



HEIDENAU, 25 May 2023

German Railway (DB) opened new information centre for construction of high-speed line Prague – Dresden

The German railway infrastructure manager Deutsche Bahn has renovated the listed building of the “Pitch hut” in Heidenau, which from today serves as the new information centre for the high-speed line project (HSL) between Prague and Dresden. Visitors can enjoy a multimedia exhibition presenting the routing of the line or the construction of the Krušnohorský tunel (Ore Mountains Tunnel). Information panels are also devoted to geological works. Similarly, Správa železnic has been providing information about the project in the centre at the main station in Ústí nad Labem since last March.

Now the public can find out about the construction of the new high-speed line between Prague and Dresden at the new DB information centre in Heidenau near Dresden. On more than 200 square metres, DB offers an insight into the current status of the project. For example, the exhibition also focuses on Czech-German cooperation and presents the planning process of the longest railway tunnel not only in Germany but also in Central Europe. An interactive map clearly presents both route variants on German territory and explains the reasons for their creation. Thanks to the drill cores on display, people will gain an overview of the geology and history of Krušné Hory (the Ore Mountains). A model of a tunnelling machine will bring out interesting facts about tunnel construction or the technology of tunnel construction. Visitors will also get comprehensive information about the history of the former “Pitch hut”. Guided tours for larger groups or by prior arrangement are also possible outside opening hours.

Martin Walden, DB's representative for Saxony, considers the information centre as a meeting place for people: *“We are pleased to be able to offer a permanent information point for dialogue with citizens on such an internationally significant building project at this historic site. Near the information centre, high-speed trains are designed to enter the tunnel towards Prague or to come to us. The metropolises of Dresden and Prague will then be only about an hour's journey from each other. The new connection will not only reduce travel time for our passengers, but will also relieve the Elbe Valley of railway transport.”*

Cross-border cooperation on the HSL project is in full swing. Other guests particularly highlighted the aspect of linking Europe: *“The joint Czech-German railway project Dresden – Prague is a milestone in the relations between our countries. Such an important construction can only succeed if the investor conducts a dialogue with the regions about its form. The information centre will provide the public with the opportunity to inform, exchange views and deepen the dialogue that has already begun. Today's opening of the information centre is an important step towards the success of this ambitious project,”* says Frank Engel

Acting for State Parliamentary Secretary of the Federal Ministry for Digital and Transport (BMDV). Václav Bernard, Deputy Minister of Transport of the Czech Republic, also sees the opening of the centre as an important step: *"The high-speed line from Prague to Dresden will speed up transport and provide new opportunities for both countries. It is essential to provide as much information as possible to citizens and representatives of municipalities and cities for such large projects. We opened a similar information centre in the Czech Republic last year. I am very pleased that there is now such a centre on the German side as well. I believe that this maximum openness towards citizens and municipalities will help to dispel any objections and doubts about this construction."*

The HSL connecting the member states is also important from the point of view of the European Union, which was represented at the opening ceremony by Mathieu Grosch, Coordinator of the Rail Freight Corridor Orient/East-Med: *"I welcome the opening of the information centre. In this part of the Orient and East Mediterranean Corridor, there will be a significant reduction in travel times, traffic distribution and cross-border road traffic in the Elbe Valley. The European Commission has proposed to complete the entire corridor by 2040 – such an information centre will make a significant contribution to public involvement in this important project between Heidenau and Ústí nad Labem."*

Design work also continues on the Czech side. A detailed technical design of the VRT Podřipsko (HSL Říp Flatlands) between Prague and the Lovosice exit is being developed, and work is also underway on the Krušnohorský tunel (Ore Mountains Tunnel). Radek Čech, Správa železnic's Director of International Affairs Department, points out that this is also thanks to intensive Czech-German cooperation: *"The joint project team includes not only designers, but also experts on tunnels, bridges, transport technology or the environment. It is thanks to their work that we are moving forward. The discussions with the partners have been productive and I am confident that we will be able to bring this important European project to its completion. Another open information centre is a proof that communication with the public is important to us, and we are not forgetting it when preparing the line."*

The construction of the first section of the Prague – Ústí nad Labem – Dresden line should start in 2027. The journey from the capital to the Saxon metropolis will be reduced from the current 2.5 hours to about 60 minutes after the completion of the entire line. It will take less than half an hour to reach Ústí nad Labem from Prague.

Správa železnic together with DB further strengthens communication with the public. The project will have its own visual identity and website. Below is the logo, which the preparation partners will encounter more and more frequently.



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