

PRAGUE, 10 January 2023

Winning design of the bridge at Výtoň best meets all parameters needed

Správa železnic is reacting to the debate that has broken out among the public after the announcement of the winning design of the bridge at Prague Výtoň. We answer the most common questions in the following points:

- **Can the bridge still be repaired?**

- Správa železnic has been trying for a major reconstruction of the bridge since its establishment in 2003, the request for the preparation of an investment plan dates back to 2008.

- The original idea to preserve the existing steel structure for further full-fledged railway operation had to be abandoned by Správa železnic. The results of the surveys carried out showed that the existing structure was beyond repair and could not be preserved.

- Klokner Institute – Czech Technical University in Prague, which deals with scientific and research activities, or the University of Žilina, among others, confirmed this in its report.

- The steel bridge simply encountered its limits, which are due to its static and spatial design, as well as the material used. The so-called cast steel (*produced by the Bessemer process*) of which the bridge is made is very susceptible to fatigue cracks. No coating can prevent their formation and propagation.

- The need to implement the relevant section of the line as a triple-track line is also clearly defined.

- **Is not the condition of the bridge the fault of Správa železnic because it neglected its maintenance?**

- Throughout its entire existence, Správa železnic has been taking proper care of the bridge and keeping it in operational condition.

- Until the end of 1989, maintenance was generally neglected, not only of bridges. In the following years, due to insufficient financial resources, comprehensive maintenance was postponed and only partial modifications were carried out.

- Správa železnic ensured the complete replacement of the bridge sleepers in 2020 and 2021; the cleaning of the lower parts of the structure took place in 1998, 2000, 2003, 2007, 2010, 2017 and 2020.

- The care of listed buildings is an integral part of Správa železnic activities; it manages several dozen of such buildings. Reconstruction of listed station buildings in Pilsen, České Budějovice and Pardubice is currently underway. Among the renovated buildings, we can mention, for example, the Negrelli Viaduct.

- **Are not two tracks enough? Why must there be more?**

- The line between the main railway station and Smíchov is a part of the transit corridor, more than 15 thousand passengers pass through it daily.
- According to the transport forecast, the number of passengers will grow significantly in the future, which for capacity reasons brings the requirement for the extension with an additional track.
- The selected triple-track solution shows significantly higher operational stability, enables the introduction of new train services and improved capacity conditions for the development of long-distance transport towards Germany.
- In addition, the triple-track solution will prospectively enable the routing of express trains between the main station and the newly built railway station at Václav Havel Airport.

- **Will the new bridge disturb the Prague skyline?**

- From an architectural perspective, the bridge respects the wider surroundings, minimally affects the observed panoramic views and seamlessly connects all main pedestrian and cycle paths.
- The listed pillar and bridgehead structures will be preserved.
- At the same time, there is room for possible partial modification of some parts of the competition proposal when it is elaborated into a study of the building.

- **What happens next?**

- First, there will be an official presentation of the winning design and a presentation of all the designs from the second round to the professional public. The event will take place on 18 January at the National Technical Museum (NTM) in Prague Letná.
- The competition designs will then be on display at the NTM until 5 March.
- The winners of the competitive dialogue will be contracted to develop their proposal into a more detailed study. This will become the basis for the preparation of the documentation for the joint building permit.
- Správa železnic will continue to discuss the planned preparation process with representatives of the National Heritage Institute, the Prague City Hall Heritage Department and other interested parties in order to find a mutual agreement.

- **When will the new bridge be built?**

- The construction is expected to start in 2026 and will last approximately 20 months.
- The construction will be coordinated in time with the modernisation of the railway station in Smíchov and the reconstruction of the line section between the Prague Main Station and Výtoň.
- It also includes the construction of a new railway stop at Výtoň.