



**PRESS RELEASE**

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**Transport, Maritime and Communication Minister Ahmet Arslan inspects the works**

## **EURASIA TUNNEL APPROACHES EAGERLY-AWAITED HISTORICAL DAY**

**Eurasia Tunnel which connects Asian and European continents via a tube crossing underneath the seabed for the first time will be opened with a ceremony to be participated by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan on Tuesday, 20 December. Transport, Maritime and Communication Minister Ahmet Arslan paid an onsite visit to the project to get information about the works that are underway day and night for the opening awaited eagerly by all Turkey. Minister Arslan said Eurasia Tunnel would start providing service as of 07:00 hrs on December 21st and would initially be in operation for 14 hours a day. Accordingly, Eurasia Tunnel will be open between 07:00 and 21:00 each day until 30 January, at the latest, on which date the Tunnel will switch to 24 hour service following the completion of all required controls and adjustment of the systems.**

Transportation, Maritime and Communication Minister Ahmet Arslan visited the construction site of the Eurasia Tunnel which will be opened in a matter of few days on 20 December. Yapı Merkezi Holding Chairman Ersin Arioğlu, ATAŞ CEO Seok Jae Seo and ATAŞ Vice General Manager Mustafa Tanrıverdi welcomed and accompanied Minister Arslan during his visit and gave him information about the works that continue on a 7/23 basis without any break. Arioğlu said all engineers and workers that take part in the project have been working with a great enthusiasm and pleasure to earn a highly valuable work to Turkey.

### **The Tunnel to be open for 14 hours/day initially**

In remarks to the press following his trip of the Tunnel, Minister Ahmet Arslan said that Eurasia Tunnel received many national and international awards so far, but the most important of these awards would be its opening on 20 December to serve the people. Regarding the operation of the Eurasia Tunnel following its inauguration on 20 December Minister Arslan spoke as follows:

“We will operate the Tunnel for 14 hours per day initially. We will extend this period as we complete the required system controls and adjustments, and we will finally switch to 24 hour operation basis as of 30 January at the latest. We are targeting to start accepting vehicles for crossing the Tunnel as of 07:00 on 21 December, and stay open between 07:00 and 21:00 each day until at the latest 30 January.”

**“The fare will never be in USD or in Euro”**



The Minister Ahmet Arslan gave the following information about the fare of the Eurasia Tunnel:

“We never had a practice of collecting tolls in dollars or in euros in any of our projects, nor can this be allowed. The toll of the Eurasia Tunnel passage will be set in Turkish Lira as of the New Year and this toll will be applicable throughout the year. We will escalate the toll at the end of the year and determine the rate. The toll collection in dollars or in euros is by no means possible. We will talk and decide with our operator company on how the operation would be and what kind of a benefit we can offer our people during the 10 days before January. We will adopt a different practice between 21 December and 31 December and think it as a social responsibility project. We are intending not to make it free of charge (during the said period); but we would rather adopt a practice that has benefits in terms of social responsibility.”

Minister Arslan also spoke about the much-debated subject of name poll for Eurasia Tunnel. Transportation Minister said they originally asked the opinion of the people with the sole purpose of finding a more catching, more meaningful and more esthetical name for the Eurasia Tunnel, but it all happened to be led to very irrelevant places which made them all very sorry. “We can reach nowhere by having the values and riches of our country compete with each other,” Minister Arslan said.

### **It takes only 15 minutes to make an intercontinental trip**

Eurasia Tunnel has been constructed by Yapı Merkezi and SK E&C partnership at Kazlıçeşme-Göztepe line after being tendered by the Transport, Maritime and Communication Ministry’s Directorate General of Infrastructure Investments in Build-Operate-Transfer model. Bosphorus Crossing with a length of 3.4 kilometers is the most important phase of the project which is consisted of three main parts making a total of 14.6 kilometers. Besides, adjustments have been made on the approach roads at the coastal line of the Asian and European sides of the city. The number of lanes in the existing roads has been increased to 8 from the present 6, and improvements have been made on these roads such as the addition of U-turns, junctions and level crossings. With the Eurasia Tunnel, the duration of the trip between Kazlıçeşme and Göztepe will fall as low as to 15 minutes from the previous 100 minutes during busy traffic hours.

### **Opening on 20 December**

The opening of the Eurasia Tunnel, which will start a new era in the country’s transportation as one of the most important investments of the Republic of Turkey, will be on 20 December 2016 with a splendid ceremony. The ceremony will be participated by the President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım, Transport, Maritime and Communication Minister Ahmet Arslan as well as many domestic and international guests.

About ATAŞ ([www.avrasyatuneli.com](http://www.avrasyatuneli.com))



Avrasya Tüneli İşletme İnşaat ve Yatırım A.Ş. (ATAŞ) was founded in 2009 in order to build the Bosphorus Road Tube Passage Project. Turkey-based Yapı Merkezi and South Korea-based SK E&C are the two partners of ATAŞ. Yapı Merkezi is among the leading construction companies of Turkey and the world implementing universally leading projects based on its 50 years of experience and knowledge in large-scale contract works. SK E&C is the construction and engineering branch of SK Group, the third largest business group of South Korea. Yapı Merkezi and SK E&C are global companies which implement very successful infrastructure and transportation projects in diverse regions of the world.

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