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Ejpvovice Tunnel Construction Nears Completion, First Train to Run Through South Tube in Two Months Already

Construction of the longest railway tunnel in the Czech Republic so far nears its final stage. On 15 November already, the first train will run through the southern tube of the Ejpvovice tunnel. With the entry into force of the new timetable as of 9 December, operation of all trains through both tubes will start and passenger will thus be able to appreciate the most substantial of the construction's assets – shorter journey times between Plzeň and Prague.

Today, the Czech Prime Minister Mr. Andrej Babiš visited the construction site together with the Minister of Transport Mr. Dan Ťok and the Director General of Správa železniční dopravní cesty (SZDC) Mr. Jiří Svoboda in order to be informed on the current progress of this project.

"The tunnel being finished just now will allow a speed of 160 kph which is nowadays the highest speed possible on the Czech railway. However, the tunnel's route is designed for high-speed operation in the future so that trains will be able to achieve a speed up to 200 kph", stated Mr. Dan Ťok, Minister of Transport of the Czech Republic.

"The tunnel is part of a relocation which will shorten the line between Plzeň and Rokycany by 6.1 kilometres. Its construction together with increasing line speed will have a substantial impact on shorter travelling between Prague and Plzeň. In average, the journey time will decrease by 9 minutes, for tilting trains by 10 minutes", explained Mr. Jiří Svoboda, Director General of SZDC. As he added, railway operation safety will increase as well as travelling comfort for passengers and ensuring a required line capacity.

The Ejpvovice tunnel is exceptional not only by its length (each of the tubes is more than four kilometres long), but also by the use of other components. A slab track is laid down in the tubes – the trackage is not embedded in the ballast but fixed within special concrete panels. In case of need, it will allow rescue service vehicle to arrive. Big stress is laid on ensuring safety in the tunnels; train operation will be supervised by the most modern technology available. The tunnelling of the southern tube began in February 2015 and took 15 months. The tunnelling of the northern tube was started in September 2016, it was completed last October.

The modernized line section Rokycany – Plzeň is a part of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) and is situated on the western branch of the Czech Rail Transit Corridor III Prague – Plzeň –

Cheb – state border with Germany. Total investment costs of the construction amount to CZK 6.783 billion. The project is being co-financed by the EU from its Cohesion Fund under the Operational Programme Transport. The contribution provided by the EU equals CZK 3.520 billion. The construction supplier is an association consisting of the companies Metrostav and Subterra.

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