

SUMMARY

FATAL LEVEL CROSSING ACCIDENT IN KIURUVESI, FINLAND, ON 6 MAY 2007

A fatal level crossing accident took place in Kiuruvesi, at the unprotected level crossing of Pohja. This accident occurred when a car travelling along the Pohja private road drove without stopping under a rail bus running from Ylivieska to Iisalmi. There were two passengers in the car; the driver perished and the front seat passenger was seriously injured. The total cost of the accident amounted to €50,000.

The accident was caused by the car driver's failure to notice the train. The level crossing at which the accident occurred does not fulfil the determined level crossing regulations in regard to visibility and the crossing angle. Observation was hampered by the characteristics of the level crossing and, possibly, the driver's health. Familiarity with the level crossing probably diminished the driver's attentiveness.

The start of the rescue operation was delayed due to the fact that the emergency alarm call made by traffic control was routed to the wrong emergency response centre with regard to the place of the accident. There were problems with locating the place of the accident, resulting in two of the rescue units driving to the wrong level crossing.

In order to avoid similar accidents and alleviate their effects, the investigation commission recommends that the Pohja level crossing be eliminated, since the nearest overpass is located at a distance of only 300 metres. Moreover, the commission recommends that the Finnish Rail Administration analyse similar level crossings that do not entail a great level of risk but that can be removed at a minor cost. In addition, the commission calls for an improvement in the emergency call capacities of traffic control, and reiterates its previous recommendation regarding emergency alarm calls performed at the accident site.