**R2021-03 Level crossing accident between a bus and a work train in Kaskinen on 5 October 2021**

A work train travelling from Seinäjoki to Kaskinen collided with a bus that was transporting schoolchildren to Kristiinankaupunki at the Pyhän Eskilinkatu level crossing, which was not equipped with a warning device, in Kaskinen on Tuesday 5 October 2021.

The driver of the work train tried to warn the bus driver by blowing the whistle, but the bus continued to the level crossing without stopping despite the STOP sign. The bus and the work train collided at the level crossing, and as a result, the work train was derailed.

The bus driver and the seven passengers on the bus sustained injuries of varying degrees in the collision. The material damage caused by the collision was extensive. The accident did not affect commercial rail traffic.

The bus involved in the accident was carrying out a school transport arranged as a part of regular service, meaning that the criteria for school transports had not been applied to its procurement. When school transport is arranged as a part of regular service in this way, the client cannot set safety criteria or define them in agreements. In addition, the investigation found that the tools and instructions for school transport route planning do not take safety in level crossings into account.

The safety management of the bus company did not provide instructions on how to react in an exceptional situation, and partly for this reason, the orientation of the new driver remained deficient with regard to the route and the vehicle. The driver had had problems with handling the vehicle and staying on the route, and the passengers had given strong feedback to the driver about those issues on the previous day. In general, the bus transport sector does not have any requirements concerning safety management systems.

Out of the eight people in the bus, only two were wearing a seatbelt. Based on this, not wearing a seatbelt is still common in buses.

Cooperation between the authorities was efficient from the start, and preparing for a potential larger and more serious accident was realised as planned. The current operating models of rescue services and emergency medical services in the Kaskinen area functioned appropriately in connection with the accident.

To improve safety, the Safety Investigation Authority recommends the following:

1. The Finnish National Agency for Education should instruct education providers to ensure that safety issues are taken into account regardless of how school transports are arranged and notify transport operators and education providers about the goals and existence of instructions.
2. The Ministry of Transport and Communications proposes that the Railway Act should be changed so that clearing the areas of unobstructed visibility to ensure their safety could also be done as smoothly as possible in level crossings, in which there are existing buildings or vegetation in the areas of unobstructed visibility.

In addition to the new recommendations, the Safety Investigation Authority repeats a previous recommendation:

1. The Ministry of Transport and Communications should draw up regulations that help to implement a safety management system in the bus transport sector as a whole.

In addition, the Safety Investigation Authority reopens a safety recommendation issued earlier to the predecessor of the Finnish Transport Infrastructure Agency:

1. It is recommended that the Finnish Transport Safety Agency should enable the introduction of low-cost warning devices and ensure that the Finnish Transport Infrastructure Agency will continue the investigation into the suitability for use of low-cost warning devices and start to introduce them in practice.