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PRESS RELEASE

Poland: Preliminary Market Consultations – what will be the future of national railway market?

Polish Minister of Infrastructure (MI) has entrusted the Centre for EU Transport Projects (CEUTP) with conducting preliminary market consultations aimed at preparing a public procurement procedure for the provision of inter-voivodeship and international passenger rail transport services in Poland. CEUTP plans to launch the consultations in the coming weeks.

These consultations mark a crucial stage in preparing for future tenders to operate inter-voivodeship and international railway connections in Poland post-2030. The objective is to gather insights, technical data, and other key information from companies interested in operating these routes, particularly those with proven experience in passenger rail transport.

Following the Minister of Infrastructure's decision, CEUTP will be responsible for preparing, conducting, and summarizing the consultation process in accordance with the provisions of the Public Procurement Law. The Centre for EU Transport Projects will draft and publish a notice of intent to conduct preliminary market consultations, which will include essential information and a set of topics addressed to the participants.

“The Minister of Infrastructure entrusting the Centre for EU Transport Projects with the task of conducting preliminary market consultations is one of the first steps toward liberalizing the passenger rail market in Poland. We are proud that our institution has been selected to provide substantive and operational support for the planning, organization, and management of public collective transport in inter-voivodeship and international passenger rail services. We have many months of intensive work ahead of us, for which we are well prepared;” **comments** Joanna Lech, Director of the Centre for EU Transport Projects.

Preliminary market consultations are a statutory tool provided for in the Public Procurement Law (Polish PZP – Prawo zamówień publicznych). In accordance with Article 84 of the PPL, they are conducted prior to the initiation of a procurement procedure to prepare the contract and inform prospective contractors of the contracting authority's plans and requirements. Importantly, this process is neither a separate contract award procedure nor a negotiation with selected entities. Instead, it serves to structure assumptions, identify risks, and acquire expert knowledge while strictly maintaining the principles of fair competition, equal treatment of contractors, and process transparency.

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The consultation process will also feature consultation and workshop meetings. The feedback and data collected during these sessions will help assess the market's true capabilities and develop high-quality tender documentation.

The findings gathered throughout the consultations will be compiled into a comprehensive report published upon their conclusion. This report will also include recommendations for the Minister of Infrastructure – specifically regarding the evaluation of the proposed division of railway lines into packages, the key provisions of the future contract, as well as proposed conditions for participation in the procedure and bid evaluation criteria.

The launch of preliminary market consultations for the upcoming inter-voivodeship and international transport contract in Poland was preceded by an in-depth market analysis. This foundational research will enable the procurement procedure to be designed in a manner that aligns both with the organizer's requirements and the actual operational capacities of entities interested in providing these transport services.

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