International Union of Railways (UIC) issues yearly report 2016 on Railway accidents in Europe

Accident numbers stabilise; UIC’s Safety Index ranking improves

The International Union of Railways (UIC) has published its annual report on railway accidents in Europe. UIC’s safety database has been collecting data since 2001 and currently covers 22 UIC members, representing 89% of the rail network within the European Economic Area (EU and EFTA). The database is managed by UIC's Safety Unit. As well as serving as a depository for statistical information on accidents, it also offers extensive insight into the causes, circumstances and consequences of accidents and aligns with the classifications and definitions used in European regulations.

Rail transport is the safest mode of land transport, and is improving continuously in terms of safety. Accidents and numbers of victims have been reduced by a third in the decade 2007-2016 thanks to the efforts of the rail community to improve safety in the sector.

Accident typology in 2016

52% of accidents were caused by trespassing on railway infrastructure, and 24% were caused by accidents at level crossings. 7% of accidents involved people being hit on a platform or falling from a train or platform. Only 13% of the significant accidents recorded in UIC’s safety database were attributed to internal causes relating to technical or organisational failures or human factors within the rail operation system; the remainder were caused by weather and environmental conditions.
More than ever, third parties are responsible for most accidents. People take life-threatening risks due to negligence, distraction, recklessness, carelessness, laziness or a sense of urgency. This is a major issue for the rail network; third parties accounted for 95% of the 900 fatalities recorded in 2016. It is imperative that public authorities play their part in promoting education and raising awareness of risk, and continue their efforts to protect the railways from uncivil behaviour by third parties, just as they have done for the road transport sector for many years.

Collisions between trains and derailments

130 train collisions and derailments were recorded per year, on average, between 2010 and 2014. 89 such events were recorded in 2015. This figure decreased to 70 in 2016, representing 4% of all significant accidents. Two collisions between trains in Belgium and Germany and a derailment in Spain resulted in 12 passenger deaths - more than half of the number of passenger deaths recorded in 2016.
UIC Global Safety Index

UIC’s Global Safety Index (GSI) not only provides statistics on numbers of accidents; each accident is weighted according to cause, type, frequency and victim category. This approach enables deeper insight into general safety levels, considered separately from rare, high-impact events.

![UIC Global Safety Index](image)

Although accident numbers stabilised between 2015 and 2016, the GSI is decreasing steadily, indicating continuous improvement in rail transport safety levels in Europe.

Members of the UIC Safety Database

ADIF (Spain), ADIF-AV (Spain), CFL (Luxembourg), CFR-SA (Romania), DB AG (Germany), Eurotunnel (France and UK), HZ (Croatia), Network Rail (UK), Infrabel (Belgium), IP (Portugal), BANE NOR SF (Norway), MAV (Hungary), ÖBB (Austria), PKP (Poland), ProRail (Netherlands), SNCF Réseau (France), FS RFI (Italy), SBB CFF FFS (Switzerland), SZ (Slovenia), SZDC (Czech Republic), Trafikverket (Sweden), ZSR (Slovakia)

Access to the document

The UIC 2017 report on safety can be downloaded from: [http://safetydb.uic.org](http://safetydb.uic.org)

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