
BTK RAILWAY TO BRING TURKEY BILLIONS OF DOLLARS

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By Orkhan Quluzade - Trend

The Baku-Tbilisi-Kars (BTK) railway, along with other railway projects under construction, will bring annual revenue of billions of US dollars to Turkey's logistics sector, Turkish Minister of Transport, Shipping and Communications Ahmet Arslan said in an exclusive interview with Trend.

Arslan said with the BTK's help, the Marmaray tunnel under the Bosphorus, which links the Eastern and European parts of Turkey, as well as other railway projects, the route through Azerbaijan and Turkey will become the most competitive and safest choice in the Eurasian corridor.

"The countries of the Silk Road, from China to Western Europe, have been closely watching the development of the BTK project since the decision on its construction was made," said the minister.

"Azerbaijan and Turkey are not only neighbors, but also fraternal countries," he added. "The BTK project will even more closely connect our countries and help the joint transportation of our products."

Arslan said the BTK railway will be commissioned in 2017, noting that the project will contribute to the creation of new jobs, economic revival and prosperity in the region.

"The aim of Turkey is to become a logistics center in the region," the minister said. "For this purpose, we will also implement a project for construction of a logistics center in the Kars province, and this project is estimated at 57 million Turkish liras."

He said the Sivas-Kars high-speed railway will be ready by 2023 and as a result Kars will be connected with the province of Edirne in the west of Turkey.

The BTK railway is being constructed on the basis of the Georgian-Azerbaijani-Turkish intergovernmental agreement.

Azerbaijan allocated a loan of \$775 million for the construction of the railway's Georgian section. SOFAZ finances the project in accordance with the Azerbaijani president's decree 'On the implementation of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars project activities', dated Feb. 21, 2007.

The peak capacity of the railway will be 17 million tons of cargo per year. At the initial stage, this figure will be one million passengers and 6.5 million tons of cargo.

Kaynak/Source: