

BRANDÝS NAD ORLICÍ, 30 June 2023

## **Modernisation of 1st corridor in Tichá Orlice Valley is completed**

Two and a half years of modernisation of the corridor between Ústí nad Orlicí and Brandýs nad Orlicí ends today. Tomorrow the last long-distance trains diverted via Havlíčkův Brod will return here. The complete renewal of the railway infrastructure eliminated speed drops, increased transport safety and, above all, its fluidity. Brandýs station has also been transformed; the modern platform and pedestrian underpass offer comfortable access to trains, and the station building has received a new façade and windows.

The reconstructed section is almost 10 kilometres long. The line had been waiting for major repairs for over twenty years. *"The long-planned modernisation from the mid-1990s was thwarted by the floods in 1997, which necessitated the needed repairs of damaged bridges in order to quickly resume operations. On the threshold of the new millennium, various variants were then examined, which would mainly bring the required speed of 160 km/h. However, given the terrain in the Tichá Orlice Valley, this meant working with alternatives for a new line with tunnels,"* introduces the Minister of Transport Martin Kupka. The high investment costs of such a construction brought the original options back into play. The unsatisfactory condition of the line then accelerated the preparation of the necessary revitalisation. The complete documentation took a record time of one year and work could start in spring 2021.

*"The demanding modernisation was aimed from the very beginning at eliminating speed drops, ensuring maximum traffic flow on the busy corridor section, and increasing traffic safety. Unfortunately, the small radius curves do not allow us to increase the maximum speed to more than 110 km/h when running under ETCS,"* explains Jiří Svoboda, Director General of Správa železnic.

The construction touched the railway superstructure including deep rehabilitation of the substructure using compacted gravel pillar technology. The overhead contact line was comprehensively reconstructed, the old signalling equipment was replaced by a new electronic autoblock. Three level crossings were significantly modernised, and the investment included the construction of 392 metre-long noise barriers. *"By cancelling the Bezpráví stop and building a new branch line, we have significantly increased the line capacity, especially in case of emergencies or closures. In addition, regional services previously stopping at Bezpráví will no longer interfere with the running of other trains. From the very beginning, we have seen traffic stability as a priority,"* adds Jiří Svoboda.

*"We have used the latest technology in the construction with respect to the environment. We have deployed a special mechanical track rehabilitation line to replace the tracks.*

*We then divided the final work into four stages and chose procedures to shorten the length of the single-track section to minimise the impact on train operations,"* says Martin Borovka, Director General of the Group VINCI Construction CS, on behalf of the contractor.

In addition to the long intermediate station section, the Brandýs nad Orlicí station itself was a noticeable operational obstacle of the whole section. Its level design complicated the traffic considerably. Now there are two external single-sided platforms 220 metres-long, access to them is barrier-free and a new pedestrian underpass has been built under the track facility. Thanks to the reconstruction of the station, stopping trains no longer obstruct passing long-distance trains. The benefits will also be felt by drivers and pedestrians at the level crossing directly in the station, as the time of its closure time is significantly reduced. Freight traffic also benefits from the modernisation, as trains are served by an overtaking station with sufficiently long tracks. The reconstruction also marks the end of a partial renovation of the station building, which has a new façade, windows, and doors.

The contractor was the association of companies EUROVIA CS, Chládek a Tintěra, Pardubice, Elektrizace železnic Praha and GJW Praha. The total investment costs of the construction amount to CZK 4.16 billion.

The project *Ústí nad Orlicí – Brandýs nad Orlicí – original track, BC* is proposed for funding by the European Union from the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) within the National Recovery Plan. It is currently co-financed by a loan from the European Investment Bank (EIB).