

PRAGUE, 19 January 2023

Condition of the bridge under Vyšehrad will require further traffic restrictions

The railway bridge under Vyšehrad is at the limit of its operability. Therefore, Správa železnic will gradually proceed to necessary measures during the year according to the plan, which will affect the railway operation. The ban on running trains with multiple locomotives was the first to come into force in mid-January. Other measures being taken are aimed at keeping operation on the bridge to the maximum extent possible without jeopardising safety. At the same time, Správa železnic is taking steps to mitigate the prospective restriction on freight transport.

The bridge between Smíchov and Výtoň has undergone a series of detailed surveys in recent years, it was subjected to a static recalculation and the diagnostics was supplemented by load tests. In response to the results, Správa železnic has tightened supervision of the bridge and, in cooperation with the Czech Technical University in Prague (CTU), has introduced long-term monitoring from 2020. The structures are permanently fitted with sensors that continuously monitor and evaluate ongoing changes. Správa železnic plans to treat critical places on the bridge deck and main girders this year as well. However, the condition of individual parts corresponds to their age, material, construction design and operational load and cannot be reversed by maintenance. Although the bridge is at the end of its service life, with the measures in place, traffic on it remains safe.

From mid-February 2023, Správa železnic is forced to reduce the bridge's load class from C3 to C2, which will ultimately prevent the operation of freight trains. Starting in 2024, the line speed will be reduced to 20 km/h and heavier vehicles will not be admitted to enter the bridge, while only one train will be admitted to cross the existing structure. The total load on the bridge must be reduced to 60 percent of the current range for next year.

For the routing of freight traffic in this part of Prague, the Braník Bridge (Branický most) is essential, and the repair and double-tracking of the Branický most – Praha-Krč – Spořilov section will begin this year. Správa železnic will announce a tender for the construction contractor in the coming days. An important aspect of the evaluation of the bids will be the shortening of the total closure, i.e. the period when trains will not run on the bridge. We are coordinating the course of the construction and the possibilities of traffic organisation with representatives of the association ŽESNAD.CZ in order to eliminate the impact on freight transport as much as possible.