

SUMMARY

FATAL LEVEL CROSSING ACCIDENT IN EURAJOKI, FINLAND, ON 24 MAY 2009

On Sunday, 24 May 2009, at 2:28 p.m., a fatal level-crossing accident occurred on the Köykäntie unprotected level crossing in Eurajoki. The accident occurred when a car en route from Lapijoki village to the centre of Eurajoki drove onto the level crossing in front of a freight train en route from Rauma to Tampere. The only person in the car was the driver, who died from his injuries despite first aid. Damage caused by the accident to track equipment amounted to some € 5,000.

The accident probably occurred because the driver did not observe that the car, which was equipped with an automatic gearbox, started moving slowly forward as the driver was reaching into the car's right front seat or leg space. This may have been due to the driver searching through a bag or picking one up that had fallen off the seat after braking. The driver had stopped the car ahead of the level crossing, probably due to having noticed the approaching train.

In order to prevent similar accidents, the Investigation Commission recommends that the Köykäntie level crossing be removed. Alternatively, the level crossing should be equipped with a warning installation with half-barriers.

In addition, municipalities with rail traffic should regularly review the status of unprotected level crossings in their jurisdictions and guide traffic through safer routes. Through mutual cooperation, municipalities and the Finnish Transport Agency should be able to identify which level crossings are dangerous and remove them with little effort and at little cost.