing information on all employees in the administrative structures in the whole country.

Since the beginning of 2006, over 86,800 state administration employees have undergone different training courses organized by the Institut of Public Administration and European Integration (IPEI) and MSAAR and aimed at enhancing their professional qualifications and career development. Furthermore, over 7,000 employees are currently enrolled in trainings due to end in 2007.

- **Development of the e-government**

The purpose of this priority is to improve the internal coordination in the state administration with the aim of achieving effective interaction with the citizens and the business.

The Law on e-Trade entered into force on 24 December 2006. The implementation of the Law regulates the duties of Information society service providers (on-line services) as well as the rules for disseminating commercial announcements on the Internet.

The Council of Ministers adopted the **draft Law on e-Governance**, submitted to the NA for consideration. It envisages automation of administrative procedures, guaranteeing the transparency of the processes in the State Administration, avoiding the possibility for corrupt practices and reducing the maintenance costs of the administration.

In September 2006, the MSAAR signed public procurement contracts for the development of the e-government.

The first public procurement concerns the establishment and exploitation of the **“Integrated e-Government System”**. The objective is to deliver high-quality administrative e-services using IT solutions. The system will serve as a nucleus for further integration between the information systems of state institutions, for maintaining the internal document flow and for automation of the delivery of electronic administrative services.

The second public procurement concerns the development and exploitation of a **“Pilot Integrated e-Region System”**. A pilot project will be applied in 3 regional administrations and constituent municipalities. The objective is to create portals and to integrate them into the central portal and into the systems of other regional institutions. The system will maintain the document flow and integrate the “back-office” systems.

The MSAAR has provided 2,170 computers and higher-class computer configurations for the needs of the state administration in the country, mostly to regional and municipal administrations. In July 2006, 100 of them were delivered to the Supreme Judicial Council: 50 for the purposes of the judiciary and 50 for the purposes of the Prosecutor’s Office.

Following an open competition under the Public Procurement Act (PPA), the supply of certificates for the universal e-signature for the purposes of the state administration was awarded to “Infonotary” Ltd. **The MSAAR has launched the provision of e-signatures to all administrative structures**. The total numbers for the country are: 2,150 e-signatures, 2,150 chip-cards, and 500 readers.

- **Improving and streamlining administrative regulation and administrative service delivery**

Improving the administrative servicing is a strategic goal of the administrative reform.

In September 2006, the Council of Ministers adopted an **Ordinance on the general rules for the organisation of the administrative service delivery**. The Ordinance regulates the work organisation of the administrative service delivery units, and describes the **“one-stop shop” principle**. It provides that all administrations shall organise their activities in such a way, as to provide administrative services to clients at one place. **The ways of providing information on the services** are described in detail.

Every 6 months the administrations shall report the status of the administrative service delivery on the Internet-based System of Administrative Service Delivery Self-Assessment. It shall be maintained by the MSAAR, and the reports shall follow unified criteria. The system was updated in July 2006, in accordance with the latest version of the model “Common Assessment Framework” of the EU – CAF 2006.

Under the Ordinance, every administrative structure shall adopt a **Client Charter**, and shall publish it on its web page or make it public in any other suitable way. The Charter shall include the general and individual quality standards of the administrative service delivery, the ways of seeking the

customers' opinion on improving and assessing the application of the standards, the rights of the customers, and the organisation of the processing of disclosures, recommendations and complaints in relation to the administrative service delivery.

Currently, the MSAAR develops, together with the regional and municipal administrations, a **List of unified names of administrative services**. It will facilitate communication between individual administrations and will be used in different e-registers, on the basis of which the e-government will function.

A project of the MSAAR for **improving the administrative service delivery in the smallest and least developed municipalities** was launched in May 2006.

On 5 November 2006, the CoM approved the draft of the MSAAR **amending and supplementing the Ordinance on the Border Crosspoints**. The amendments envisage the introduction of the **“one fiche” at all road BCPs** at the external borders of the EU.

For the implementation of this priority MSAAR also works on the topics, associated with relieving the operating procedures, the requested documents and charges, regulated in secondary normative acts. An analysis of the existing regulative regimes as well as a draft of the program for better regulation is produced.

- **Enhancing transparency and integrity in the state administration**

The achieving of this priority includes the development and the implementation on Strategy for transparent governance, prevention and combating of corruption for the period 2006 – 2008 and the **Programme for Transparency in the Activity of the State Administration and the High-Level Officials**

In mid-June 2006, the MSAAR elaborated **Standards of Administrative Ethics**, which represent the major rules that every employee must comply with. The Standards are printed in the form of posters for all administrative structures and leaflets for all state administration employees. These information materials have been distributed to all structures of the central, regional and local administration.

For implementation of the **Strategy for training the state administration employees** and of the National strategy for preventing and counteracting corruption for 2006, the IPAEI has considerably broadened the scope of training in preventing and counteracting corruption for the state administration employees and has started work on the development on new courses adapted to the particular needs of knowledge.

A large-scale CD-based **self-training** of state administration employees in **“Prevention and counteraction of corruption – state administration ethics”** was launched in July 2006.

- **Contribution to the European integration process and building of administrative capacity under the conditions of full EU membership. Successful start of the work on the Operational Programme Administrative capacity (OPAC)**

Successful start of the work on the OPAC is a priority of MSAAR for 2007. It is a strategic document proceeding from the priorities set by the National Strategic Referent Framework (NSRF) and an instrument for absorption of the funds from the ESF within the frames of the 2007-2013 programming period.

The strategic goal of the OPAC is to build up a strong, effective and modern administration, capable to meet the high expectations of Bulgarian citizens, the business sector and the European Union for good service delivery and high professional ethics. Competent and well motivated civil servants. **Specific objectives are:** good governance, modern human resources management, better quality of the administrative service delivery.

The budget of OPAC is EUR 180 mln from the European Social Fund and the state budget.

4. Progress on EU SDS cross-cutting issues

4.1. Education and training

- **Education for sustainable development in primary and secondary educational system**

In the context of educational system in Bulgaria basing on European experience, education for sustainable development in the general educational system is planned and organized on integrative principle. The following facts are expression of this:

1. In the state educational regulation for syllabus (Ordinance N2 from 18 May 2000, published in SG 48, 2000) is included main body of syllabus connected with the education for sustainable development.
2. In Government education regulation for education content are formulated knowledge, skills, relations and competences, orientated towards formation of sustainable development which has to be acquired by the students towards graduation of corresponding level or degree.
3. In education programs for different subjects and classes this standards are decomposed in purposes for teaching on respective themes.
4. Apparent accent on education for sustainable development is put on the standards and education programs in cultural – education programs. “Social sciences and civil education” (in the subjects “Human and society” , “History and civilization”. “Geography and economics”), “Natural sciences and ecology” (in subjects “Human and nature”, “Biology and health education”, “Chemistry and preservation of environment”) and the subject “Philosophy”
5. In composition of education programs for obligatory – chosen schooling, for the subjects mentioned above, teacher is given the opportunity to put stronger accent or to leave as only center the education or sustainable development.
6. In the frames of free – chosen schooling, of out – of –class and out – of –school activities, the possibilities for education for sustainable development are practically unlimited by the side of Ministry of education and science (MES). Free – chosen schooling, out – of class and out – of – school activities are especially suitable form of education for sustainable development, because they ensure the opportunity for realization of the need of such education, realized by the whole society, with the participation of students, parents, teachers, and principals, in the choice of this kind of preparation and activity, and on these themes, and also of the communities in the financing of such education.
7. Part of school time for periods of class is also used for education for sustainable development.
8. In the frames of professional education and training are regulated Government education requirements for acquiring a qualification on profession. In development of education content registering the specificity of labor activities of concrete professions and specialties is included obligatory education content, which:
 - forms knowledge and skills for preservation of environment
 - considers possibilities for reduction of harmful influence of levels of technological process over air, water and soils, over life and health of human.

In National examination programs for conducting of government exams for acquiring of degree of professional qualification, are put indicators for evaluation of acquired professional competences for preservation of environment in practicing of corresponding profession.

In the system is realized professional education and training on profession “Ecology” specialty “Ecology and preservation of environment”

National program for support of education for sustainable development is worked out. The program considers decisions of all frame and strategic documents on national and international level, in the sphere of environment and education for sustainable development (ESD). It is created to facilitate application of main messages and directions of Strategy for ESD of Economic commission for Europe of UNO, which is based on the shared experience of a row of international documents UNO, UNESCO, and Council of Europe.

Two national conferences for discussing of problems and successes in realization of initiatives on school level have been organized until now.

An appliance for trainers of teachers for teaching of the problems of sustainable development is worked out.

Appliances for education of sustainable development of obligatory and free – chosen schooling of pupils from 1 to 4 grades are elaborated. Distributed are:

- 1000 numbers of appliance “Green package”, which includes teacher’s manual, CD, video cassette, and cards for students, for education of students from 5 to 10 grades;
- 800 numbers from the appliance “With Flupi for clear environment” - for the kindergartens;
- 800 numbers from the appliance “With Flupi for clear environment” - fro pupils from 1 to 4 grade;
- 2000 appliances for education of sustainable development for pupils from 1 and 2 grade;
- 2000 appliances for education of sustainable development for pupils from 3 and 4 grade will be distributed in months June – September;
- more than 1000 CDs with films and games connected with preservation of ozone layer and biological diversity;
- 1000 video cassettes with film touching different problems of preservation of environment.

More than 2000 teachers are trained to work with different appliances.

The strategy of Economic commission for Europe of UN is translated into Bulgarian and is distributed in the school network.

4.2 Research and development

In 2005 and 2006 MES financed research projects in the sphere of environment and health on competitive, program – project principle, in the frames of 15th and 16th regular competition sessions in the following directions:

- ❖ “STIMULATION OF RESEARCH IN GOVERNEMENT HIGHER SCHOOLS”
- ❖ “BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES, BIOTECHNOLOGY, AND FOOD – QUALITY, SAFETY”
- ❖ “YOUNG SCIENTISTS”
- ❖ “DEVELOPMENT OF SCIENTIFIC POTENTIAL IN HIGHER SCHOOLS”

4.3 Financing and economic instruments

For financing of NSDS, mainly in the first 7 years of its application will be used assets from the Structural funds of EU, on different Operative programs, related with the purposes put in the strategy. In addition European agricultural fund for development of rural regions will finance the sustainable development of agricultural regions. For the planned measures and activities that exceed the sphere of Operative Program (OP), will be searched possibilities for financing by the side of international financial institutions: EBRD, WB, and EIB), programs of European communities, like Seventh frame program for scientific researches and demonstrations, program Competition and innovations and other. At the same time is expected significant participation by the private sector, including via use of opportunities offered by different forms and schemes of public – private partnership.

National budget will participate in the financing of the strategy on the line of co – financing on projects financed by the instruments of EU, via participation of government in public – private partnership (PPP) and also with prolongation of acting of existing financial instruments (for example “Energy Efficiency Fund”, “National Scientific Fund”, and “National innovation fund”)

4.4 Implementation, Monitoring and Follow – up

- Indicators
- Voluntary peer reviews
- Advisory councils on sustainable development

Monitoring and control of National strategy for sustainable development will assist for the transparency of application and performance of Strategy and also preparation of evaluation of purposes, tasks and measures, put in the strategy. For observation of progress on realization of purposes, put in the National strategy for sustainable development, is elaborated system of indicators for observation. The system of indicators is divided on 10 sub – themes, according to the accepted Eurostat structure.

The institution in charge for immediate monitoring and control of implementation of strategy for sustainable development of Republic of Bulgaria is Ministry of economy and energy, as coordinator of activities, connected with sustainable development on national level. In frames of this responsibility the minister of economy and energy determines Group for observation of realization of Strategy. The group includes representatives of ministry of economy and energy, ministry of environment and waters, ministry of labor and social policy, ministry of agriculture and forests, ministry of healthcare, ministry of transport, national statistic institute and other organizations and institutions, which have interest. In need Minister of economy and energy can attract additional members to the group.

The group for observation has the following range of work:

- Observes the process of realization of Strategy for sustainable development
- Participates in determination of indicators for evaluation of Strategy
- Demands information from the responsible institutions and organizations in relation with the achieved purposes and tasks and also future actions
- Organizes working meetings and discussions in connection with the application of strategy
- Every two years introduces report to the prime – minister with evaluation for the application of Strategy, recommendations and proposals.

Minister of economy and energy introduces in the council of ministers reports for realization of National strategy for sustainable development, and eventual recommendations and direction for its realization in the next two –year period. On the ground of above reports and recommendations, National strategy can be actualized on every 5 years. In need the actualization of strategy can be realized in shorter period.

5. Progress on implementation of WSSD commitment

Bulgaria gives its contribution for solving of global problems of sustainable development. Its achievement depends on that to what extent the countries collaborate on its key directions on international, regional and national level, no matter the differences in national priorities.

Bulgaria has participated in all important forums on questions of sustainable development: Conference of UNO on problems of environment and development, (UNCED), Rio de Janeiro 1992 year; Meeting of the Millennium of state and government leaders of member states, New York 2000 year, Summit of high level on the problems of sustainable development, Johannesburg, 2002 year. The country will stick to the taken engagements and purposes given on these forums. It gives its contribution in the work of Commission for sustainable development of UNO, as a forum for review of progress of separate directions of sustainable development. For two – year period its work is focused over the problems of energy, industrial development, air pollution and changes in climate. The fifteenth sessions of Commission for sustainable development registered progress in the realization of purposes, but did not accept any political decisions concerning concrete steps and periods for realization of engagements, taken on the forums mentioned above.

According to the taken international engagements, countries are obligated to work out national programs for sustainable development. Currently National strategy of Republic of Bulgaria in this sphere is in process of construction. From 2006 year, International consultative council on sustainable development functions.

In external plan Bulgaria will stick to its engagements according to the plan from Johannesburg, 2002 year, containing concrete steps for support of developing world for achievement of purposes of sustainable development. In this sense our country elaborates capacity for giving help to less developed countries for achieving purposes of Millennium and more concretely overcoming of poverty.

As a member state of EU, Bulgaria participates completely in policy for development of EU and applies corresponding European standards.

6. Elaboration of NSDS

6.1 Process and organization

- Title of the NSDS, date of first version, form and status of adoption (endorsed by Head of state/ government/ parliament, etc.) [please provide link to web site where it exists]
- Draft of National Strategy for Sustainable Development of Republic of Bulgaria (in process of procedure of accepting by Council of Ministers) The web page in Internet is www.mee.gouvernement.bg
- Which ministry is responsible for the coordination of NSDS? What other ministries are involved? What are means of coordination for the successful implementation of NSDS? (Inter –departmental involvements, e.g. steering groups, committees, working groups)?

Coordinating institution on the sustainable development in Republic of Bulgaria is Ministry of Economy and Energy. Republic of Bulgaria develops for the first time and accepts strategic document which embraces as a whole all aspects related to sustainable development, and is execution of EU Strategy for Sustainable Development. After acceptance of conclusions of European Council, 15 -16 June 2006 year, and announced strategy of EU for sustainable development, with decision of Council of Ministers of republic of Bulgaria, is created Inter – departmental Consultative Council for Sustainable Development, with chairman Minister of economy and energy. Members of the Council are vice ministers and directors of specialized administrations, with activities related to sustainable development from Ministry of regional development and public works, Ministry of environment and waters, Ministry of healthcare, Ministry if labor and social policy, Ministry of foreign affairs, Ministry of transport, Ministry of government administration and administrative reform, Ministry of agriculture and forests, Ministry of finance, Agency of economic analyses and prognoses. Special working group is created with

representatives of Ministry of economy and energy and National statistic institute, aiming elaboration of system of indicators, for monitoring and evaluation of progress on realization of NSDS. The activity of Council is supported by Secretary Office, created by the chairman of Council. The process of elaboration of national strategy for sustainable development has started in October 2006. The draft NSDS is published for public discussion on the internet pages of all Ministries participating in its working out in the beginning of month May 2007. Until the middle of month June 2007, are realized a row of meetings, consultations and discussions, with representatives of NGO's, branch organizations, civil associations, representatives of local and regional authority.

- What was the involvement of regional and local levels of government as well as of stakeholders (civil society, business, NGOs, trade union etc.) in the elaboration of strategy?

The draft NSDS is published for public consultations on the internet pages of all ministries participating in its working out in the beginning of month May 2007. Until the middle of month June 2007, are realized a row of meetings, consultations and discussions, with representatives of NGO's, branch organizations, civil associations, representatives of local and regional authority.

6.2. Strategic priorities and instruments

- Key themes and challenges of NSDS. What are the key challenges requiring specific attention?

The challenges in front of National strategy for sustainable development of Republic of Bulgaria are:

- Climate change
- Increase in prices of energy and restricted possibilities for new energy sources.
- Growing social and regional disbalance
- Accelerated regional integration in condition of global economic competition, increasing dependence between regions and countries worldwide.
- Influence of expansion over economic, social and territorial cohesion
- Influence of aging of population and migration processes over labor market, offering of services of common interest and market of homes
- Increase of transportation traffic
- Overexploitation of ecological resources and loss of biodiversity, more particularly the urbanization territories and depopulation of some regions.

What are the main instruments used to achieve objectives of the NSDS? Legislative voluntary agreement, other? Per time? Are there any successful examples of best practices?

The NSDS provides specific measures and activities for each challenge defined in it. Depending on the certain aim the necessary measures and activities for its achievement in short-term as well as in long-term aspect, for example: need for changes and complements in legislative sphere, standards and modern management schemes implementation, financial schemes development, resources from Structural and Cohesion funds guidance to specific measures, public-private partnership start and etc.

- State of play/progress achieved in view of objectives/targets (measurable achievements) fixed by the NSDS?
- Did the latest revision (is it planned in the near future) take account of the renewed EU SDS as adopted in June 2006? How do the main challenges identified in the NSDS compare with those of the EU SDS?

The National Sustainable Development Strategy of Republic of Bulgaria was developed in pursuance of EU renewed SDS and fully reflect the main challenges of EU strategy. In chapter “Clean energy” is reflected as well adopted aims and priorities for energy development in the new Energy packet, accepted in the Spring European Council in 2007.

- What are the main strengths and weaknesses of the *present* NSDS?

Analysis of strong and weak sides of National Strategy will be done in parallel to preparation of the first monitoring report for strategy implementation on national level.

6.3. Monitoring and evaluation

- Is a regular cycle of reporting, review and evaluation established? Are the SD indicators identified and used for purposes of monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the strategy? How do these compare with EU SD indicators?

For monitoring and evaluation of NSDS a system of indicators is adopted. The system of indicators is conformable to the one adopted by Eurostat and indicators for specific national themes have been added.

- Is impact assessment used as a tool in implementing the strategy? If so – how?

Such instrument hasn't been used till now.

- Are evaluations, including peer reviews, undertaken? If so – what were the most important lessons learned from the last evaluation? Has the Member State established connections with other Member States in the elaboration or evaluation of the NSDP? With non-EU countries?

Such evaluation hasn't been made yet.