

**From:** Josh Holly

**Sent:** Tuesday, October 31, 2017 2:24 PM

**To:** Josh Holly

**Subject:** Baku-Tbilisi-Kars Railway Launches New Transportation Link Between Europe and China

Hope my note finds you well.

As you may know, the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars (BTK) Railway, which will link Europe to China and stimulate economic growth across the region, was officially launched in Baku yesterday. I wanted to make sure that you have a copy of the press release issued today by the Embassy of Azerbaijan.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks,  
Josh



**JOSH HOLLY PRINCIPAL**

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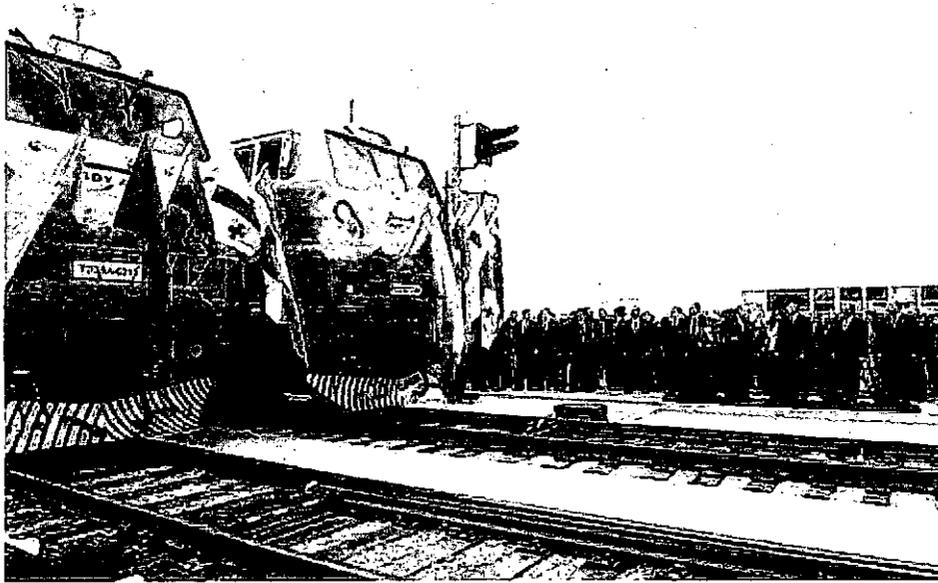
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Official Press Release of the  
EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

## **Baku-Tbilisi-Kars Railway Launches New Transportation Link Between Europe and China**



WASHINGTON (Oct. 31) – Yesterday in Baku, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev officially inaugurated the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars (BTK) railway. The 850-kilometer (500-mile) railway links Europe to China, helping stimulate economic growth across the region. President Aliyev was joined by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Georgian Prime Minister Giorgi Kvirikashvili as well as ministers from Tajikistan and Turkmenistan to launch the historic transportation project.

At the opening ceremony, President Aliyev underscored the geostrategic and economic importance of the BTK project, describing it as “the shortest and most reliable link between Europe and Asia” and highlighting that it will increase “trade turnout and mutual investment among the countries along the route.” President Erdogan noted that the BTK railway will “benefit our region not only economically” and “will bring peace, security and stability politically, and prosperity socially.” Georgian Prime Minister Kvirikashvili said, “the railway is a new Eurasian bridge, connecting not only the economies of our countries but also our citizens.”

This strategically important railway serves as an integral part of the modern “Silk Road,” connecting Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey. With initial capacity of 6.5 million tons of cargo and 1 million passengers per year, the new transportation network will facilitate transit, trade and investment among the countries of the region and beyond.

The BTK is expected to reduce prices and facilitate shipments while serving as the shortest connection between European and Asian railway systems. The project also allows for the development of more business and infrastructure opportunities along the regional corridor. Projects, among others, include the development of the Baku International Trade Sea Port – the largest port that acts as multimodal transit and logistics hub in the Caspian Sea - and the Free Economic Zone established by Azerbaijan within the port.

What's more, the BTK provides opportunities for other Central Asia countries, including Afghanistan and Turkmenistan, by facilitating shipments between Europe and South Asia, and will benefit American companies engaging across the region.

Similar to the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline, Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline and Southern Gas Corridor projects, the historic BTK railway is another significant and strategic effort spearheaded by Azerbaijan to increase connectivity across the region and provide access to vital networks.

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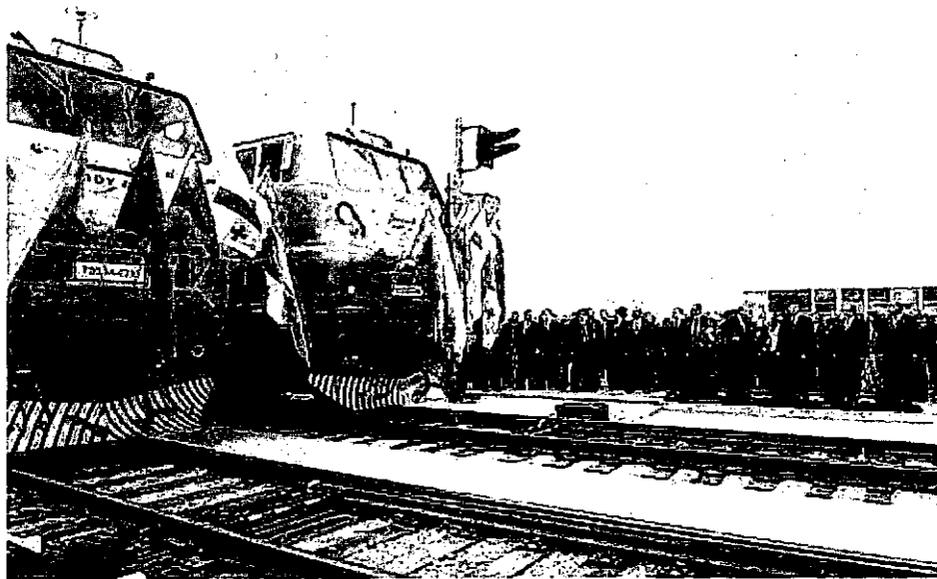
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