

## SUMMARY

### FATAL LEVEL CROSSING ACCIDENT IN NIVALA, FINLAND, ON 5 MARCH 2007

On Monday 5 March 2007 at 2.39 p.m., a level crossing accident took place involving a passenger car and a rail bus travelling from Ylivieska to Iisalmi. Both the driver and the passenger of the car perished, while the train personnel and passengers were unharmed. The accident wrecked the car beyond repair, while the train suffered only minor damage. The total material costs due to the accident were approximately EUR 70,000.

The immediate cause of the accident was the passenger car driver driving onto the level crossing without stopping. Presumably, the car driver and passenger did not notice the rail bus approaching from the right. This might have been affected by the following:

- The driver was distracted by a phone call the passenger received and was possibly looking for the ringing mobile phone
- The driver's attention was focused on attaching the safety belt
- The approaching short train was in a blind spot formed by the moving vehicle's structures and the passenger
- The driver was not in the habit of stopping every time at the level crossing.

To prevent similar accidents, the Accident Investigation Board of Finland recommends that the level crossing environment be made safe for road traffic and that the unprotected level crossing of Pahaoja be equipped with a half barrier equipment. In addition, the Investigation Commission would repeat its previous recommendations on train and level crossing visibility and placing emergency calls directly from the accident location. Furthermore, the Commission would reiterate its proposals in recommendation S1/05R/S213 for improving information on level crossings, monitoring them more effectively and enhancing the related traffic offence penalties.