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Podbeskydské Lines Await Electrification

The Central Committee of the Ministry of Transport of the Czech Republic approved The Feasibility Study Beskydy at the end of last year. An investment in the entire section Ostrava-Kunčice – Frýdlant nad Ostravicí – Ostravice and in the section Studénka – Štramberk demonstrated as economically efficient. SŽDC plans to complete modernization of the lines, their electrification, increasing capacity of the section from Vratimov to Frýdek-Místek and equipping them with the most modern security equipment. At the same time, the infrastructure manager will repair all the stops and stations that have not undergone any treatment yet. Barrier-free access course will be matter of course. The planned investment will bring significant operational savings to carriers, higher comfort for passengers and a dramatic reduction of journey times of trains.

The objective of the study was to evaluate the effectiveness of investments in lines Ostrava-Kunčice – Valašské Meziříčí, Frýdlant nad Ostravicí – Ostravice, Frýdek-Místek – Český Těšín and Studénka – Veřovice. SŽDC has been working on this extremely extensive study dealing with modernization of lines in the length of 123 km for three years. The section from Ostrava to Frýdlant nad Ostravicí is one of the busiest non-electrified in the Czech Republic. Around 6,000 passengers pass through it every day. The investment in the entire section Ostrava - Kunčice – Frýdlant nad Ostravicí including lines from Frýdlant nad Ostravicí to Ostravice and also to the section Studénka – Štramberk demonstrated as economically efficient. With regard to the decision of the Ministry of Transport of the Czech Republic regarding the concept of introducing alternate current traction (25 kV, 50 Hz) it is necessary to update selected parts of the study as savings of investment costs are expected as well as a possible extension of electrification to Frenštát pod Radhoštěm město stop, respectively to Valašské Meziříčí.

A construction schedule has not been determined yet. Construction activities will take place in several stages. If no serious complications occur during preparation, the actual construction of the first phase can begin after 2020. As for the section Ostrava-Kunčice – Frýdek-Místek – Ostravice, work on another preparatory stage - documentation for land use permit - begins later this year. In case of acquisition, it is possible to continue with preparation of the project construction, which is terminated by a building permit.

All lines mentioned above will undergo overall modernization. SŽDC will double-track the section between Vratimov and Frýdek-Místek. To achieve higher safety, grade-separated crossing of the railway with a road is planned in Vratimov. Selected sections will be completely electrified and equipped with the most modern safety installations. Repairs will be made at all stations and stops which have not undergone any adaptation yet. Ensuring barrier-free access and platforms at a height of 550 mm for comfort boarding into modern trainsets is a matter of course.

Modernization will ensure a considerable increase of line speeds and thus better time accessibility of separate places in the region, journey time will be reduced significantly. Specifically in the section Ostrava - Frýdek-Místek, speed will be increased up to 100–120 km/h, the local complicated profile notwithstanding. As for the section Frýdek-Místek – Frýdlant nad Ostravicí, it will be possible to achieve a speed up to 160 km/h. In other sections between Frýdlant nad Ostravicí and Valašské Meziříčí, maximum speed of 80–120 km/h is envisaged and speed between Sedlnice and Štramberk will increase up to 80–100 km/h. After modernization, journey times of through trains will be reduced in comparison with the present state to a half; a ride from the station Ostrava-střed to Frýdek-Místek will take 14 minutes, to station Frýdlant 21 minutes, to station Ostravice 33 minutes and to station Valašské Meziříčí 72 minutes.

The planned modernization will also bring improved conditions for freight transport. Especially the car manufacturer Hyundai is currently extremely limited by the trains' length. Double-tracking of the line between Vratimov and Frýdek-Místek will eliminate this limit which will show in transferring a part of transport by trucks to the railway.

Total costs of modernization of the section Ostrava-Kunčice – Valašské Meziříčí including the branching Frýdlant nad Ostravicí – Ostravice equal CZK 10.5 billion and for the section Sedlnice – Štramberk CZK 2.4 billion. By decision of the Central Committee, SŽDC will currently start preparing the section Ostrava – Ostravice for a price of CZK 6.8 billion. The remaining parts will be updated, therefore a modification of the total costs' amount can be expected.

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