

**Information provided by Bulgaria about the following topic discussed in the
Capacity-building Programme on Tourism Statistics,
I Workshop - Vienna, 1-4 April 2008**

**INBOUND TOURISM AND BALANCE OF PAYMENTS (BOP): BOP developments
("travel" and "passenger transportation" items)**

**1) Present situation of administrative records and expenditure surveys used for
estimating the “travel” and “passenger transportation” items.**

The Item Travel in the Bulgarian Balance of payments covers revenues (credit) from and expenditures (debit) for goods and services, including those related to health and education services, acquired by tourists, travelling for business and personal purposes.

The data on travel is based on data from the Ministry of internal affairs on the number of travellers crossing the borders and on estimates of per capita expenditure, the latter based on the methodology for estimation of the receipts and expenditures from travel services – “Methodology for estimation of the receipts and expenditures from travel in the Bulgarian Balance of payments” (elaborated from Bulgarian national bank and Ministry of trade and tourism, November 1999). From January 2007 the data for the number of foreigners who visited the country are based on information from border police and National statistical institute estimates.

**2) Does your present information system allow for distinguishing visitors from
travellers?**

The present information system allows distinguishing visitors from travellers.

**3) Initiatives that you might be considering for improving the estimation of these BoP
items.**

Regarding the balance of payments’ improvement, the Bulgarian National Bank organizes a national statistic survey at the border amongst the travelling foreign and Bulgarian citizens. The survey has been contracted with a company for marketing research. It is being implemented through interviews with leaving the country foreign travelers and entering Bulgarian citizens at the border check points. The pilot survey was realized in July 2007. The first month of the real survey was August 2007 and it was supposed to last 12 months. Trustworthy statistic data from the “Frontier research amongst Bulgarian and foreign travelers” will be available by the fourth quarter of 2008, the earliest.

One of the main goals of the research is to collect data for the improvement and updating the estimation of the average expenses of the foreigners travelling to Bulgaria and those of the Bulgarians going abroad, according different purposes of travel.

The practice of other EU countries like the United Kingdom, Italy, and Greece shows that this type of research is the most trustworthy source of information about expenses for “Travel” item.

After the accession of Bulgaria to the European Union, starting of January 2007, the National Border Police Service has stopped the obligatory registration for the EU citizens. Instead, a “minimal border control” has been introduced, which has lead to the lost of information and makes the data for the number of visitors not complete. Nowadays, the National Statistical Institute performs estimation of the EU citizens crossing the border.

4) Is there any discussion about the credibility of the “travel” item data?

Discussions about the reliability of the present data for the revenues and expenditures for “travel” item assessment have been carried out several times, including with the representatives of the State Agency for tourism as well. The organized by the Bulgarian National Bank national statistic survey at the border points amongst travelling Bulgarian and foreign citizens is a direct result of ambition to increase the reliability of the data for the “Travel” item.

Parallel to this, due to the insistence of the Bulgarian National Bank, the subject “Sample survey on the crossing through the border points of the Republic of Bulgaria foreign and Bulgarian citizens” has been included into the National programme for statistic research 2008. It will be conducted by the National Statistical Institute. Within the same research, together with the data on the average expenses of the foreigners travelling to Bulgaria, a sample counting of the number of travels should be realized. It will give information about the number of the cross-border travels.