

Rail Baltica Riga Central Hub: three years of progress and milestones

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As 2023 comes to a close, three years have transpired since the initiation of the Rail Baltica Riga Central Hub construction. The construction efforts in Riga encompass an area spanning approximately 2 kilometers, and this fall has seen the accomplishment of various noteworthy projects associated with railway transportation, the building of the Rail Baltica Riga Central Station, and the enhancement of surrounding infrastructure. Additionally, the start of December signifies a noteworthy achievement in the construction of the Riga Central Station – the installation of the inaugural station arch.

Due to the ongoing reconstruction of the Riga Central Railway Station and its associated infrastructure, it is poised to become the largest passenger service hub in the Baltic region. Emphasis is placed on incorporating energy-efficient technologies, sustainable solutions, and prioritizing passenger comfort and safety. This includes the implementation of blast-resistant structures, the integration of a ventilation system equipped with detectors and filters for hazardous chemical and biological substances, among other safety measures.

The new station is designed to be functionally accessible, and even before Rail Baltica trains start making stops, it is already benefiting the public by improving environmental accessibility and introducing new platforms for upcoming trains.

The construction of the Riga Central Station site commenced at the end of November 2020. Since then, the construction efforts led by BERERIX and Rail Baltica's national implementing body in Latvia, Eiropas Dzelzceļa līnijas, have encompassed extensive railway infrastructure works. These include the complete construction of new underground engineering communications, the establishment of a new railway crossing on Lāčplēša Street, and the construction of additional crossings on nearby streets such as Dzirnavu Street, Gogoļa Street, and Prāga Street. Concurrently, ongoing efforts are focused on the construction of the Riga Central Railway Station and its roof structures.

The conclusion of the third year of construction is marked by the successful installation of the first station arch, symbolizing the highest point of the station at almost 30 meters. With the arch in place, significant progress is being made on the continued construction of the station's roof structure. Comprising thousands of steel pipes, each forming a unique three-dimensional lattice interconnected with steel nodes, these elements are noteworthy both in terms of their size and their strategic placement.

Work on the railway crossing on Gogoļa Street continues, with supporting structures for other crossings also having been built, and the most significant impacts on city traffic having passed. In the bus station area, the construction of embankments at street level has been completed, enabling the utilization of the area under the embankment by bus station customers soon.

The most notable achievements during the third year of construction include

- Completion of the railway crossing and road reconstruction on nearby Lāčplēša Street.

- Construction of supporting structures for the southern part of nearby Dzirnavu Street and the western part of the Gogola Street railway crossing.

- 98% completion of the retaining wall construction across the entire project area.

- Almost complete filling of the railway embankment.

- Construction of embankment and passenger platform structures.

- Manufacture and installation of foundations for all 8 station metal arches.

- Concrete pouring for the planned waiting hall floor on the 3rd floor of the station up to the northern boundary.

- Installation of the first load-bearing roof arch.

- Construction of pedestrian crossings to railway platforms, including the future connection zone of Timoteja and Elizabetes streets.

- Construction of structures for the railway bridge over the city canal.

- Construction of the railway embankment on Prāga Street and in the Riga International Bus Station area.

- Almost complete construction of the passenger disembarkation area in the Riga International Bus Station area.

In 2024, work on the southern part of the Rail Baltica Riga Central Hub will continue, with the construction company "BERERIX" commencing the construction of the railway system (tracks and contact network), along with the installation of railway signaling and engineering networks in the next phase of construction and financing. The construction of the new Rail Baltica railway bridge over the Daugava River on the right bank is scheduled to begin next year, contingent upon available financing.

The construction zone of the station represents the most extensive and technically complex segment of the Rail Baltica Riga Central Hub. In 2024, plans include initiating the construction of the engineering network on the southern side of the station, commencing finishing works, progressing with roof construction, installing escalators and elevators, and conducting landscaping works in the station area. The following year is anticipated to witness the completion of the construction of the supporting structures of the station, as well as the construction of the station's transport and platform structures.

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