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The opening ceremony of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway (BTK) was held on October 30, 2017 in Baku.

An intergovernmental agreement on construction of new Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway was concluded between Azerbaijani, Turkish and Georgian governments on February 7, 2007 in Tbilisi city. On April 10, 2007, Milli Majlis of the Republic of Azerbaijan ratified the Agreement. It was intended to complete the new railway project until 2010, however, the construction of the railway continued for more than 10 years, with the completion of the project being repeatedly postponed for various reasons. Finally, the heads of four states, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkey and Kazakhstan, officially gave the “green light” for the first train, which went from Baku to Kars via Tbilisi. Government representatives from Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan attended the opening ceremony as well.

The 504-kilometer part of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway, which has a total length of about 850 kilometers, passes through Azerbaijan, while 263 kilometers run through Georgia, and 79 kilometers – through the territory of Turkey.

The railway’s peak capacity will be 17 million tons of cargo per year. At an initial stage, this figure will be one million passengers and at least 5 million tons of cargo.

Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway will accelerate the access of central Asian countries (Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Afghanistan) to the European market. Along with Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey are also expected to receive significant revenues from transit transportation.

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