



REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND WATER

**FIRST NATIONAL REPORT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA**

**ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION**

APRIL – 2002

Table of Contents

I.	Table of contents		2
		
II.	Summary		4
		
	Introduction		11
		
III.	Strategies and Priorities, determined within the framework of Sustainable Development Plans and/or Policies 12		12
		
III.1.	<i>National Development Plans</i>		12
		
III.2.	<i>National Environment Strategy</i>		13
		
III.3.	<i>Other documents for Strategies or Plans in the field of the Environment</i>		13
III.3.1.	<i>National and Local AGENDA 21</i>		13
		
III.3.2.	<i>Other existing Plans or Strategies related to the Environment</i> 14		14
		
IV.	Institutional measures, undertaken for implementing of the Convention		14
IV.1.	<i>Legal status of the National coordinating institution – functions, institutional framework, resources</i>		14
		
IV.1.1.	<i>Budget and financial resources of Ministry of Environment and Water. Sources of financing and its financial instruments</i>		15
		
IV.1.2.	<i>Governmental and academic institutions, supporting the Ministry of Environment and Water</i>		16
		
IV.1.3.	<i>The state of the information and data</i>		16
		
IV.1.4.	<i>Other databases related to the environment and desertification within the country</i>		17
		
IV.1.5.	<i>Exchange of information for targeting and addressing of different users</i>		17
		
IV.1.6.	<i>Approved and functioning legal and regulatory framework</i>		17
IV.1.6.1.	<i>Analysis of the legislation in the field of the environment and in the related fields</i>		17
		
IV.2.	<i>Reform and management of the ownership on land</i>		19

IV.3.	<i>Reform in forestry. Management of forests and the lands within the forestry fund</i>	20
IV.3.1.	<i>Restitution of the ownership of the forests and the lands within the forestry fund</i>	21
V.	Participation process in the maintenance of the preparation and implementation of the Action programs	22
	
V.1.	<i>Participation of the society and local population in the Decision-making process.....</i>	22
V.1.1.	<i>Actions undertaken by the Ministry of Environment and Water, in its capacity of National coordinating institution for informing of the wide public.....</i>	22
V.1.2.	<i>Improving the public awareness and training of specialists.....</i>	23
VI.	Process of consultations for support and implementation of the National Action Programs and partnership agreements with the developed country Parties and other organizations.....	23
	
VII.	Planned and undertaken measures within the framework of the National Action Programs, including measures for improvement of economic environment, for preservation of natural resources and for encouraging its sustainable use.....	25
	
VII.1.	<i>Assessment of the state of natural resources as well as the level of desertification as of the moment of initiating of the National Action Plan.....</i>	25
VII.1.1.	<i>Inventory, adaptation and integration of current projects within the process of the National Development Plan and assessment of its compatibility with the principles of the Convention. Action Programs, implemented in accordance with priority fields as determined by the Convention.....</i>	30
	
VIII.	Financing from the national state budget for support of the implementation.....	31
	
IX.	Overview of the starting points and indicators, used for reporting of the progress and subsequent evaluation.....	32
	
IX.1.	<i>Working mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation.....</i>	32

II. SUMMARY

On 12.01.2001 through adoption of a law, the National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria ratified the UN Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (prom. SG, Vol. 7 dd. 23.01.2001)

The Ministry of Environment and Water is the institution, which performed the act of ratification of the Convention, and has undertaken the responsibilities for its implementation as well as the functions of the National coordinating institution.

The national focal point is Mrs. Tatyana Dimitrova, expert in “National Nature Protection Service” Directorate with the Ministry of Environment and Water.

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The Ministry of Environment and Water, jointly with its divisions and regional bodies is also the principal state institution, responsible for the environmental protection policy.

The Ministry of Environment and Water is juridical person with state budget financing, having its seat in the City of Sofia.

On the grounds of the provisions in the Ordinance No. 214/1999 of the Council of Ministers for approval of Internal Regulation of the Ministry of Environment and Water, the organizational structure of the ministry is as follows:

- **Minister** – directs, coordinates and controls development and implementation of the state policy in the field of environmental protection, conservation and use of water and mineral resources;
- **Political cabinet** – includes all Deputy ministers, a Head of the Cabinet of the Minister, a Parliamentary Secretary and a Head of Public Relations Unit;
- **Inspectorate**
- **General administration** – organized within “Legal Counseling, Financial and Economic Activities, Property Management, Defense and Mobilization Preparation and Public Relations” Directorate;
- **Specialized administration** – organized within 6 Directorates: “Coordination of the Regional Inspectorates of Environment and Water”, “National Nature Protection Service”, “Strategy, European Integration and International Cooperation”, “Preventive Measures, Ambient Air Purity Protection and Waste Management”, “Water Resources”, “Geology and Mineral Resources Protection”.

Under the direction of the Ministry of Environment and Water are 15 Regional Inspectorates of Environment and Water and the Executive Agency of Environment and Water, which is a specialized body of the ministry and the authorized center in Bulgaria within the range of activities of the European Environmental Agency.

*The total number of employees within the system of the Ministry of Environment and Water is **1002 persons**:*

- incl. **509 women**, which represents 50,8% of the total employees number.

*The administrative personnel in the head office is **200 persons**,*

- incl. **111 women**, which represents 55,5% of the total employees number.

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Bulgaria is such a country, where as result of the global warming, were observed climate changes, expressed mainly in warming and aridity and increase of the continental character of the climate.

The constant warming and aridity phenomena occurred within the territory of our country during the last two decades and the adverse analogous trends for the first decades of the last century showed that as a result from the climate change, the weather conditions caused a beginning of degradation of the phyto-ecosystems and soils in Bulgaria and outline a trend to desertification.

Nevertheless that Bulgaria is a comparatively new Party to the Convention and a National Plan to Combat Desertification is not developed yet, within the most part of the documents with national importance, developed in the recent years, these issues were covered in some extent, based on the point of view of the sustainable development, and namely:

- **National Economic Development Plan for 2000 – 2006 period.**

The National Economic Development Plan was adopted by Decision of the Council of Ministers and was developed in accordance with the National Strategy for Accession to the European Union, the Government Programme Bulgaria 2001, the updated National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis (NPAA) and the Programme “Accession Partnership”. The legal ground for its development is the Law for Regional Development, which determines that the plan represents “*a summary of sectoral and regional programmes, based on analysis of the integral development of the country and general strategy for its development*”. The National economic development plan outlines the vision for the development of Bulgaria and determines the national priorities. In accordance with the above Decision of the Council of Ministers, all institutions, responsible for the implementation of the Action Plan, should include in its sectoral programmes the policies and measures provided therein.

The strategic objective of the plan is “*achievement of sustainable low-inflation economic growth, as a prerequisite for income increase and improvement of the living conditions in relation to the future integration in European economic and social area.*”

- **National Development Plan until the year 2006**
Sectoral programme "Environment."

Programme objective:

Preserving the quality of the environment in the ecologically clean areas of the country and improving the state of the environment in the polluted and damaged areas.

Expected results from the implementation of the programme:

To prevent and decrease the risk for human health, flora and fauna; to improve the conditions for the development of key sectors of the economy – tourism and agriculture; to build-up an effective ecological infrastructure to facilitate the increasing economic activity; to improve the quality and quantity range of services for the population in the respective region; to create new employment opportunities – temporary and permanent; to facilitate the process of accession of the country to the European Union; to stimulate the local and regional development.

Scope

- Territorial – the entire country;
- Sectoral –water, air, waste, nature conservation, noise pollution reduction, protection from landslides and abrasion;
- Timing – 2000 – 2006.

• National Environment Strategy

In 1991-1992 period, the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria undertook wide-scale studies on the Draft Environment Strategy for Bulgaria, conducted with the support of the World Bank. The Government adopted an Environment Strategy and its updating in 1994 resulted in the elaboration of a ministerial programme, which determined the basic priorities of the country for the period until the year 2000. The Environment Strategy and Action Plan until the year 2000 aimed to achieve two main objectives: firstly, *introducing of new approaches and development of a modern steady system for environmental management*, and secondly - *performing of actions for solving of critical ecological issues*. The objectives of this Strategy were achieved as a result of the efforts of the Bulgarian institutions in the last years, and significant progress has been made with the support of some European and other international programmes.

In 2001 the Government adopted through its Decision No. 455 a new **National Environment Strategy and Action Plan for 2000 – 2006 period**.

As opposed to the previous one, the new Strategy is oriented mainly towards the net results, i.e. *towards actions and measures for practical implementation of the adopted legislation aiming the improvement of the quality of life of the people and nature conservation. Or strictly speaking, towards the preservation and enlargement of the large clean areas and the rich nature of Bulgaria at the expected economic growth and overcome of the existing local ecological problems*.

Other documents for Strategies in the field of Environment

• National and Local Agenda 21

In the Republic of Bulgaria by a Decision of the Council for Regional Development was established a National Commission on Sustainable Development, the Minister of Environment and Water being its Chairperson.

The main functions and tasks of the Commission include as follows: *support of the constructive national dialogue for achieving of consensus on key issues of the Sustainable Development of Bulgaria, determination of ways and means for integration of the national and local initiatives on Sustainable Development and evaluation and recommendations to the National Economic Development Plan, aiming its development into a Strategy on Sustainable Development*.

Other existing Plans or Strategies in relation to the Environment

Sectoral Plans and Strategies:

- National Strategy for Energy Development for the period up to 2010;
- National Action Plan on Environment and Health;
- National Plan for Regional Development within 2000-2006 period;
- The National Agricultural and Rural Development Plan for 2000-2006 period under the Special EU Accession Programme for Agricultural and Rural Development (SAPARD);
- National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis (NPAA);
- Strategy on ISPA, Sector “Environment” etc.

In case of Bulgaria, a comparatively new Party to the Convention to Combat Desertification, facing now a preparation process for elaboration of documents, such as National Strategy on Soils, National Action Plan to Combat Desertification, etc., the implementation of the *synergism principles* will be extremely useful. Bulgaria, as a party to other two UN Conventions – UN Framework Convention on Climate Change 1992 and The 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity, will be able to use already gained experience and accumulated database thereunder. It could be used approved Strategies and Programs, with clearly outlined direction towards climate change and drought and measures planned for decrease of its consequences, some already in stage of implementation, such as:

- Strategy for Integrated Water Management in the Republic of Bulgaria-1997, Council of Ministers;
- General Schemes for Water Resources Utilization – 2000;
- National Programme for Phasing Out the Distribution and Use of Leaded Petrol - Council of Ministers, 1998;
- Programme for necessary measures in the existing conditions of trend to aridity within 2001-2010 period - Council of Ministers, 2001;
- National Programme for Reducing the Impact of Aridity and Increasing of adaptive possibilities of forests for survival in extreme conditions;
- National Biological Diversity Conservation Strategy – Council of Ministers, 1998;
- National Biological Diversity Conservation Plan – Council of Ministers, 2000;
- National Programme for Phasing Out the Use of Ozone Depleting Substances, which implementation completed successfully in 2000;
- National Action Plan on Climate Change for fulfillment of obligations of Bulgaria under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and Kyoto Protocol (1997). One of major commitments for 21st Century, set forth within is the afforestation of uncultivated lands, unsuitable for agriculture, covering an area of 250 000 ha – Council of Ministers, 2000;
- National Programme for Combating the consequences of Fires through afforestation of devoured forests, which envisages hiring of persons from the risk group “long-term unemployed” in the activities on reclamation of forests, which are destroyed by fire or drying up – cleaning and preparation of burned down areas, afforestation, crops cultivation and seeds collection;
- The National Agricultural and Rural Development Plan funded under SAPARD and Guidelines on Forests – Measure 1.4. “Forestry, afforestation of agricultural lands, investments in forestry, processing and marketing of forestry products;
- National Implementation Programme for Enforcement of the Acquis in the field of Environment – Council of Ministers, 2000;

Programmes:

- Bulgarian-Swiss Programme on Biological Diversity Conservation;
- National Programme for Biomonitoring in Bulgaria (1999);
- Bulgarian-Swiss Programme on Forests and its two projects;
 1. Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Use of Forests;
 2. Monitoring of Forest Ecosystems.

National Project “Encouraging the possibilities of the governmental and non-governmental organizations in Bulgaria for implementation of afforestation projects aiming the mitigation of the consequences of the climate changes” (1995). In this relation, two new forest-oriented projects were proposed. There is envisaged *afforestation aiming the stabilization of the soil, agro-afforestation, production of bioenergy, reclamation of the environment, better protection of the forests from natural and anthropogenic impact – fires, pests, diseases, deforestation.*

In order to achieve better progress in the activities for the implementation of the Convention it has to acquire a wider popularization. ***The society has to be informed about, to engage the central government, local authorities, non-governmental organizations, the citizens and companies.*** For this purpose:

- In May 1998, thanks to the financial and expert assistance of the Interim Secretariat for the Convention, a National seminar was held on issues of land degradation and combating desertification, aiming the increase of the national awareness. This seminar was attended by representatives of concerned bodies and institutions, non-governmental soil-protection societies, etc.
- The Convention was translated into Bulgarian language;
- A special seminar for the specialists, which are working within the system of Ministry of Environment and Water on the problems of the soil protection was held;
- The Convention was published in a paperback print edition by a non-governmental organization – Association “Green Balkans”, uniting a number of nature protection associations;
- We envisaged to promulgate the Convention in the State Gazette – May 2002 as timetable;
- In May 2002 we are planning to organize a regular National seminar on the problems of land degradation and combating desertification, outlined in the Convention as well as
- Its popularization through mass information media.

For providing of wide public support towards ensuring of adequate actions and conditions for sustainable and optimal functioning of the natural resources, for institutional strengthening of the protected areas system aiming the protection of biodiversity were organized the following events:

- ***Round table*** within the program of the Conference, “***90 years organized combating to soil erosion in Bulgaria***”.
- Scientific and Practice ***Seminar “Nature-friendly Management of the highland coniferous forests” – forestry systems of woodcutting and afforestation, biodiversity and measures for its preservation.***
- Scientific and Practice ***Seminar “Forestry and biodiversity in the plain forests of North-Eastern Bulgaria”.***
- ***Seminar – “The process of forest certification in Bulgaria”.***
- ***Seminar*** – on implementation of the pilot project under the Plan for Multifunctional Forests Management.
- ***Round table – “Afforestation after forest fires – problems and solutions”.***
- ***Seminar “Fires and Forest Ecosystems”.***
- ***Workshop on issues of the afforestation – “Actual problems of afforestation” and “Condition and perspectives for development of the production of forest reproductive materials, afforestation and combating the erosion”.***

The transparency of the actions is a goal-oriented policy of the government in accordance with its “Program 2001”. Especially in the field of the environment where the sensitivity is greater, are envisaged special measures for involving the population and the non-governmental organizations as important partners for policy implementation. In the short-term timetable it is planned adoption of legislation in the field of the information of the public on the problems of the environment and access to this information and development of plan for its implementation. Forthcoming is the development of National program for involving the society in the resolving of the environmental problems by training and increasing of the social culture and conscience in the concerned field.

Together with their offices and branches in Bulgaria there are around 115 non-governmental organizations (NGO) for preservation of the environment (Catalogue of NGO for preservation of the environment in Bulgaria, 1993). The number of such organizations varies from 5 000 to 10 000 people. Members are nature-lovers, nature-defenders, experts, scientists, pupils, students, teachers,

and people with different social status united by the idea for preservation of the nature. These organizations perform activities on elaboration of expert assessments and expertise on particular ecological situations, practical activities in relation with the ecological training and education and public control:

Other state institutions, having responsibilities on different environmental protection aspects are: *Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works, Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Industry, Ministry of Energy, etc.*

Other organizations, supporting the environmental protection: *National Agency on the Use of Atomic Energy for Peaceful Purposes, National Agency on Energy Efficiency, National Agency of Standardization and Metrology, National Soil Resources Agency, National Agency of Agricultural Sciences, National Plant Protection Service, National Institute of Meteorology and Hydrology, Scientific Research Institute "N. Pushkarov", Agricultural University – City of Plovdiv, etc.*

One of the main leading principles of the sustainable husbandry of the nature resources is the *realization of training programs* aiming to engage the local public with the problems of the soils, forests and biodiversity, its preservation and reclamation, increase of the ecological culture and forming of right attitude to the nature. For institutional strengthening of the divisions of the institutions and aiming the improvement of its positive image from the point of view of nature protection, periodical campaigns are held, mutual work and enlargement of the relations and interaction with other state and public bodies and non-governmental organizations, scientific institutions and all kind of media (radio, television, magazines, newspapers) are also performed.

In the universities and other higher state and private educational establishments in our country a considerable number of young people receive every year very good academic education in different sectors of the environment and nature protection.

The Ministry of Environment and Water disposes with well-developed information system. The database related to the desertification can be used not only by the specialized bodies related directly to the problems of the land degradation and desertification, but also by the wide public.

- Ministry of Environment and Water maintains an information system by components and factors of the environment – *air quality, quality of surface and ground waters, soils, protected areas and biological diversity, condition of the wastes, non-ionizing radiation and aviation and transport sound pollution*
- **The information system**, including the collection and submitting of the information for the environment in Bulgaria is legislative settled with the general Act and its normative regulations, rules and the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria. These are Environment Protection Act, State Administration Act. On the grounds of Art. 17 of the Environment Protection Act everyone is entitled of access to the available information on the environment without proving a particular interest.
- **The information** is spread as a primary, available, edited and purposely edited.
- **The available information** is spread by means of bulletins, yearbooks, legislation, and other print editions.
- In most cases it is maintained by the web-site of the Ministry of the Environment and Water or the one of the Executive Environmental Agency - www.moew.government.bg or www.nfp-bg.eionet.eu.int/

Other state institutions, submitting information on environment are:

- The Ministry of Agriculture and Forests – monthly and information bulletins – print editions.
- Ministry of Health – monthly specialized editions.

- National Institute of Meteorology and Hydrology with the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences – monthly and annual bulletins.

Bulgaria has a well-developed communications infrastructure, allowing comparatively mass utilization of Internet services. In particular, on the territory of Sofia the state administration disposes with its own communication network using optical cable and servicing the state institutions. It provides easy and qualitative access to Internet, a possibility for supporting of own web-pages, provides a wide range of **useful information** on the environment, like *legislation, planned, actual and completed projects, initiatives, web-links in form of USER-groups and other Internet activities within the CIRCLE environment of the EIONET- network*.

An establishment of Catalogue of Data Sources (CDS) is forthcoming. The joint print edition of the Ministry of Environment and Water and the Regional Environmental Center - “*Who is doing what for the environment in Bulgaria*” is at the present in process of updating and it will be published on the web-site together with the contact address list of the institutions, which generate information for the environment.

All described above outlines the efforts of the Ministry of Environment and Water for making the information available to different users, which are expressed in the form of:

- Printing publications
- Brochures
- Specialized rubrics in mass media – TV, radio
- Press-conferences
- WEB – sites
- Establishment of information centers

INTRODUCTION

Bulgaria is a comparatively small country, situated in the Balkan peninsula, in south-eastern part of Europe.

The country borders on the north with the Republic of Romania, on the east – with the Black Sea, on the south - with the Republic of Turkey and the Republic of Greece, on the west it borders with the Republic of Macedonia and Serbia.

The territory of Bulgaria covers an area of 110 993.6 km², with total borders' length of 2 245 km, including – 52.6% - land, 30.6% - riverine and 16.8% - marine ones.

The administrative division of the country includes 28 districts and 262 municipalities.

The population of the Republic of Bulgaria is 8 149 500 inhabitants, 69% of which live in the towns and cities. The capital is Sofia, with over 1 million inhabitants.

The climate is temperate continental, with four different seasons: Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter.

The ground type is diversified, the mountains are high and low, rocky and folded ones, which are cut through by deep valleys, shallow riverbeds and large plains.

The broken ground and existence of large number of mountains have as consequence that the share of the croplands is only 42% of the total area of the country, so the issue of its preservation is of extremely national importance.

In the last decades the mutual impact between the man and natural environment increased significantly. These inter-relations passed different stages of development and interference on the way of utilization of the natural resources. So occurred sophisticated problems, related to ensuring of energy, food and recreational resources, always accompanied by anthropogenic pollution and damaging of the environment. As result of the excessive intensification of the industry and agriculture in the recent past, urbanization of the settlements, etc., was observed a deterioration of the components of the environment – air, waters and soils. In the recent years in Bulgaria is observed another constant trend of decrease of the active agricultural population and the technical equipment level of the agriculture in general. Fertile arable lands are abandoned, irrigation systems are destroyed, irrigation and drainage channels are clogged, use of mineral and organic fertilizers is decreased drastically, the vegetation in many places is degraded. All above are such changes, which have direct negative impact biological potential of the lands, which is already an indicator for existence of trends towards desertification.

Having in mind the wide-accepted definition of the UN Conference “*Environment and Development*” held in 1992 in Rio, where the desertification is determined as a “*function of land degradation in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas, resulting mainly from anthropogenic activities – erosion, salting, acidification, contamination, vegetation cover degradation*”, the mere registration of degradation processes is already a serious indicator and a prerequisite for occurrence of desertification processes. In Bulgaria exist a number of factors, which indicates that the desertification processes are present on the territory of our country.

III. Strategies and Priorities, determined within the framework of Sustainable Development Plans and/or Policies

Nevertheless that Bulgaria is a comparatively new Party to the Convention and a National Plan to Combat Desertification is not developed yet, within the most part of the documents with national importance, developed in the recent years, these issues were covered in some extent, based on the point of view of the sustainable development, and namely:

III.1 National Development Plans.

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The National Economic Development Plan was adopted by Decision of the Council of Ministers and was developed in accordance with the National Strategy for Accession to the European Union, the Government Programme Bulgaria 2001, the updated National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis (NPAA) and the Programme “Accession Partnership”. The legal ground for its development is the Law for Regional Development, which determines that the plan represents *“a summary of sectoral and regional programmes, based on analysis of the integral development of the country and general strategy for its development”*. The National Economic Development Plan outlines the vision for the development of Bulgaria and determines the national priorities. In accordance with the above Decision of the Council of Ministers, all institutions, responsible for the implementation of the Action Plan, should include in its sectoral programmes the policies and measures provided therein.

The strategic objective of the plan is *“achievement of sustainable low-inflation economic growth, as a prerequisite for income increase and improvement of the living conditions in relation to the future integration in European economic and social area”*.

- **National Development Plan until the year 2006**
Sectoral programme "Environment"

Programme objective:

Preserving the quality of the environment in the ecologically clean areas of the country and improving the state of the environment in the polluted and damaged areas.

Expected results from the implementation of the programme:

To prevent and decrease the risk for human health, flora and fauna; to improve the conditions for the development of key sectors of the economy - tourism and agriculture; to build-up an effective ecological infrastructure to facilitate the increasing economic activity; to improve the qualitative and quantitative range of services for the population in the respective region concerned; to create new employment opportunities – temporary and permanent; to facilitate the process of accession of the country to the European Union; to stimulate the local and regional development.

Scope

- Territorial – the entire country;
- Sectoral – water, air, waste, nature conservation, noise pollution reduction, protection from landslides and abrasion;
- Timing – 2000 – 2006.

Foundations

- Accession Partnership;

- National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis EU/NPAA;
- Government Programme 2001;
- Environment Strategy;
- National sectoral strategies and programmes in the field of environment;
- National sectoral strategies and programmes.

III.2. National Environment Strategy

In 1991-1992 period, the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria undertook wide-scale studies on the Draft Environment Strategy for Bulgaria, conducted with the support of the World Bank. The Government adopted an Environment Strategy and its updating in 1994 resulted in the elaboration of a ministerial programme, which determined the basic priorities of the country for the period until the year 2000. The Environment Strategy and Action Plan until the year 2000 aimed to achieve two main objectives: firstly, *introducing of new approaches and development of a modern steady system for environmental management*, and secondly - *performing of actions for solving of critical ecological issues*. The objectives of this Strategy were achieved as a result of the efforts of the Bulgarian institutions in the last years, and with the support of some European and other international programmes a significant progress has been made, and namely:

In 2001 the Government adopted through its Decision No. 455 a new **National Environment Strategy and Action Plan for 2000 – 2006 period**.

As opposed to the previous one, the new Strategy is oriented mainly to the net results, i.e. *to actions and measures for practical implementation of the adopted legislation aiming the improvement of the quality of life of the people and nature conservation. Or strictly speaking, towards the preservation and enlargement of the large clean areas and rich nature of Bulgaria at the expected economic growth and overcome of the existing local ecological problems*.

III.3 Other documents for Strategies in the field of Environment

III.3 .1 National and Local Agenda 21

In the Republic of Bulgaria by a Decision of the Council for Regional Development was established a National Commission on Sustainable Development, the Minister of Environment and Water being its Chairperson.

The main functions and tasks of the Commission include as follows: *support of the constructive national dialogue for achieving of consensus on key issues of the Sustainable Development of Bulgaria, determination of ways and means for integration of the national and local initiatives on Sustainable Development and evaluation and recommendations to the National Economic Development Plan, aiming its development into a Strategy on Sustainable Development*.

The principles of integrating the environment protection requirements were gradually introduced into all fields of the country's economy. For that purpose special environment protection and management measures are incorporated into all sectoral plans programmes. Furthermore, the environment protection legislation in Bulgaria aims at sustainable development.

Bulgaria presented its National Report on Sustainable Development at the ninth session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development in May 2001.

III.3 .2 Other existing Plans or Strategies in relation to the Environment

Sectoral Plans and Strategies:

- National Strategy for Energy Development for the period up to 2010;

- National Action Plan on Environment and Health;
- National Plan for Regional Development within 2000-2006 period;
- The National Agricultural and Rural Development Plan for 2000-2006 period under the Special EU Accession Programme for Agricultural and Rural Development (SAPARD);
- National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis (NPAA);
- Strategy on ISPA, Sector “Environment”, etc.

IV. Institutional measures, undertaken for implementing of the Convention

IV.1. Legal status of the National coordinating institution – resources, functions, institutional framework.

On 12.01.2001 through adoption of a law, the National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria ratified the UN Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (prom. SG, Vol. 7 dd. 23.01.2001)

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The Ministry of Environment and Water, jointly with its divisions and regional bodies is also the principal state institution, responsible for the environmental protection policy.

In accordance with the recommendations of the Environment Strategy from 1992 as well as in result of the integration processes to the European Union the Ministry of Environment and Water was gradually reorganized.

The present Ministry of Environment and Water was established in 1997, integrating the larger part of the national ecological administration under the administrative management of a sole Ministry. The Ministry of Environment and Water relocated its activity to development, enforcement and coordination of the national policy on the environment without abandoning the control functions, which were assigned to it earlier.

The Ministry of Environment and Water is juridical person with state budget financing, having its seat in the City of Sofia.

On the grounds of the provisions in the Ordinance No. 214/1999 of the Council of Ministers for approval of Internal Regulation of the Ministry of Environment and Water, the organizational structure of the ministry is as follows:

- **Minister** – directs, coordinates and controls development and implementation of the state policy in the field of environmental protection, conservation and use of water and mineral resources;
- **Political cabinet** – includes all Deputy ministers, a Head of the Cabinet of the Minister, a Parliamentary Secretary and a Head of Public Relations Unit;
- **Inspectorate**

- **General administration** – organized within “Legal Counseling, Financial and Economic Activities, Property Management, Defense and Mobilization Preparation and Public Relations” Directorate;
- **Specialized administration** – organized within 6 Directorates: “Coordination of the Regional Inspectorates of Environment and Water”, “National Nature Protection Service”, “Strategy, European Integration and International Cooperation”, “Preventive Measures, Ambient Air Purity Protection and Waste Management”, “Water Resources”, “Geology and Mineral Resources Protection”.

Under the direction of the Ministry of Environment and Water are 15 Regional Inspectorates of Environment and Water and the Executive Agency of Environment and Water, which is a specialized body of the ministry and the authorized center in Bulgaria within the range of activities of the European Environmental Agency.

The total number of employees within the system of the Ministry of Environment and Water is **1002 persons**:

- incl. **509 women**, which represents 50,8% of the total employees number.

The administrative personnel in the head office is **200 persons**,

- incl. **111 women**, which represents 55,5% of the total employees number.

IV.1.1. Budget and financial resources of Ministry of Environment and Water. Sources of financing and its financial instruments:

- **Budget subsidies**

During the recent years, the share of the direct state subsidies for investments in the environment amounted to 1-1,3% of the gross domestic product. The expectations indicated an increase during the next 10 years up to 3%.

- **National Environmental Protection Fund (NEPF)**

The Fund was established in 1992. Its management, operations, funding sources, ranges and types of expenses, etc. are regulated in the *Regulation for collection, spending and control of the financial resources in the environmental protection funds*, approved with Ordinance of the Council of Ministers and is periodically amended and supplemented.

The financial resources are collected from: *fees from import of fuels, fees from import of second-hand motor vehicles, privatization funds, sanctions, fines for pollution, administrative fees (fines, taxes), payments on previous loans.*

- **Municipal Environmental Protection Funds (MEPF)**

Simultaneously with NEPF were established also funds on municipal level. Both types of funds are governed by the same Regulation. The priority finance activities are the same as for NEPF, but in case of **MEPF** are limited within the territory of the respective municipalities.

- **The National Trust Ecofund (NTEF)**

In the end of 1995 Bulgaria and Switzerland signed the Debt for Nature Swap Agreement. The National Trust Ecofund was established in 1996, as an independent institution with the purpose to manage the financial resources under the conditions of “Debt for Nature” and “Debt for Environment” as well as the funds, provided under other types of agreements with international and national funding sources.

- **International investment –**

PHARE Programme, Global Environmental Facility (GEF), World Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, European Investment Bank, etc. A large number of countries

offer bilateral assistance to Bulgaria as to the state institutions and municipalities as well as to private companies.

IV.1.2. Governmental and academic institutions, supporting the Ministry of Environment and Water

Other state institutions, having responsibilities on different environmental protection aspects are: *Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works, Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Industry, Ministry of Energy, etc.*

Other organizations, supporting the environmental protection: *National Agency on the Use of Atomic Energy for Peaceful Purposes, National Agency on Energy Efficiency, National Agency of Standardization and Metrology, National Soil Resources Agency, National Agency of Agricultural Sciences, National Plant Protection Service, National Institute of Meteorology and Hydrology, Scientific Research Institute “N. Pushkarov”, Agricultural University – City of Plovdiv, etc.*

IV.1.3. The state of the information and data:

Thanks to the well-developed information system of Ministry of Environment and Water the database related to the desertification can be used not only by the specialized bodies related directly to the problems of the land degradation and desertification, but also by the wide public.

- Ministry of Environment and Water maintains an information system by components and factors of the environment – *air quality, quality of surface and ground waters, soils, protected areas and biological diversity, condition of the wastes, non-ionizing radiation and aviation and transport sound pollution.*
- **The information system**, including the collection and submitting of the information for the environment in Bulgaria is legislative settled with the general Act and its normative regulations, rules and the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria. These are Environment Protection Act, State Administration Act. On the grounds of Art. 17 of the Environment Protection Act everyone is entitled of access to the available information on the environment without proving a particular interest. In 1998 in Aarhus, Bulgaria signed the Convention for Access to Information, the public participation in decision-making and the access to jurisdiction related with the matters on the nature protection– not ratified yet.
- **The information** is spread as a primary, available, edited and purposely edited.
- **The available information** is spread by means of bulletins, yearbooks, legislation, and other print editions.
- In most cases it is maintained by the web-site of the Ministry of the Environment and Water or the one of the Executive Environmental Agency - www.moew.government.bg or www.nfp-bg.eionet.eu.int/

IV.1.4. Other databases related to the environment and desertification within the country

- The Ministry of Agriculture and Forests – monthly and information bulletins – print editions.
- Ministry of Public Health – monthly specialized editions.

- National Institute of Meteorology and Hydrology with the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences – monthly and annual bulletins.

IV.1.5. Exchange of information for targeting and addressing of different users

Bulgaria has a well-developed communications infrastructure, allowing comparatively mass utilization of Internet services. In particular, on the territory of Sofia the state administration disposes with its own communication network using optical cable and servicing the state institutions. It provides easy and qualitative access to Internet, a possibility for supporting of own web-pages, provides a wide range of **useful information** on the environment, like *legislation, planned, actual and completed projects, initiatives, web-links in form of USER-groups and other Internet activities within the CIRCLE environment of the EIONET- network.*

An establishment of Catalogue of Data Sources (CDS) is forthcoming. The joint print edition of the Ministry of Environment and Water and the Regional Environmental Center - “*Who is doing what for the environment in Bulgaria*” is at the present in process of updating and it will be published on the web-site together with the contact address list of the institutions, which generate information for the environment.

All described above outlines the efforts of the Ministry of Environment and Water for making the information available to different users, which are expressed in the form of:

- Printing publications
- Brochures
- Specialized rubrics in mass media – TV, radio
- Press-conferences
- WEB – sites
- Establishment of information centers

IV.1.6 Approved and functioning legal and regulatory framework

IV.1.6.1. Analysis of the legislation in the field of the environment and in the related fields

The structure of the ecological legislation in Bulgaria is settled in accordance with the specificity and hierarchy of the national legislation. The legislation in the field of the environment provides specific types of normative, administrative and investment measures, depending on its sectoral range. Along with this there exists a considerable number of horizontal measures related to the ecological management issues, which are extremely important for the achievement of one of the most important objectives in the modern environmental management in Europe – the integrated prevention and control of environmental pollution simultaneously on all its components.

The framework of the contemporary ecological legislation in Bulgaria is set up by the Environment Protection Act, adopted in 1991. It revises the system of ecological standards and incorporates the principles “the polluter pays”, “the right of the public to be informed” and “prevention of the pollution”. The Environment Protection Act specifies also the necessity for integration of the preservation of the environment within the other areas of the national policy.

During the past few years there were developed and adopted a large number of normative acts, governing the public relations in the separate sectors of the environment – laws and regulations. The fast development of this process is a result on one side from the necessity of regulation of certain fields in compliance with the new socio-economic conditions in the country and on other side from the necessity of adoption of the Acquis of EU as an irrevocable condition for the European integration processes in our country.

Sectoral laws:

- Clean Ambient Air Act – adopted in 1996 – amended in 2000;
- Reduction of the Harmful Impact of Waste upon the Environment Act – 1997;
- Waters Act – adopted in 1999;
- Protected Areas Act – 1998;
- Nature Protection Act – adopted in 1968, with considerable amendments in the recent two years;
- Forest Act – 1998;
- Hunting and Game Protection Act – 2000;
- Medicinal Plants Act – 2000;
- Law on Protection of Harmful Impact of Chemical Substances, Preparations and Products – 2000;
- Mineral Resources Act – 1999;
- Protection of Farm Lands Act – 1996.

During the past years to these general laws there were developed and approved over 90 normative acts approved by Council of Ministers or accepted by particular ministries. They detailed the requirements, rules and procedures that are principally executed thereon.

There were developed a number of other laws, a large part of which were accepted recently and their main purpose was to regulate the public relations outside the environment, but also to incorporate particular ecological aspects or to support the execution of the laws in the field of the environment like:

- Law on Energy;
- Territorial Regulation Act;
- Road Traffic Act;
- Public Health Act;
- National Standardization Act;
- Law on Information;
- State Budget Act for the respective year;
- Privatization Act;
- Concessions Act;

In the National Assembly were submitted for approval a Biodiversity Act and a new Environment Protection Act.

During the past years, there are significant achievements in Bulgaria related to the adoption of the ecological legislation. The process of transposing of the European ecological legislation in our national legislation is largely completed.

IV.2. Reform and management of the ownership on land

The reform on the ownership on the land was implemented pursuant to the Ownership and Use of Farm Land Act, which was for this purpose during the past years a subject numerous changes (last amendments and supplements - 2000) and pursuant to Cooperatives Act which contributes for establishment and activating of market relationships in the agriculture and establishment of competitive agriculture. With the restitution of the agricultural farm lands it were considerably divided into small parcels. For the resolving of this problem in Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, with the participation of the inter-department work group, a Draft for Commensurable Restitution of Farm Land Act was developed, which will establish conditions for enlarging of the agricultural lands aiming to increase the effectiveness of the agricultural exploitation and in respect to this to increase the market value of the agricultural lands as well as to improve or to preserve the agroecological aspects.

By data from the National Institute of Statistics as of December 2000, totally in real existing and restorable borders and by plan for land allocation ***the right of property was restored of 99,79% of the determined for restoration agricultural farm land.*** It can be said that the process of restitution of the agricultural lands is practically completed.

After the restitution of the agricultural lands there were established specific agencies for scientific services and consultations in service of the citizens, and namely:

- National Agricultural Extension Service, which main function is to enforce the state policy in the field of agriculture as to ***provides the producers with actual information, specific advises and consultations, to render expert assistance in their efforts for accomplishment of effective competitive agriculture and its approximation to the European standards.***
- Executive Agency on Soil Resources (EASR) – it performs specific activities related to the quality, preservation, restoration and improvement of the fertilization of the soil resources and the ecological functions of the soil cover, based on the **Ownership and Use of Farm Land Act, Protection of Farm Land Act** and the rules and regulations related therewith.

The EASR activities include: ***establishment and maintenance of Geographic Information System (GIS), which is unique in its essence, establishment and maintenance of digital model of polluted lands and recommended regimes of land-use; to execute expert reports for the quality of the agricultural lands.***

The social policy of the country in the field of the land ownership is directed to lease out the lands from the state land fund, with priority and on preferential terms for citizens with no or small amount of land property.

For more effective and rational exploitation of the nature resources a project of National agro-ecological program was developed in accordance with Chapter IV of Regulation No.1257/99 of EU. This program will be effective in Bulgaria after the accession of our country to EU. The main purpose of this program is to stimulate the farmers to use production methods, aiming to preserve the environment. The program will encourage: Methods for exploitation of the agricultural lands in accordance with the requirements for preservation of the environment, landscape and its characteristics, the nature resources – soil and genetic variation, preservation of threatened or rare species from the wild flora and fauna; in accordance with the rules for good agricultural practice.

IV.3. Reform in forestry. Management of forests and the lands within the forestry fund

The structural reform in the forestry sector started with the acceptance of the Forest Act (1997). Its purpose is to separate the state from the economics functions. The state (control and management) functions were undertaken by the National Forests Directorate with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, 16 Regional Forests Directorates and the 176 State Forestry Services, which are entitled to manage the state forest fund and to perform the control on all forests and lands from the forest fund in Bulgaria.

The economics functions (timber production and forestry activities) were undertaken by sole-owner stock companies with 100% state participation and this assisted the smooth transition from a planned to market economy and warranted the continuity of the production activity in the sector.

A normative regulation for the forests was also developed. Rules for implementing of the Forest Act (1998) as well as regulations and instructions were approved, which regulated the management, husbandry and guarding within the state and private forests. In these documents and acts are panned the principles for balance of the economic and ecological factors for sustainable use and management of the forests, which are contained in the responsibilities that Bulgaria have undertaken at the Ministerial meeting in Helsinki (1993).

For the good maintenance and management of the forests there are:

- Prepared and approved ***new leading principles for activities in the afforestation and combating the erosion*** (2001). A Register of newly-developed forest cultures was prepared.
- ***An instruction*** was approved ***for protection of the forests*** from pests, illnesses and other damages (2001), which were caused as a consequence of continuous aridity, reduced fullness of some offset forests in the zones of 600 meters above sea level, damages caused by hurricane winds, ice covering, wet snows, the new property structure in the forests. The development of ***National Information System*** for forest-pathology monitoring is planned.
- ***A program for the activity of the bodies on guarding of the forests*** from fires, illegal woodcutting etc. was approved in 1999. A project “Damages to the forest ecosystems, caused by the fires in Bulgaria” (1999-2001) is under development.
- ***Institutional strengthening*** of the specific structures in the system of the National Forests Directorate is achieved, aiming to preserve and restore the biodiversity—directorates of natural parks, forest-protection stations, forest seed-controlling stations, Experimental station for oaks, Experimental station for the fast-growing wood species; Legislative regulation of the functions and tasks of these structures in the Forest Act (1997) and other normative acts on its implementation; Actions for presentation of its duties and responsibilities before the wide public.
- ***Plans for management*** and specific structural projects for natural parks and priority-protected areas and natural sightseeing places are developed.
- ***The implementation of regional plans***, for integrated development of sustainable agriculture and forestry and for development of eco-tourism in various forms, is started.
- Steps for ***legal and institutional coverage*** of agro-forestry on national level are made and agencies on of agro-forestry are established. Demonstrative example fields are created.
- The maintenance of the ***complex monitoring*** on the condition of the forest ecosystems in Bulgaria continues.

- *A multiplication of the results* of sustainable use of the forests and preservation of the biodiversity achieved by the Bulgarian-Swiss program (BSP), is anticipated.
- *The leading principles and directions* for sustainable use of the forests (2001) were approved and the general objective is its preservation and the development of all useful functions of the forest ecosystems and its maintenance in ecological balance. The use of it will also be directed to maintenance and improvement of its sustainability, vitality, reproduction capacity and the capabilities of the forest ecosystems to adapt to various stress factors and in conditions of the global climate changes (desertification).

IV.3.1. Restitution of the ownership of the forests and the lands within the forestry fund

Restoration of the ownership of the forests and the lands of the forest fund was carried out in accordance with the regulations of the Restitution of the Ownership on Forests and the Forest Fund Land Act and the Rules for its implementation.

As of the present the total restored ownership is 88,7%.

Accelerated restoration of the ownership on the private forests and the forest fund lands was made by approval of the Restitution Act in 1997 and Rules for its implementation (1998).

The problems that arose in relation with the restoration of the forest estates, forced the elaboration of the *numeric model* of the graphical information for the forest fund (forest cadastre). Through it, the exact frontiers between the forest and the agricultural funds will be established in accordance with the state cadastre and the real restitution of the forests will be accomplished. Specific inter-department municipal commissions were formed which have the aim to resolve clauses arose in the substantiation of the title of property.

In 1999 has started the German-Bulgarian project (DBFP)– “Assisting of Restitution and Use of Forests”. Its main task is to offer a working formula for establishment of partnerships of private forest-owners, like the already created Bulgarian Forestry Chamber, which in 2000 obtained a statute of observer in European Union, to assist the forest-owners in development of business plan with pilot project in State forestry from Rhodopes Mountains; elaboration of a concept for joint use of very small and divided estates and its experimentation in State Forestry Services in Stara Planina Mountain; consultations for development of normative documents in relation with the private forest-ownership.

V. Participation process in the maintenance of the preparation and implementation of the Action programs.

V.1. Participation of the society and local population in the Decision-making process

The transparency of the actions is a goal-oriented policy of the government in accordance with its "Program 2001". Especially in the field of the environment where the sensitivity is greater, are envisaged special measures for involving the population and the non-governmental organizations as important partners for policy implementation. In the short-term timetable it is planned adoption of legislation in the field of the information of the public on the problems of the environment and access to this information and development of plan for its implementation. Forthcoming is the development of National program for involving the society in the resolving of the environmental problems by training and increasing of the social culture and conscience in the concerned field.

Together with their offices and branches in Bulgaria there are around 115 non-governmental organizations (NGO) for preservation of the environment (Catalogue of NGO for preservation of the environment in Bulgaria, 1993). The number of such organizations varies from 5 000 to 10 000 people. Members are nature-lovers, nature-defenders, experts, scientists, pupils, students, teachers, and people with different social status united by the idea for preservation of the nature. These organizations perform activities on elaboration of expert assessments and expertise on particular ecological situations, practical activities in relation with the ecological training and education and public control.

V.1.1. Actions undertaken by the Ministry of Environment and Water, in its capacity of National coordinating institution for informing of the wide public

In order to achieve better progress in the activities for the implementation of the Convention it has to acquire a wider popularization. *The society has to be informed about, to engage the central government, local authorities, non-governmental organizations, the citizens and companies.* For this purpose:

- In May 1998, thanks to the financial and expert assistance of the Interim Secretariat for the Convention, a National seminar was held on issues of land degradation and combating desertification, aiming the increase of the national awareness. This seminar was attended by representatives of concerned bodies and institutions, non-governmental soil-protection societies, etc.
- The Convention was translated into Bulgarian language;
- A special seminar for the specialists, which are working within the system of Ministry of Environment and Water on the problems of the soil protection was held;
- The Convention was published in a paperback print edition by a non-governmental organization – Association "Green Balkans", uniting a number of nature protection associations;
- We envisaged to promulgate the Convention in the State Gazette – May 2002 as timetable;
- In May 2002 we are planning to organize a regular National seminar on the problems of land degradation and combating desertification, outlined in the Convention as well as
- Its popularization through mass information media.

For providing of wide public support towards ensuring of adequate actions and conditions for sustainable and optimal functioning of the natural resources, for stimulating of Pan-European trends and processes for ecologization of forests in Bulgaria, for improvement of normative base of the forest and nature protection legislation, or institutional strengthening of the protected areas system aiming the protection of biodiversity were organized the following events:

- *Round table* within the program of the Conference “*90 years organized combating to soil erosion in Bulgaria*”.
- Scientific and Practice *Seminar “Sustainable Management of the highland coniferous forests” – forestry systems of timber production and afforestation, biodiversity and measures for its preservation.*
- Scientific and Practice *Seminar “Forestry and biodiversity in the plain forests of North-Eastern Bulgaria”.*
- *Seminar – “The process of forest certification in Bulgaria”.*
- *Seminar on* implementation of the pilot project under the Plan for Multifunctional Forests Management.
- *Round table – “Afforestation after forest fires – problems and solutions”.*
- *Seminar “Fires and Forest Ecosystems”*, in 2001
- *Working meeting on issues of the afforestation – “Actual problems of afforestation” and “Condition and perspectives for development of the production of forest reproductive materials, afforestation and combating the erosion”.*

V.1.2. Improving the public awareness and training of specialists

On of the main leading principles of the stable managing of the nature resources is the *realization of training programs* aiming to engage the local society with the problems of the soils, forests and biological variation, their preservation and restoration, increase of the ecological culture and forming of right attitude to the nature. For institutional enforcement of the sections of the institutions and for confirmation of their positive image from nature-protective point of view, periodical campaigns are held, mutual work and enlargement of the connections and interaction with other state and social bodies and non-governmental organizations, scientific institutions and all kind of media (radio, television, magazines, newspapers) are also held.

In the universities and other higher state and private educational facilities in our country, a reasonable number of young people, every year receive very good academic training in different sectors of the environment and nature-protection.

VI. Process of consultations for support and implementation of the National Action Programs and partnership agreements with the developed member countries and other concerned organizations

“**The Summit for the Earth**” in Rio – 92 formulated several fundamental and long-term decisions, engaging the international society with the following key principles of the ecological policy:

- “*The principle of the preventive measures*”, “*Polluter pays*” principle, *the principle “that the protection of the environment is common task of the governments, citizens and industry, accomplished by the cooperation between them”*, *the principle of the “integration”*,

For the achievement of these fundamental principles the government of our country exerts great efforts as to achieve economic and social prosperity and to contribute for the prevention of ecological risks and crises. The government strives for achievement of this purpose, by advancing the clause for the preservation of the environment in all European and international organizations and bodies, in

the framework of the international ecological conventions and by means of relationship with other countries in the framework of numerous consultations and partnership alliances. Our country is Party to:

- UN Framework Convention on Climate Change 1992, ratified in 1995, in force since 1995; Kyoto Protocol to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change 1997, signed in 1998, not ratified;
 - The 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity, ratified in 1996;
 - Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat (The Ramsar Convention) 1971, ratified in 1976;
 - Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (The Washington Convention, CITES) 1973, ratified in 1990;
 - Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, (The Bern Convention) 1979, ratified in 1991;
 - The Convention Concerning Fishing in the Black Sea, ratified;
 - The Convention Concerning Fishing in the Danube Water, ratified;
 - Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, 1972 Paris, ratified in 1976;
 - Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution, ratified in 1992, in force since 1994;
 - Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo, Finland, 1991), ratified, in force for Bulgaria since 1997;
 - Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, ratified in 1996;
 - Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (Helsinki, 1992), ratified in 1995;
 - Convention between the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Government of Romania on Environmental Cooperation, ratified in 1992;
 - The 1985 Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer, ratified in 1989, in force since 1991;
 - The 1987 Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, ratified in 1989;
 - Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade - ratified in 2000;
 - Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), signed in May 2001;
 - Agreement on Cooperation between the People's Republic of Bulgaria and the Kingdom of Greece Concerning the Utilization of the Waters of the Rivers Crossing the Two Countries, ratified in 1964;
- Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Government of the Republic of Greece on the use of the Mesta River Waters, ratified in 1964, in force since 1996, etc.

VII. Planned and undertaken measures within the framework of the National Action Programs, including measures for improvement of economic environment, for preservation of natural resources and for encouraging its sustainable use.

The National Action Plan 2000-2006 towards the National Strategy for the environment sets the frame of the sector programs for action with clearly defined planned activities. The strategic objectives are presented as a *long-term objective, objectives and sub-objectives to it (pillar of objectives)*.

The long-term strategic objective of the country in the sphere of the environment is:

An improvement in the quality of the population life by providing of suitable environment and its preservation on the basis of the stable management of the environment.

Objectives and sub-objectives:

- 1. Providing of sufficient quantity of water for the population and for the economics of the country;*
- 2. Reaching of the standards for quality of the ambient air in the settlements – “hot spots”;*
- 3. Preservation and extension of the territories with good quality of the environment;*
- 4. More narrow integration of the policy related with the environment in the policy of the developed economic branches;*
- 5. Preservation and maintenance of the rich biodiversity;*
- 6. Creation of conditions for implementation of the European ecological legislation and international conventions in the field of the environment;*
- 7. Decrease of the sound pollution;*
- 8. Wider participation of the society in resolving of the issues of the environment.*

VII.1. Assessment of the state of natural resources as well as the level of desertification as of the moment of initiating of the National Action Plan.

In climatic aspect, the territory of Bulgaria is divided into two main climate zones – European – continental and Continental – Mediterranean.

European-continental climate zone

European-continental climate zone covers North and Middle Bulgaria and the relevant mountains. The climate is characterized with fairly cold winter and warm summer.

Continental – Mediterranean climate zone

Continental – Mediterranean climate zone covers the south-eastern parts of the country and the Black Sea coast. Characteristic feature of the climate is the considerably softer and richer in rainfalls winter in comparison with the European – continental climate zone. In the summer the climatic differences between the two zones are smaller, but the aridity in the Continental – Mediterranean climate zone is expressed better.

Depending on the physic-geographical zones, our country is divided into Danube plain, Balkan zone, Kraishtensko-Tunjanska zone, Osogovsko-Rodopska zone and Black Sea zone.

Soil-geographical division into regions of Bulgaria is in compliance with the variety and peculiarity of the soils, determined by the interaction of the physical-geographic conditions. The division in regions divides the territory of the country into three soil areas, including generally 7 sub-areas and zones, 28 provinces and 63 regions.

In accordance with the global warming in Bulgaria exist climate changes, which are expressed mainly in warming and drying and strengthening of the continental character of the climate.

Changes in other elements of the climate are also observed. The cloudiness is reducing. The wind and its frequency are increased. Changes in the regime of the storms, hailstorms, fogs etc., are also observed.

The aridity is a normal compound of the climate alternation and is observed in all parts of our country, but most commonly in the aridity regions.

The desertification is related with the unsuitable nature conditions and with the human activity. The first factor of the desertification – the dangerous nature conditions are related with the unsuitable climate effects, mostly as drought with long time period and territorial distribution. The anthropogenic factors are related with incorrect and excessive exploitation of the vulnerable plant ecosystems of the arid regions. The joint actions of these two factors proved to be destructive, because the natural recovery mechanisms are not capable of coping with additional overloads to the unsuitable nature conditions, caused by the anthropogenic activities and transships the nature resources of the arid regions. The symptoms of the processes of desertification start with aridity and drought, degradation of the plant ecosystems, loss of biomass and decrease of the biological production, decrease of the potential fertilization of the soil, soil degradation and an increase of the regions with sands, wind and water erosion of the soil.

The results from the research of the climate alternation during the last century with the help of the mathematical models of the general atmospheric circulation in conditions of a double concentration of greenhouse gasses (2070) indicates that the overall annual temperature of the air on the territory of the country probably will arise with ca. 4 degrees in comparison with the overall temperature for the period of the contemporary climate.

The climatic scenarios of the future heat resources indicate that the changes in the temperature of the air will start since the beginning of this century. It is predicted for the rainfalls that they will increase during the cold six months and by the warm part of the year a deficiency of the rainfalls is expected.

The variations of the general meteorological elements as the role of the desertification are especially cleared have a direct impact on the quality of the crops. The climate change will effect on the overall output of grain from the general agricultural plants: winter wheat and corn.

According to data of the World Meteorological Organization during the past years the monitoring of the concentration of the greenhouse gasses indicates a persistence of the tendency of increase of its total concentration. According to the studies in our country with this tendency is characterized also the concentration of the greenhouse gasses on the territory of our country. ***The constant warming and aridity phenomena occurred within the territory of our country during the last two decades and the adverse analogous trends for the first decades of the last century showed that as a result from the climate change, the weather conditions caused a beginning of degradation of the phyto-ecosystems and soils in Bulgaria and outline a trend to desertification.***

During this century the largest threat has the first region, especially when the amount of the rainfalls during the potential vegetation period decreases with less than 300 mm (Annex IV – Fig. 2). These processes accelerated during the past years, because of the human activity in the agriculture and forestry as the adverse consequences for the society increase continuously.

A decrease in the quality of the fresh water, obtained through the natural hydrological cycle, was registered in Bulgaria in the last decades. The most significant decrease in the outflow was 40% during the period 1985 – 2005. This trend is formed both by the regular alterations of the waterflow and by the rapid climate changes. The prognoses, based on climatic models, outline a trend of global warming of the climate of the planet and desertification of the Mediterranean region, including Bulgaria. It is expected that the global warming and the increase in the average annual temperature will result in significant decrease of the mountainous watersheds, which are the main water supply resources of the country. The decrease in the rainfall could reach 300 l/m²/year. Together with the increased physical and biological evaporation, it will lead to decrease in the stored in the dams water quantities (potable water and water used for agricultural and energetic purposes) on the long-term scale. Under the conditions of a continuous drought (the year 2000 is a good example) the water quantities in the rivers decreases significantly and is inappropriate for water supply purposes.

The forthcoming drought and the problems with the water supply for the households and for agricultural purposes in some regions, towns and villages *call for urgent measures* to prevent the consequences of the trend. With Decision No 34 of 30.01.2001 of the Council of Ministers and based on the Water Act, the Government of Bulgaria adopted a *Programme for the Necessary Measures under the Conditions of the Drought Trend*. It includes measures to: protect the water resources; provide water for agricultural purposes; solve the crisis in the water supply for the households resulting from the irregular annual distribution of the surface outflow and from the irrational use of the regulated water quantities; form knowledge and awareness of water resources economy.

The constant warming and drought in the country during the last two decades, as well as the adverse similar trends during the first two decades of the last century shows that the climate change has started a process of degradation of the phyto-ecosystems and the soils in Bulgaria and outline a trend to desertification.

This is the reason why the soil as the most important component of all ground ecosystems and as a limited, decreasing, rare and hard for restoration resource, has to be preserved for the next generations. The common condition of the soil recourses principally depends on and is determined mostly from the development of the degradation processes, alterations of its main purposes and functions and their chemical pollution. Bulgaria as well as many others countries around the world also spare the problem related with the degradation of the ground, as well as in soil-climate aspect and in anthropologic aspect.

The erosion of the soil is still remaining one of the most serious degradation processes for our country. The problematic territories related to the erosion are – for water erosion around 100 regions and for wind erosion – around 25 regions.

Reasons for the development of the erosion processes are factors like:

- Soil - climate;
- Anthropogenic – incorrect treatment of the soil, incorrect irrigation, criminal carnage of the forests, fires causing deforestation and barring of considerable territories, allowance of abandon and waste lands, firing of stubble, etc.
- * **The effect of the water erosion** takes place in all arable lands with slope over 2 degrees in other words these are approximately 4 823 011 ha, which presents about 72% of the arable lands and 43% of the total territory of the country. The most affected lands, that need a complex anti-erosion protection are 875 000 ha.

- * **Wind erosion** – it is manifested mainly in the plains and in the deforested regions of the country and it is affected approximately 1 657 386 ha or 29% from the arable lands and 14,9% of the total territory of the country.
- * **Irrigation erosion** – this process is clearly anthropogenic. It affects all irrigated areas in the country with slope above 2 degrees. During the past years in quantitative attitude the same lands drastically reduced their number which supposed a decrease of the negative consequences. The reasons are economical.

Also another serious problem for the country are **landslide and abrasive processes**.

The landslide and the sea and river abrasion is added to the group “**natural disasters**”. Their development threatens the safety of the villages, resort complexes, railroads and inflicts irretrievable damages to the arable lands. In the Republic of Bulgaria are registered around 1000 cases of landslides in 350 settlements and resort complexes with total territory over 25 000 ha.

The abrasive processes over the Black Sea seashore cover approximately 143 kilometers. From the total length of the erosion Danube coast the active area is around 48,59 kilometers and the threatened areas are almost 50,20 kilometers.

Acidification and salinization of the soils

* **The acidic soils** in Bulgaria are approximately 1 500 000 ha, 500 000 ha of which are with harmful acidification for the plants or 4.5%

Parts of the soils are naturally acid and saline but the portion of the secondary damaged soils, is reasonable, as a result of the harmful effect of the chemical pollution in the agriculture and from the emissions of the industry and mining activities, which contributed for the sharpening of the problem.

* **Damaged lands from** the extraction and primal conversion of unrecoverable nature resources, are generally 24 113.4 ha and the re-cultivated ones are generally 8 252.9 ha. The rate of re-cultivating in comparison with the rate with which the lands are damaged considerably falls behind.

General data for the forests in Bulgaria

The territory of the forest fund is 3 772 000 ha. This represents 34% of the total territory of the country;

The forested territory is 3 239 500 or 86,5%;

Protected forests 39,8% of all forests;

The overall forest cover for the country is 30%;

The overall age of the forests is 48 years;

The larger part of the forests are young – almost 55%;

The annual growth is 12 348 000 cubic meters;

The wood store of the forests during 2000 reaches 480 million cubic meters;

Afforestation 1,2 million ha for 40 years;

Distribution of the forested territory by the class of the trees:

Oak 32,2%; white pine-tree 16,5%; beech-tree 16,9%; black pine-tree 9,3%; spruce 4,6%; acacia 2,9%; hornbeam 3,6%; scab hornbeam 5,5%; lime tree 1,4%; other classes 7,1%;

Distribution of the forested territory by types of forests:

Coniferous 32,7%; broad-leaved high-stalked 22%; forests for reconstruction 18,3%; offset forests for transformation into seed ones 23,8%; low –stalked forests 3,2%;

The forests in the mountain regions (from 600 to 1600 meters) dominated (52%); the forests from plain-hill regions (to 600 meters) follows (45%) and the are the forests from the higher regions (from 1600 to 2600 meters) which are 3%.

53% of the Bulgarian forests are situated at terrain with slope over 20 degrees (there are cases with slope over 45 degrees);

29% of the forests are situated in slope of the terrain 11 degrees to 20 degrees; 12,7% of the forests takes terrain with slope of 5 degrees to 10 degrees; the rest are in the plains (with slope to 4 degrees).

Afforestations in the forest fund for restoration of destroyed forests by fires, preservation from natural disasters and for reconstruction and supporting of restoration in forests in bad condition, for transformation of offset forests into seed ones in 1997 – 10223.5 ha; in 1998 – 7508.8 ha; in 1999 – 7739.6 ha; in 2000 – 6308.3 ha; in 2001 – ca. 5000 ha;

The problem with the global advancing crisis events in the forests is more and more turning to be a world problem. While in the conference in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 confirmed as a main task the stable development, on the Ministries meetings for preservation of the European forests carried out in Strasbourg (1990), Helsinki (1993) and Lisbon (1998) it was accentuated, besides the stable development, also on the multifunctional forestry, biological variation, the preservation of the genetic resources, adaptation of the European forests to the climate alterations and the forest cooperation with the countries in transition. In combination with the anthropologic factors, the increase number of aridities in the regions with natural lack of rainfalls waters leads degradation of the forests (deforestation, loss of aged forests, threaten for the biodiversity and decay of their ecological functions) and soils, i.e. desertification.

During the past years an incredible problem for our country are the *illegal fire of the stubble*, which leads to sharp decrease of the soil fertilization, by destroying the useful entomo-flora and fauna and the *criminal fires* which annihilated thousands decrees of forest plants and turned in wilderness a vast territories for which restoration a large amounts of resources are issued.

Laying of purposes:

The so made analyses of the actual condition of the components of the environment and having regard the fact that Bulgaria fall into a climate area with clearly defined perspective for the climate change and desertification and pursuant to the requirements of the clause 5 from the UN Convention for fight with Desertification, it is *imperative in short term to make a step for:*

- *Development of National Strategy for preservation of the soil resources, including priorities like: policy, legislation, plans and programs for Sustainable Development, training, institutional and investment strengthening;*
- *Development of National Plan for taking actions for fight with the desertification and softening the consequences from the drought – endorsing the measures which the government have to undertake to define and eliminate the reasons, which stands at the rudiments of the desertification and they must not allow the processes of degradation and desertification, permanently to reside at the territory of our country;*
- *Drafting a Protection of Lands and Soils Act and respective normative acts.*

For the realization of this purpose the following things have to be done:

- **Formation of National commission (NC) for fight with the desertification and softening the consequences from the drought;**
- **Preparation of work plan and schedule for the job of NC;**
- **Elaboration of mechanisms for financing, control and evaluation of the job of NC;**

VII.1.1. Inventory, adaptation and integration of current projects within the process of the National Development Plan and assessment of its compatibility with the principles of the Convention.

Bulgaria as a country, which is a comparatively new Party to the Convention to Combat Desertification, facing now a preparation process for elaboration of documents, such as National Strategy on Soils, National Action Plan to Combat Desertification, etc., the implementation of the *synergism principles* will be extremely useful. Bulgaria, as a party to other two UN Conventions – UN Framework Convention on Climate Change 1992 and The 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity, will be able to use already gained experience and accumulated database thereunder. It could be used approved Strategies and Programs, with clearly outlined direction towards climate change and drought and measures planned for decrease of its consequences, some already in stage of implementation, such as:

- Strategy for Integrated Water Management in the Republic of Bulgaria-1997, Council of Ministers;
- General Schemes for Water Resources Utilization – 2000;
- National Programme for Phasing Out the Distribution and Use of Leaded Petrol - Council of Ministers, 1998;
- Programme for necessary measures in the existing conditions of trend to aridity within 2001-2010 period - Council of Ministers, 2001;
- National Programme for Reducing the Impact of Aridity and Increasing of adaptive possibilities of forests for survival in extreme conditions;
- National Biological Diversity Conservation Strategy – Council of Ministers, 1998;
- National Biological Diversity Conservation Plan – Council of Ministers, 2000;
- National Programme for Phasing Out the Use of Ozone Depleting Substances, which implementation completed successfully in 2000;
- National Action Plan on Climate Change for fulfillment of obligations of Bulgaria under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and Kyoto Protocol (1997). One of major commitments for 21st Century, set forth within is the afforestation of uncultivated lands, unsuitable for agriculture, covering an area of 250 000 ha – Council of Ministers, 2000;
- National Programme for Combating the consequences of Fires through afforestation of devoured forests, which envisages hiring of persons from the risk group “long-term unemployed” in the activities on reclamation of forests, which are destroyed by fire or drying up – cleaning and preparation of burned down areas, afforestation, crops cultivation and seeds collection;
- The National Agricultural and Rural Development Plan funded under SAPARD and Guidelines on Forests – Measure 1.4. “Forestry, afforestation of agricultural lands, investments in forestry, processing and marketing of forestry products;

- National Implementation Programme for Enforcement of the Acquis in the field of Environment – Council of Ministers, 2000;

Programmes:

- Bulgarian-Swiss Programme on Biological Diversity Conservation;
- National Programme for Biomonitoring in Bulgaria (1999);
- Bulgarian-Swiss Programme on Forests and its two projects;
 1. Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Use of Forests;
 2. Monitoring of Forest Ecosystems.

National Project “Encouraging the possibilities of the governmental and non-governmental organizations in Bulgaria for implementation of afforestation projects aiming the mitigation of the consequences of the climate changes” (1995). In this relation, two new forest-oriented projects were proposed. There is envisaged *afforestation aiming the stabilization of the soil, agro-afforestation, production of bioenergy, reclamation of the environment, better protection of the forests from natural and anthropogenic impact – fires, pests, diseases, deforestation.*

VIII. Financing from the national state budget for support of the implementation

As was already mentioned above, Bulgaria is at an early stage of implementation of the Convention, and the mechanism for financing is not still worked out, and in this sense calculations from the national budget have not been done.

The economic condition of our country in the past few years reflected extremely negative on the amount and the quality of the activities related with the preservation and fertilization of the soils. Practically, the development and execution of anti-erosion and melioration projects, is terminated or very limited, in the areas with registered salinization, acidification, erosion; the amount of the vast scale researches on the development of the processes and the alteration of the areas of the affected soils, is strongly reduced; a control, on the condition of the soils in regions which were in past years an object of melioration and for which a vast amounts of capital investments were consumed, is not performed.

Ministry of Environment and Water by its finance policy somewhat helps to overpower and restrict the destructive processes in common and mostly erosion ones, by issuing credits without interests for creation and development of ecological suitable agriculture and animal breeding in these regions. This resources is issued for projects and activities related with restoration, preservation and maintenance of the soil fertilization of the low productive (deserted and degraded) agricultural land as well as for preservation and reproduction of the useful flora and fauna in the mountain and semi-mountain regions. Regarding the scale of the issues, these resources are quite insufficient.

The Ministry of the Agriculture and Forests also issues financial resources for obtaining of abandoned and deserted areas from the state and the municipal land fund for land-settlement of non-estate and less-estate citizens or for lease out.

IX. Overview of the starting points and indicators, used for reporting of the progress and subsequent evaluation

IX.1. Working mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation

The Ministry of Environment and Water through Executive Environmental Agency (EEA) is the state institution in the country that is authorized to maintain National Environmental Monitoring System (NEMS) *and informational system by components and factors of the environment – air, surface and ground waters, soils, protected areas and biological diversity, condition of the waste, ionized, non-ionized radiation and the aviation and transport noise.*

NEMS, which is administrated from Executive Environmental Agency, covers the territory of the whole country and maintain database on national and regional level.

The system provides prompt and true information by components and factors of the environment. By the basis of the received information, evaluations, analyses and forecasts for preserving of the environment, are made. The records received from the monitoring are centralized in the National database in EEA, which still is not integrated by components.

The actualization of the database depends on the particular components and factors like:

- For air – every day, the adduction of the system in real time is forthcoming;
- For gamma – field – in real time ;
- For water and radiation – monthly, quarterly and annual;
- For soils, wastes, sounds – annual;
- For emissions – bi-annual;

The control of the quality of the lands and soils is a part of the National system for ecological monitoring. The same is managed, maintained and executed by IAOS.

Soil monitoring:

The monitoring of the lands and soils is executed in respect of:

- Control and preservation of the subterranean richness – by supervision and control of the extraction, technological waste and waste waters, violation and recultivation in the extraction of subterranean richness;
- Control and preservation of the soils from pollution with heavy metal (318 clauses, allocated by origins of pollution – industry, chemicalization irrigation and mobile transport);
- Control and preservation of the soils from pollution with stable organic Contaminants (firstly 98 and then actualized to 20 clauses for observation of poliaromatic carbohydrates, polichlorine bi-phenyl, chlorine-organic compounds.);
- Control and preservation of the soils from erosion – installation of mathematical model for evaluation of the foreseen water erosion and wind erosion;
- Control and preservation of the soils from acidification (70 fields);
- Control and preservation of the soils from salting (12 fields);

The control stations are distributed through the whole country, by a plan allowing proper and true registration of the alterations in the quality of the soils that have taken place. The records come into IAOS for treatment, evaluation and analysis.

Monitoring of the forests:

The monitoring of the forests is also a part of NASEM. It is executed in accordance with International Coordination Center – division forests (ICC). Every year records from International Coordination Center are presented. The monitoring program is executed by University of Forestry and the Institute of Forestry with the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and is coordinated and financed by Ministry of Environment and Water, Ministry of Agriculture and Forests.

The critical overloads and overbalances of acidification, sulfur and nitrogen are calculated and mapped. The records are given to the ICC on effects. From this year we will start to make calculations and mapping of the critical overloads and overbalances of heavy metals.

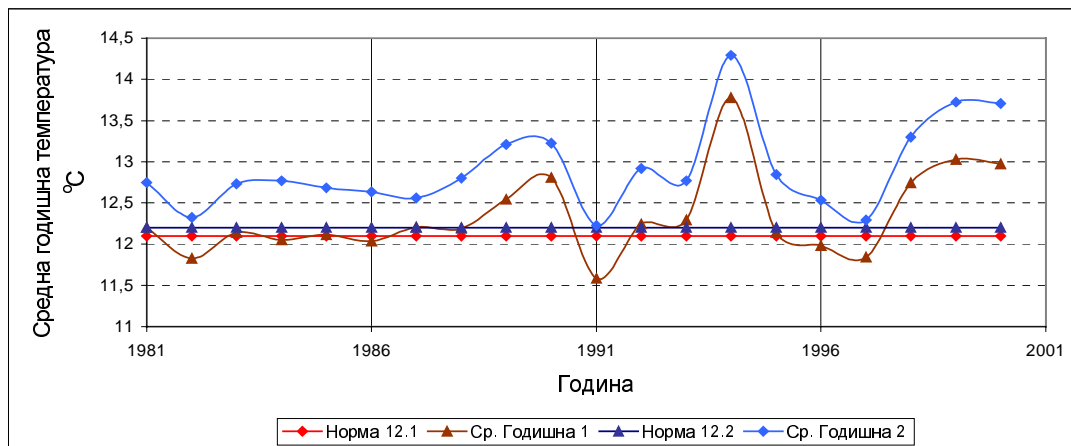
Monitoring of biodiversity:

There is no developed system for monitoring of the biodiversity. At that time a concept for its execution is under development.

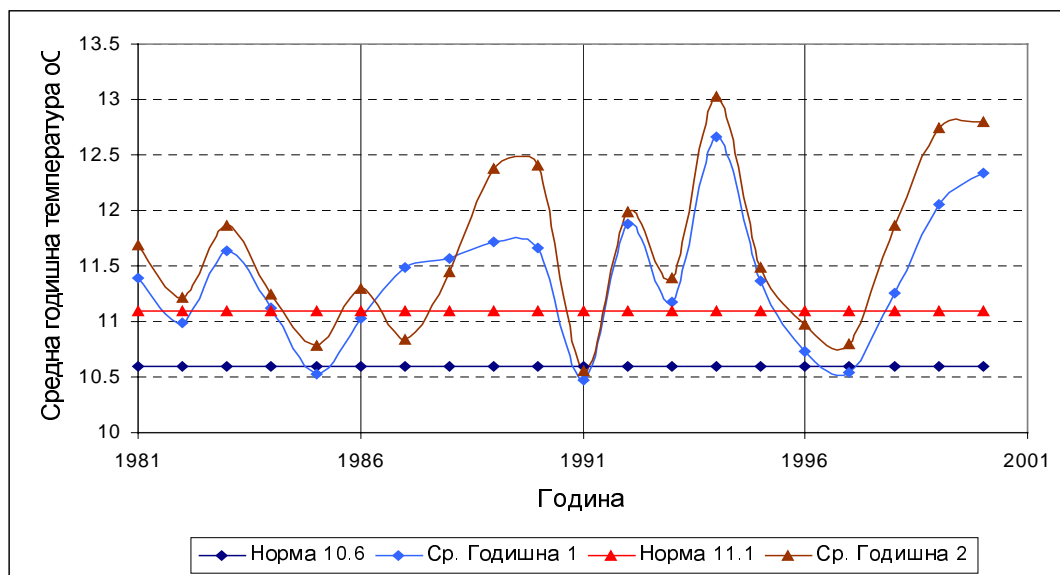
At the end we would like to express our sincere thanks to the Executive Secretary of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification Mr. Hama Arba Dialo for the financial support rendered for the preparation of the first National report of the Republic of Bulgaria concerning the implementation of the Convention and to Mr. Mikhail Outkine for his expert help constantly rendered by him in person and his participation in the day-to-day work under the implementation of the Convention.

Annex I – Alteration of the Annual Average Temperature of the Air in Bulgaria

Annual Average Temperature of the Air in Southern Bulgaria

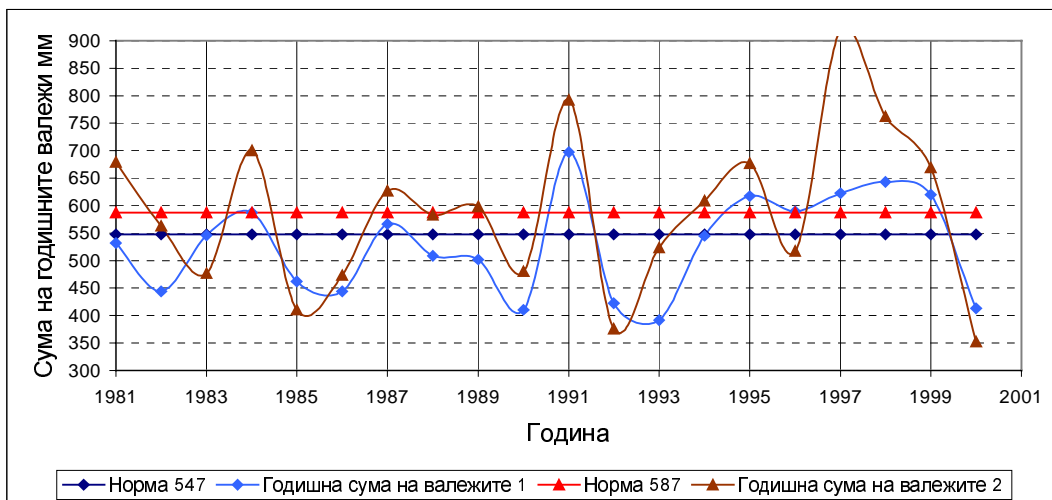


Annual Average Temperature of the Air in Northern Bulgaria

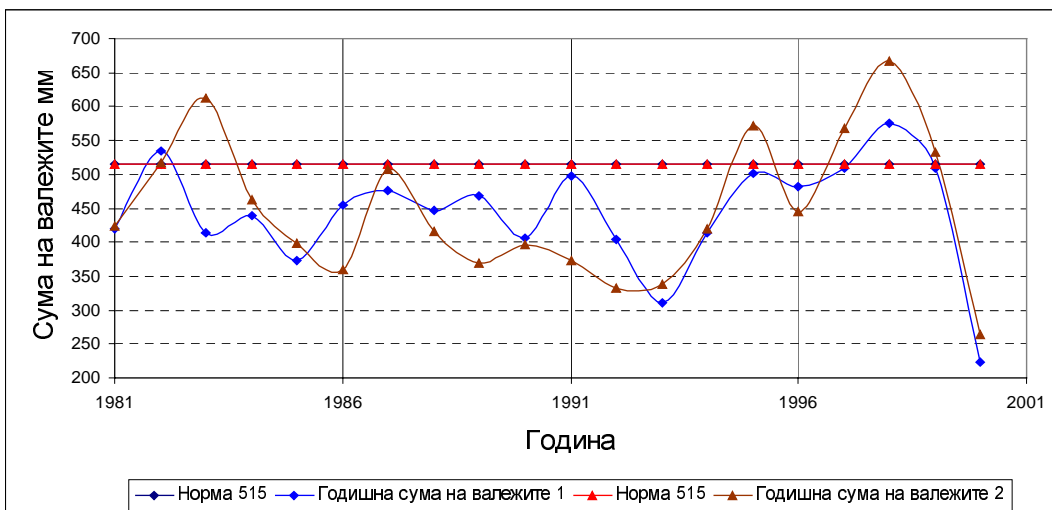


Annex II – Alteration of the Annual Sum of Rainfall in Bulgaria

Alteration in the Annual Sum of Rainfall in Northern Bulgaria



Alteration in the Annual Sum of Rainfall in Southern Bulgaria



Annex III – Multiyear alterations, with average step of 5 years, and trend of the temperature for the vegetation period in Bulgaria

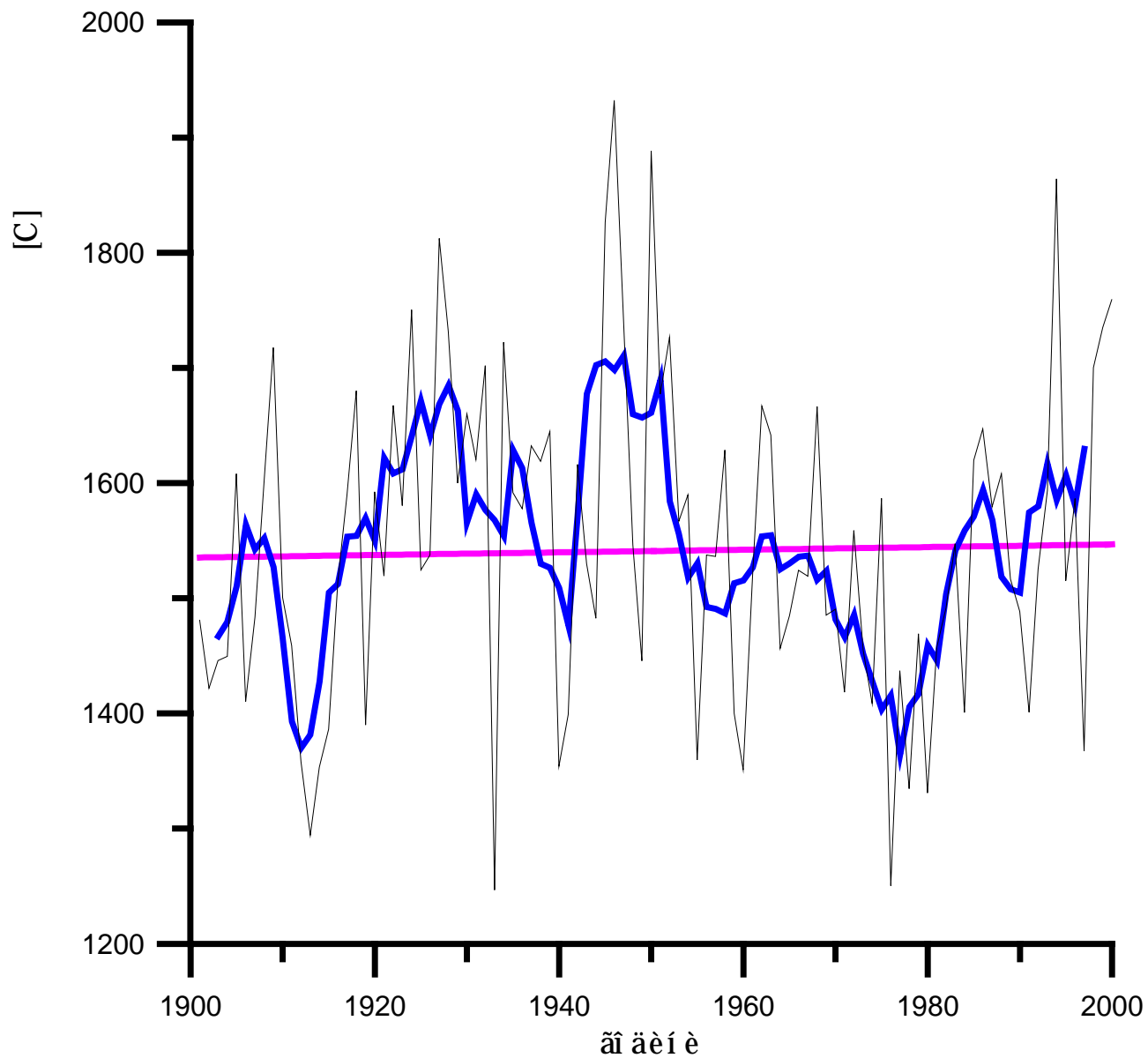


Fig. 1

Multiyear alterations, with average step of 5 years, and trend of the temperature for the vegetation period in Bulgaria

Annex IV – Multiyear alterations, with average step of 5 years, and trend of the rainfall for the vegetation period in Bulgaria

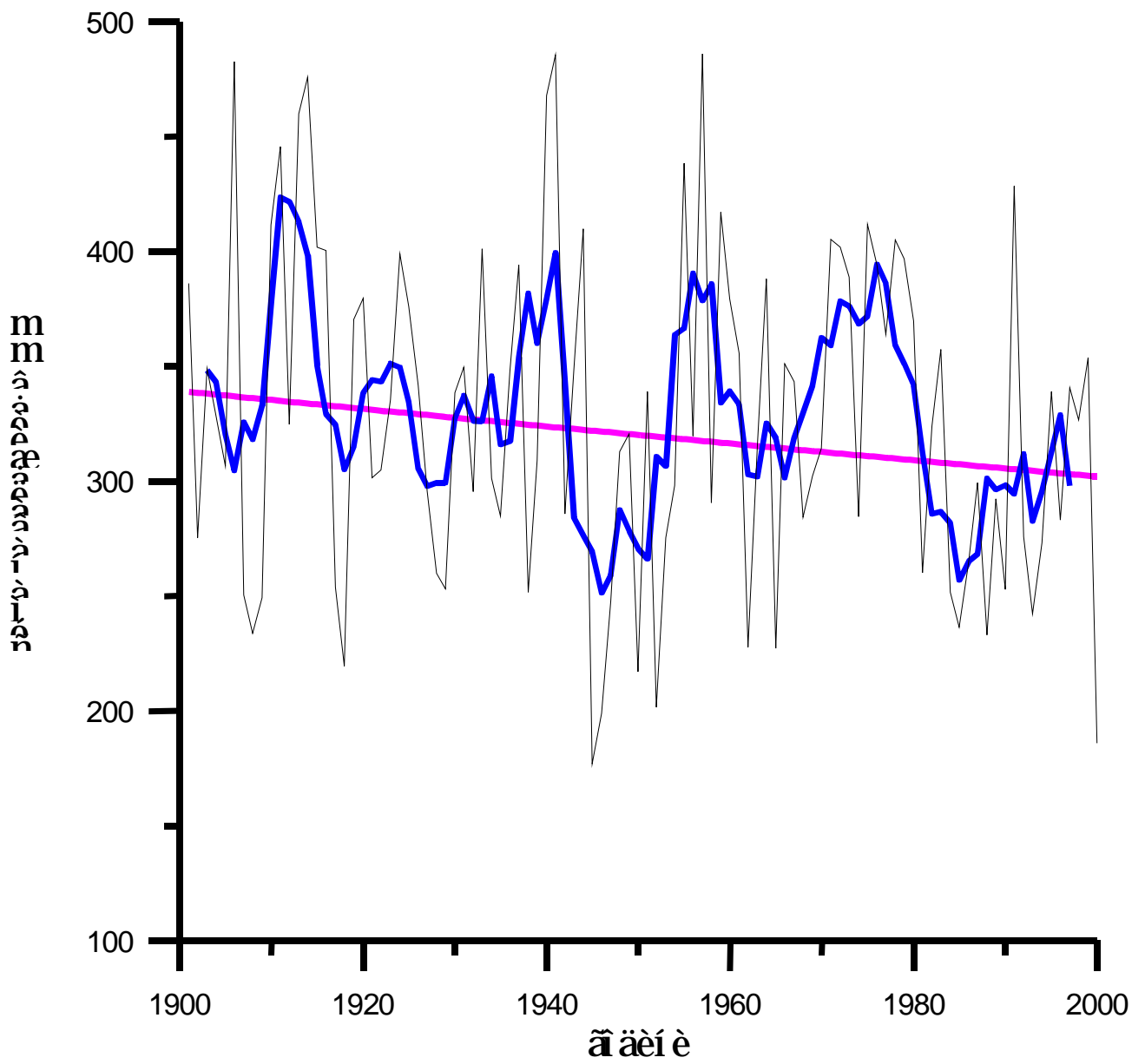


Fig. 2

Multiyear alterations, with average step of 5 years, and trend of the rainfall for the vegetation period in Bulgaria

Annex V – Map of the Main Soil Erosion Regions in Bulgaria

Map of the Main Soil Erosion Regions in Bulgaria

