PRESS RELEASE

Dan Ťok, Czech Minister of Transport: The European communication standard GSM-R connected the Czech and the Austrian railway

Prague/Šatov, 16 September 2016 –Správa železniční dopravní cesty (the Czech Railway Infrastructure Administration) officially took over from the Kapsch company as supplier another railway line section twelve and a half kilometres long with extended GSM-R radio technology. The strategic route from Znojmo through Šatov up to the Austrian state border was covered by a European standard in less than a year. ”We gradually safeguard and accelerate railway transport in this way. By using this technology, we are getting a better connection with our Southern neighbour“, said Mr. Dan Ťok, Minister of Transport of the Czech Republic.

During the meeting in Šatov, representatives of the Austrian railway ÖBB reminded that their network is already almost entirely covered by the GSM-R system. They appreciated long-time good cooperation between SŽDC, the Austrian railways and the supplier. Precisely the last GSM-R project uses also the ÖBB infrastructure in part, especially by means of their network. ”According to EU interoperability Directives, we will have this system in operation at least up to 2030“, confirmed Mr. Christian Sagmeister, Director of Division Life Cycle Management Telematik ÖBB. Mr. Pavel Surý, Director General of SŽDC, stressed that GSM-R implementation has successfully been under way on Czech key railway lines for ten years already. ”For this whole period, no default in observing agreed terms in the project or dealing with any arrears or penalties occurred on our suppliers’ side“, added Mr. Surý.

The GSM-R system is used for transferring necessary data and voice information between the train and ground traffic control with a crucial requirement of 100% reliability. As it increases safety on key railway lines, its implementation is supported by the European Union. ”Expanding GSM-R technology is one of the projects which the transport branch drew important sums of money from EU funds in the last ten years for, in total approximately 60 million EUR“, added Minister Ťok.

The GSM-R network construction is crucial for reasons of operation; however, passengers will ultimately benefit from its assets too as it will contribute to simpler as well as faster railway operation, especially in international transport. Besides the Kapsch company, many other domestic companies cooperated on the project for the needs of SŽDC, i.a. AŽD Praha, ČD-Telematika, TEPLOTECHNA Ostrava or SUDOP Brno. ”The line section leading to the Austrian state border was especially important for us as the Kapsch company implements GSM-R technology in Austria as well. In our position of a global leader, we implement projects e.g. in Poland, Hungary, France, the UK or Spain“, said Mr. Karel Feix, Director General of the Kapsch company in the Czech Republic.

Total costs of the construction designated as GSM-R Znojmo - Šatov state border amounted up to CZK 10,234,578 (VAT excluded). The project was financed from resources of the State Fund for Transport Infrastructure.

About the GSM-R system

To develop applications needed for modern traffic control in railway transport it proved necessary to design and implement into this milieu a radio system serving for transfer of data and voice information between fixed railway infrastructure and mobile train-sets. The GSM-R system was applied precisely for this specific use. A traffic control – train-set connection has many specific requirements such as priority calls, a secure data channel, transfer of control and safety data etc. It is a system of communication between the train and ground traffic control, its basic characteristic being both communication as such and its 100% reliability. The main issue is safety, therefore no communication drop-out or interruption may occur. *"The implementation of this radio communication system (originally European only) into railway traffic control outside Europe as well shows its real strength and utility value. Africa, Asia and Australia – these are continents where the GSM-R is already in use or being installed in railway operation. Although maximum safety and reliability is primarily emphasised in this system, its standardisation and wide expansion allows a quick decrease of final terminals' costs"* said Mr. Karel Feix, Director General of the Kapsch company.