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## **SOFIA □ ISTANBUL RAIL LINK SET TO RETURN AS RECONSTRUCTION ON TURKISH SIDE COMPLETED**

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The railway link between Bulgarias capital Sofia and Turkeys largest city Istanbul is set to return after the completion of reconstruction on the Turkish side, some months after Bulgaria completed the upgrade of the section between Plovdiv and the Kapikule border point.

Turkey began its upgrade of the 292km section of railway line in June 2014 and reports said that work had been completed and the line was ready for reopening on February 20 2017.

While Turkey was carrying out the reconstruction work on its section of the line, passengers were transported between Kapikule and Istanbul by bus.

The return to service of the full Sofia □ Istanbul rail link is taking place in terms of an agreement between Bulgarian state railways BDZ and Turkish State Railways. The journey on the renovated line between the two cities will take about 10 hours.

Bulgaria completed its work on the 154km line between second city Plovdiv and the Kapikule border checkpoint in May 2016. The work, funded from the European Unions transport operational programme, enables higher speeds for trains travelling on the lines.

The line is part of a European transport corridor, linking the Serbian city of Niš to Sofia and Plovdiv, and the Turkish cities of Edirne and Istanbul.

Photo: Balkaneu / IBNA

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