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BULGARIAN NATIONAL FREIGHT FORWARDING ASSOCIATION

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Kapikule/Kapitan Andreevo Border Crossing Points are among the busiest BCPs on the world and it is the busiest in Europe. They are located on important road transport corridors connecting Europe, Asia, Middle East and North Africa. Their functions are important considering the frequency and volume of freight operations passing through and their significance do not only concern the countries located at the two sides of the border but also the whole range of countries which conduct road transport operations through these BCPs.

Despite their international significance, there are various problems at the Kapikule/Kapitan Andreevo BCP. To name a few, long truck queues, slow customs procedures and physical difficulties for truck drivers are among the current problems. The international significance of the Kapikule/Kapitan Andreevo BCP requires immediate addressing of the problems and necessitates smooth border crossing procedures, customs formalities and decreased waiting times. Truck queues and other problems at these BCPs are not only affecting countries in Europe and Turkey but also proximate economies as well. The international importance of the BCPs make the problems have international repercussions and yet the current bottlenecks require national solutions. Global economic recovery due to COVID-19 pandemic, on the other hand, indicates the necessity of swift actions towards issues preventing smooth trade operations.

The enclosed report on the current problems at the BCP is prepared by UTIKAD; we would like to kindly ask you to consider the report in conducting necessary analysis of the problems, provide us with your solution proposals and bring the issue forward as an agenda item for relevant Bulgarian authorities.

Best Regards,



Cavit UĞUR
General Manager

Enclosed: Kapikule-Kapitan Andreevo BCP Report

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KAPITAN ANDREEVO/KAPIKULE BCP: PROBLEMS, IMPACT AND EXPECTATIONS FROM BULGARIA

INTRODUCTION

Turkish and Bulgarian border is a 269 kilometers long international land border. The border is established by the Treaty of Istanbul (1913) and later by the Bulgarian-Ottoman Convention (1915). Treaty of Lausanne (1923) reaffirms the agreed borders between Bulgaria and Turkey. The land border between Bulgaria and Turkey is among the external borders of the European Union after joining of Bulgaria to the EU in January 1st, 2007.

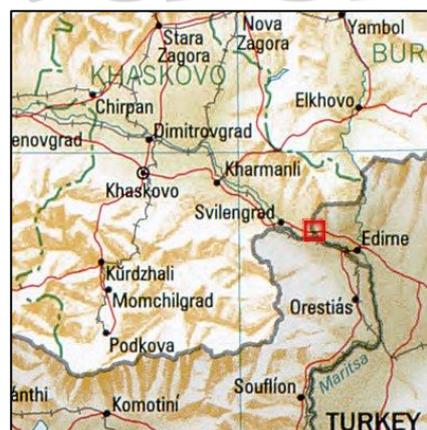
Border crossing is enabled through three BCPs along the border; Kapitan Andreevo/Kapikule (opened in 1953), Lesovo/Hamzabeyli (opened in 2004) and Malko Tarnovo/Dereköy (opened in 1969). The busiest among the three is Kapitan Andreevo/Kapikule. Kapikule is located in Edirne



Location of Edirne

city of Turkey. It also allows rail traffic. The BCP is located over the European route E80 which is also known as Trans-European Motorway or TEM, and the Pan-European Corridor IV. Kapikule BCP is the end point of Asian Highway Network, AH1.

Kapitan Andreevo/Kapikule BCP is the busiest BCP of Turkey and it is among the busiest BCPs around the world. Together with commercial and non-commercial vehicular traffic, its share in inbound and outbound traffic is around 31% in 2020 among all Turkish BCPs. Its share in international road traffic is increasing.



Location of Kapitan Andreevo/Kapikule BCP

Year	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
Direction	Nr. of Vehicles	Share (%)	Nr. of Vehicles	Share (%)	Nr. of Vehicles	Share (%)	Nr. of Vehicles	Share (%)	Nr. of Vehicles	Share (%)
Inbound	829.786	26,7	891.293	26,1	1.024.545	29,7	1.159.112	30,4	787.626	30,6
Outbound	794.958	25,7	848.087	24,8	994.915	28,9	1.101.335	28,8	787.342	30,7
Total	1.624.744	26,2	1.739.380	25,5	2.019.460	29,3	2.260.447	29,6	1.574.968	30,7

Inbound and Outbound Vehicle Traffic at Kapikule/Kapitan Andreevo BCP

Kapitan Andreevo/Kapikule BCP is particularly significant for commercial freight traffic. It's located on important transport corridors. European Union's trade with Turkey, Mid-East, Caucasia and Mid-Asia is predominantly conducted through Kapitan Andreevo/Kapikule BCP.

Year	2015			2016			2017		
Commercial Vehicle Type	Truck-Trailer	Tanker	Truck-Pickup Truck	Truck-Trailer	Tanker	Truck-Pickup Truck	Truck-Trailer	Tanker	Truck-Pickup Truck
Inbound	235.526	4	17.457	259.256	7	18.522	273.842	4	19.168
Outbound	238.200	2	14.014	272.820	6	15.243	291.167	0	14.521
Total	473.726	6	31.471	532.076	13	33.765	565.009	4	33.689
Year	2018			2019			2020		
Commercial Vehicle Type	Truck-Trailer	Tanker	Truck-Pickup Truck	Truck-Trailer	Tanker	Truck-Pickup Truck	Truck-Trailer	Tanker	Truck-Pickup Truck
Inbound	295.973	15	21.504	346.464	6	26.108	327.474	3	22.239
Outbound	320.941	0	24.161	357.912	1	19.130	342.242	24	12.258
Total	616.914	15	47.115	704.376	7	45.238	669.716	27	34.497

Inbound and Outbound Commercial Vehicle Traffic at Kapikule/Kapitan Andreevo BCP

Kapitan Andreevo/Kapikule BCP is a vital gateway considering the volume and frequency of road transport operations between Europe, Asia, Middle East and North Africa. The well-functioning of the BCP have implications for not only two neighboring countries but also for the entire region and this very aspect becomes more of an issue in times when economic recovery of the countries is a lot more important due to economic repercussions of COVID-19 pandemic. Despite its significance for international trade Kapitan Andreevo/Kapikule BCP has been associated with long truck queues and delays, slow and desynchronized customs operations and physical challenges for drivers, to name a few of the problems. The international significance of the Kapitan Andreevo/Kapikule BCP necessitates smooth border crossing operations and decreased waiting times. The truck queues and other issues at the BCP are not only concerning Bulgaria, EU and Turkey but also the immediate economies as well. It is not only concerning carriers and logistics companies but also producers, customers, investors and drivers.

PROBLEMS AT THE KAPITAN ANDREEVO/KAPIKULE BCP

- Long Truck Queues

The outbound trucks from Turkey using the Kapitan Andreevo/Kapikule BCP, depending on the time of the year, face long queues. These queues reach up to 35 kilometers occasionally. This situation leads to unfavorable and difficult living conditions for truck drivers of all nationalities. Drivers cannot leave their vehicles in order to eat, sleep and even to use the bathroom.

- Insufficient Number of Customs Officers

The Bulgarian part of the BCP does not have enough number of customs officers who can process the intense traffic at the BCP. The traffic consists of not only the commercial vehicles of Bulgaria and Turkey, but the international freight of the proximate economies as well. Therefore, the Bulgarian part of the BCP need to be supported with more customs officers and other supporting personnel in order to facilitate the smooth operation at the gate. The shift changes also increase the severity of the problem and this issue needs to be addressed as well.

- Lack of Precautions During Holidays or Other Peak Seasons

The outgoing traffic from Turkey through Kapitan Andreevo/Kapikule BCP is already intense during weekdays and weekends. However, the traffic increases especially during holidays and other peak seasons. Although the same situation is experienced almost every year and the consequences only get more difficult, necessary precautions are not taken by the Bulgarian side of the border in order to facilitate border crossing.



Truck Queue at Kapitan Andreevo/Kapikule BCP

- Unsynchronized Processing Volume

In line with the frequency and volume, Turkish side of the BCP processes 4 to 8 platforms for outgoing traffic, however the platforms at the Bulgarian part of the BCP usually operate much less than its Turkish counterpart. This leads to an important bottleneck where delays and queues occur subsequently.

- Unsynchronized Working Hours of Customs Personnel

The lack of harmony in working hours of the customs personnel (including the fueling personnel) lead to inefficiencies, loss of time and truck queues.

- Inefficiencies due to Physical Infrastructure

The buffer zone where the vehicles are accepted for inspection at Bulgarian part of the BCP does not have enough physical capacity to accommodate the incoming traffic from Turkish side of the BCP. In addition, the positioning of the disinfection unit at the Bulgarian side leads to delays for vehicles.

- Lack of Infrastructure for Refrigerated Vehicles Hamzabeyli/Lesovo BCP

Hamzabeyli/Lesovo BCP does not have the physical infrastructure for the refrigerated vehicles and this situation leads to increased vehicle frequency at the Kapitan Andreevo/Kapikule BCP.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- Turkey serves as a natural land bridge between Europe, Middle East and Middle Asia; Bulgaria is controlling an important external border of the EU. The inefficiencies at the Kapitan Andreevo/Kapikule BCP lead to challenges and difficulties at the delivery of raw materials required for manufacturing and the delivery of orders, increase waste of resources together with environmental impact.
- The queues and delays impede economic recovery which is much needed due to the negative impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the economies.
- Truck drivers face challenging conditions due to queues.
- Trucking costs increase and the price of manufactured goods increase accordingly.
- Delays increase the need for enhancing the truck fleet due to inefficient use.

THE MEASURES TAKEN BY TURKEY

- The “Kapikule Action Plan” is developed by the Ministry of Trade in 2019. Certain bottlenecks are defined and necessary precautions are taken by relevant authorities.
- Physical infrastructure is enhanced at Kapikule: number of platforms is increased, parking area is enlarged, the positioning of fuel station is changed and the number of fuel stations is increased, a truck parking area of 600 trucks is planned.
- The Virtual Queue System is adopted for Kapikule border crossings in order to decrease waiting time.
- UTIKAD discussed the problem with Turkey’s Vice-President Fuat OKTAY in September 2018 and later provided him with a fact sheet on the issue.
- Service Exporters’ Association in Turkey prepared a report on the financial and durational impact of queues and delays, and provided solutions to problems.

EXPECTATIONS FROM BULGARIA

- Customs administration of Bulgaria at Kapitan Andreevo needs to be able to process incoming vehicle traffic from Turkish side of the border.
- Necessary number of platforms for vehicles are required.
- Necessary number of customs officers, police, inspection and other supporting personnel need to be employed at Kapitan Andreevo BCP.
- Additional personnel need to be made present to process the incoming vehicle traffic during holiday and other peak seasons.
- The inefficiencies during shift changes of the Bulgarian customs personnel have to be addressed.
- Physical inadequacies such as insufficient parking area at the Kapitan Andreevo BCP need to be immediately addressed.
- Kapitan Andreevo and Kapikule BCPs need to be designed and function as one BCP. In order to achieve this, necessary data exchange protocols, integration and cooperation have to be developed between customs administrations of Bulgaria and Turkey, the working hours of the personnel at both sides of the border have to be synchronized.

- Infrastructural investments need to be done for refrigerated vehicles at the Hamzabeyli/Lesovo BCP in order to make the vehicle traffic shift from Kapitan Andreevo/Kapikule BCP.
- In case the excess number of vehicles at the Bulgarian truck fleet, which is higher in number than the need of Bulgaria, lead to competition with the Turkish truck fleet and lead to barriers consequently, this issue needs to be addressed as well.

