
FM: BAKU [REDACTED] PROJECT WILL FACILITATE UNINTERRUPTED RAILWAY ACCESS BETWEEN EAST AND WEST

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"Due to its strategic role of a natural bridge between Asia and Europe, Azerbaijan has always been an active participant and key enabler of regional and trans-regional connectivity initiatives. Today Azerbaijan has involved in implementation of three major projects to promote East-West and North-South corridors, so called geographical crossroad," Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov said at the meeting of foreign ministers of Visegrad (V4) Group and Eastern Partnership countries, the Azerbaijani MFA told APA.

He noted that the launch of the strategic Baku [REDACTED] project (BTK), railroad connection between Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey will facilitate regional trade and uninterrupted railway access between East and West.

We expect that the project will be completed this year. With improving cost and time performance of shipments between Asia and Europe BTK will be a strong alternative to current routes. In 2016 we launched the first container train starting from China crossing Central Asia, Caspian Sea further to Azerbaijan and Georgia with destination to Europe. This test train proved that this route can reduce the transit period from 30-35 to 15 days. Azerbaijan is also embarking on another remarkable project - construction of a new Baku International Sea Trade Port (Alat) - the biggest and multi-purpose port in the Caspian Sea with potential capacity of handling 25 million tons of cargo annually. Standing at the intersection of railroad connections to Europe, Russia and Iran, and in close proximity to Baku airport the Alyat Port will allow seamless connection to regional hinterland and air cargo, as well as cost effective rail ferry access to other Caspian Sea ports, he noted.

Mammadyarov added that for regional projects like Trans-Caspian International Transit Route,

connecting China with Europe, broader participation, including Central Asian states and Turkey should be considered.

This will also be in line with EUs connectivity agenda aiming to expand trans-European networks further to the East, he added.

Kaynak/Source: