

Strasbourg, 15 September 2003  
[files10e\_2003]

**T-PVS/Files (2003) 10**

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE  
AND NATURAL HABITATS

**Standing Committee**  
23<sup>rd</sup> meeting

Strasbourg, 1-4 December 2003

---

**Specific File**

**Construction of a Motorway in the Gorge of Kresna  
- Corridor No. 4 of transport: EU PHARE Project –  
Connection Bulgaria - Greece**  
(Motorway E79 : Sofia-Kulata)

**Report by the Government**

*Secretariat Memorandum*  
*Prepared by*  
*The Directorate of Culture and Cultural and Natural Heritage*

## **PROJECT TO BUILD A MOTORWAY IN THE KRESNA GORGE (BULGARIA)**

### **The new environmental impact assessment report**

As we have already informed the Bern Convention Bureau in April 2003, the Executive Road Agency has assigned the development of a new EIA report for Struma motorway in its part through Kresna gorge. A contractor for the report has been chosen as a result of a successful tender. In line with the Bulgarian legislation, the assignment for the scope of the report will be presented to Ministry of Environment and Water for consultation.

The Ministry of Environment and Water has requested all option of the motorway trace, presented in the preliminary EIA report and its annexes, as well as those proposed by “Krasi-Bo” Ltd. and “Votan Consult – Petar Tzolov” Ltd. in the EIA process, to be equally assessed and compared in the new report.

The Ministry of Environment and Water will also insist the assignment to be in accordance with Recommendation No 98 (2002) of the Bern Convention Standing Committee.

The Ministry of the Regional Development and the Road Executive Agency have insured Ministry of Environment and Water that the EIA procedure will follow strictly all legal requirements.

### **The dialogue with the different partners**

As the procedure of elaboration of EIA report is renewed, as well as the positions of the stake holders have been considerably clarified during the previous stage, the present period is characterized with relatively inactive among the partners dialogue. The dialogue comprises information exchange, informal talks and correspondence regarding the public transparency of the process.

### **The legal protection of the whole of the Gorge site**

The Bulgarian-Danish project for establishment of protected zones according to the Habitats Directive is in progress. Bulgaria will propose these protected zones become part of the ecological network “Nature 2000” on its territory.

Kresna gorge with contiguous areas is included in the project’s scope of investigations. The project is in a working stage and no administrative procedures have been carried out for the declaration of territories as a part of the Ecological network. The procedure for the declaration of a new protected area also has not been completed yet, thus there is no change in the legal status of the gorge contiguous territories.

### **Project finance**

We do not dispose of official information concerning changes occurred in the financial status of the road construction project.