 **March** **19, 2024**

**Light sighted in the Karawanks Tunnel connecting the Mediterranean, the Balkans and Central Europe!**

**The Karawanks Tunnel constructed by Cengiz İnşaat as the crowning touch to the motorway network connecting the Mediterranean, the Balkans and Central Europe is nearing completion. Cengiz İnşaat Deputy Board Chairman Asım Cengiz pointed out the importance of the project that passes the border between Austria and Slovenia, marking the first infrastructure contract ever awarded to a Turkish contractor in Slovenia.**

Earthworks have been completed on the Karawanks Tunnel crossing the Alpine Karawanks mountain range between Austria and Slovenia, considered the crowning touch to the road network connecting the Mediterranean, the Balkans and Central Europe. The project constructed by Cengiz İnşaat, a group company of Cengiz Holding, is the first infrastructure project in Slovenia built by a Turkish company. The project passing the border between Austria and Slovenia is scheduled to reach completion and be opened to traffic by the third quarter of 2025.

To celebrate the sighting of light in the tunnel, the Slovenian government held a ceremony in Hrušica on March 18, 2024. The ceremony was attended by Slovenian Prime Minister Robert Golob, Minister of Infrastructure Alenka Bratusek, Turkish Ambassador Aylin Taşhan, government officials, and executives and employees of Cengiz İnşaat. Speaking after the ceremony, **Cengiz İnşaat Deputy Board Chairman Asım Cengiz** noted: “The Karawanks, the longest motorway tunnel built in Slovenia, has been a project that had us work under very challenging conditions such as unfavorable ground conditions, groundwater outflow and the presence of high amounts of methane gas, requiring us to put in advanced engineering knowledge. We have been awarded both of the two contracts for the project, making us the first Turkish company to carry out an infrastructure project in the country.” Providing details about the Karawanks Tunnel being built in the alpine Hrušica region, Cengiz said that the project included the construction of a tunnel, two bridges, a portal building and an administration building: “As the existing tunnel in the region fell short of meeting the traffic needs, it was decided to complement it with another tunnel and the two countries put the section on their territories out to tender. The Karawanks Tunnel has a total length of 7,822 meters and we are building the 3,446-meter section on the Slovenian side. Once completed and operational, the other tunnel that was completed in 1991 and has been in service ever since will be renovated and in the meantime our tunnel will be used as a single tube for two-way traffic. When the renovation of the old tunnel is completed, our tunnel will be used one-way only, from Slovenia to Austria. The Karawanks Tunnel will contribute to regional development, trade and tourism and provide a convenient and efficient transportation route for passenger and freight traffic.”

**15 MILLION VEHICLES IN 3 YEARS**

The Karawanks Tunnel with a contract price of €120.2 million is an EU financed project. Construction of the tunnel started in March 2020 and is scheduled for completion by April 2025. In addition to the road from the toll plaza to the tunnel, a 165.2 meters long prestressed steel bridge, a portal building to manage the tunnel's ventilation, lighting and other electromechanical systems, and a 1,000 square meter, three-story administration building will be completed by Cengiz İnşaat and handed over to the Slovenian General Directorate of Highways, with the project employing 225 people, including 175 Turks. Once open to traffic, a total of 15 million vehicles are expected to pass through the tunnel in three years, the three-year renovation period of the old tunnel.

***EDITOR’S NOTE:***

*Cengiz İnşaat is a group company of Cengiz Holding that has undertaken numerous projects of high significance around the world with its remarkable equipment pool, technical infrastructure and experience. Having completed projects in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Northern Iraq, Kuwait, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Croatia and Romania, the company is climbing up ENR’s (Engineering News Record) “Top 250 International Contractors” list year after year.*

*The company’s major overseas projects so far include inter alia Karabakh Victory Road, Ahmadbayli-Fuzuli-Shusha Highway, Nakhchivan Vayxir Dam, and Shamkirchay Dam in Azerbaijan, Aktobe-Martuk Highway and CAREC Transport Corridor Zhambyl and Mangystau Sections in Kazakhstan, Ljulin-Daskalovo Highway in Bulgaria, Corridor 5C Vlakavo-Tarcin and Poprikuse-Nemila Sections and Zenica Tunnel in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hawler International Airport and Altun Köprü Road in Northern Iraq, International Airport T4 Terminal and Al Mutla City Infrastructure in Kuwait, Križevci – Koprivnica Railway in Croatia, and Sibiu-Pitesti Motorway in Romania. Last year, Cengiz İnşaat has also been awarded the contract for the Corridor 5C Medakovo-Ozimice Section tendered out by the Road Administration of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The project is Bosnia and Herzegovina’s longest and most expensive project to date.*