

PRAGUE, 20 December 2021

High-Speed Rail in the Czech Republic Will Be Part of TEN-T Core Network

On 14 December 2021, the European Commission published a proposal to revise the TEN-T regulation¹, taking into account the objectives of the European Transport Policy, the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy and the Green Deal. During the preparation period of this proposal, Správa železnic was seeking the integration of the high-speed railway lines system (HSR), in particular Via Vindobona (Berlin – Vienna) and Vienna – Ostrava, into the TEN-T Core Network, also in order to obtain the possibility of granting of financial aid from EU funds.

Negotiations were complicated, at the beginning the European Commission completely ruled out a major change in the maps of the Core Network, not wanting to jeopardise its completion by 2030. The original proposal was to keep the Czech HSR in the Comprehensive Network, which would realistically exclude CEF funding before 2040. Through a series of personal negotiations, which culminated during the Connecting Europe Express event, Správa železnic managed to convince the European Commission to include the Czech HSR in the Core Network and the TEN-T Extended Core Network already in the initial draft of the revised regulation.

The EC proposal fully respects the requirements promoted by Správa železnic and will allow co-financing of the Czech HSR from EU funds. At the same time, it is clear that the Via Vindobona project is a project of priority importance for the EU under the direct supervision and support of the European Commission.

Design innovations in the routing and extent of the Core Network:

- Via Vindobona: Berlin – Praha – Vienna – the entire route of the new HSR in the Czech Republic (with a possible exception of the Central Bohemians Uplands Tunnel – not visible on the map) will be included in the Core Network, with the sections Lovosice – Praha – Světlá nad Sázavou and Velká Bíteš – Břeclav being part of the Core Network with maximum priority for funding and completion by 2030 (the section Světlá nad Sázavou – Velká Bíteš is included in the Extended Core Network with a completion date of 2040, funding is already possible now).
- The section Brno – Přerov – Ostrava is also included in the Core Network, with Brno – Přerov already being part of it today (modernisation to 200 km/h). The section Přerov – Ostrava is probably included in the Extended Network version.
- The section Brno – Česká Třebová remains in the Core Network for freight transport, which enables co-financing of projects on this line from the CEF Blending Call.

¹ European Commission proposal for the REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on Union guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network, amending Regulation (EU) No 2021/1153 and Regulation (EU) No 913/2010 and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013 ([link](#))

- The section Česká Třebová – Ostrava also remains in the Core Network; its preservation was negotiated even for the case of HSR being included in the Core Network. The co-financing of projects from the Blending Call CEF is therefore maintained.
- The line Velký Osek – Choceň is newly included in the TEN-T Core Network for freight transport.
- Basic principle of the revision of the Regulation is to merge the Core Network Corridors (CNC) and the Rail Freight Corridors (RFC) and to create the so-called European Transport Corridors (ETC), which will include the most important lines of the TEN-T Core Network.
- Two European transport corridors, the Rhine-Danube and Baltic-Adriatic corridors are to pass through the Czech Republic. This will remove the overlaps of the existing RFC corridors, but all existing main routes will remain part of the new ETC corridors.
- Revision of the Regulation also introduces a new layer of the TEN-T Network. Under the original Regulation, the completion date of the Core Network was set for 2030 and the Comprehensive Network for 2050. A new Extended Core Network with a completion date of 2040 is included.
- Inclusion of the Czech HSR system and the main freight axes in the Core Network and the Extended Core Network is extremely important in terms of future co-financing of construction from EU funds. Only projects on these lines will be candidates for co-financing from CEF 2 and other EU funds. CEF 2 is the main instrument for financing European transport infrastructure development projects.
- The draft regulation also introduces new requirements for the minimum parameters of the lines that are part of the TEN-T Network, however, any such additional parameters will be discussed and assessed by the European Parliament in the next step of the approval process and it may therefore come to significant alterations of the European Commission's proposal.