

## **6th edition of International Level Crossing Awareness Day ILCAD launched on 3 June 2014 in Lisbon at invitation of REFER**

(Lisbon / Paris, 4 June 2014) On 3 June 2014 the Portuguese Railway Manager REFER, UIC and key partners celebrated the 6th International Level Crossing Awareness Day (ILCAD) focusing on educational measures and the promotion of safe behaviour at and around level crossings. This edition once again brought together over 43 countries and concentrated its message on professional drivers. Almost 100 persons participated in the international press conference and round table discussion emphasising the importance of road safety at level crossings.

ILCAD events were introduced in Lisbon jointly by Rui Loureiro, Chairman of REFER, Jerzy Wisniewski, Director of the UIC Fundamental Values Department and Alan Davies, RSSB, UK, Chairman of the European Level Crossing Forum (ELCF).

Rui Loureiro, Chairman of REFER stressed: *“Since 2009, the challenge set out by the UIC to dedicate a day to the issue of safety at level crossings has been welcomed by REFER with great enthusiasm. The marking of this date has been regarded by us as an opportunity to draw more attention to this subject, broaden the debate, involve other partners and, above all, reiterate the need to comply with safety rules. This involvement has also provided a greater sharing of experience, knowledge, technical solutions, best practices and means of communication among our international partners.*

*In the last 14 years, a great amount has been done by REFER to reinforce safety at railway crossings, with very positive results, as attested by the reduction of the number of accidents by 83%. This is a matter we take very seriously and for which we express our commitment to continue to allocate resources, with the ultimate goal of eliminating accidents at level crossings.*

*However, for all this investment to have practical results, it is essential that members of the public are made aware that they also have a role to play in avoiding accidents. Therefore we will continue to raise awareness through alerts reinforced by the promotion of educational and communication campaigns. We have an aim which we are determined to achieve and we are counting on everyone helping us reach this goal.”*

Jean-Pierre Loubinoux, UIC Director General, underlined in a video message: *“Since 2009 the International Level Crossing Awareness Day (ILCAD) campaign has been spearheaded by the International Union of Railways (UIC) with the support of the railway community around the world. A growing number of road sector organisations, the European Commission and the United Nations - Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) are also involved in raising awareness of the risks at level crossings in order to change road user and pedestrian behaviour to “act safely at level crossings”.*

Jerzy Wisniewski, Director of the UIC Fundamental Values Department added: *“The 5th edition of ILCAD held on 7 May 2013 focused on young people and distraction from mobile phones and iPods – visit: [http://www.unece.org/trans/roadsafe/2nd\\_grs\\_week/ilcad.html](http://www.unece.org/trans/roadsafe/2nd_grs_week/ilcad.html)”*

*ILCAD 2014 is taking place again in many countries with bigger or smaller campaigns. The public targeted is professional drivers (school buses, coaches, taxis, minivans, tractors, trucks, heavy haul trucks, emergency vehicles...).”*

Key speakers from various countries (Belgium, Estonia, France, Italy, Poland, Switzerland and the UK) then had the opportunity to debate the three Es: Engineering, Enforcement and Education aiming at improving safety at level crossings.

Alan Davies, RSSB, Community Safety Manager at RSSB (UK) Chairman of the European Level Crossing Forum (ELCF) chaired and moderated the international session.

Jacques Marmy, Head of Technical Affairs at the International Road Transport Union (IRU) gave an overview on IRU activities and presented a common project with UIC on a guidance to give recommendations to drivers of commercial vehicles when approaching and traversing level crossings (see also UIC press release 21/2014).

António Viana (REFER) presented REFER's level crossing programme and strategy, results and targets. He presented REFER results and objectives: In 1999 Portugal gathered 2494 LCs, 154 accidents and a high density of LCs/km of lines (0.89) compared to the average in the EU. In 1999 by Law Decret- 568/99 it was decided to launch an LC safety programme foreseeing to upgrade, to close LCs, and not to open any new LC. They also decided to reduce the density of LCs/km of lines to 0.5 LC/km by 2006 (target achieved and anticipated in 2005: 0.48).

In 2005 REFER put in place a safety management system based on a risk model that targeted a reduction by 50% of the number of LC collisions by 2009 to count no more than 52 accidents, they actually counted 49 accidents in 2009). In 2006 REFER aimed to reduce the number of accidents by 60% in 2015 (representing less than 29 accidents). The target was achieved earlier with 27 accidents in 2013. In 2013 they counted 870 LCs (2494 in 1999), a density of LCs on 0.34 LC/KM Lines (0.89 in 1999). Over 50% are protected (26% only in 1999). New targets for 2014-2020: reduce the number of accidents by 40% (to achieve fewer than 17 accidents).

Then the round table with Portuguese and other European experts was followed by the signing of a contract between REFER and EFACEC to upgrade 12 passive level crossings into automatic level crossings.

A press conference chaired by Sérgio Monteiro – Portuguese State Secretary for Transport Infrastructure and Communication closed the international conference dedicated to ILCAD 2014. He said: *“Accidents at level crossings is not only a Portuguese but an international issue which is why we welcome ILCAD today in Portugal. A transgression at level crossing is 10 times higher than a transgression anywhere on the roads. Involvement of Portuguese local and regional authorities with the railways in level crossing safety through a common understanding agreement shows decision makers on a national level how we can work together.”*

*Over 1400 LCs have been closed, 687 upgraded from 1999. 345 million euros have been invested in this LC programme to save lives. The figures speak for themselves: 27 accidents at LCs in 2013 in Portugal versus 154 accidents at LCs in 1999. Today's strategic objective of REFER: 13 LCs to be closed by the end of 2014 which represents 6.7 million euros of investment. We also have a project to merge the railway and road infrastructure managers to improve the quality of services, rationalise maintenance operations. I take the opportunity today to stress the fact that this operation will improve the safety at this particular road/rail interface. This decision has been taken and will be put in place in 2014 to rationalise investments without putting safety at risk."*

For further information please visit <http://www.ilcad.org>. ILCAD is also visible on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/ilcad> and Twitter: <https://twitter.com/ilcad>.

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