



PRESS RELEASE 7/2020

European project SAFER-LC (Safer level crossing by integrating and optimising road-rail infrastructure management and design): online final conference to present its final results

(Paris, 22 April 2020) The SAFER-LC European project is coming to an end after three years of hard work and held its Final Conference online on 22 April 2020. As meeting face-to-face was not an option due to the COVID-19 crisis, the conference was held online.

More than 180 participants from around 35 countries across the world attended this conference organised by UIC (International Union of Railways) to discuss the findings and main outputs of SAFER-LC.

The European Union's project SAFER-LC coordinated by UIC is addressing the issue of level crossing safety. It started on 1 May 2017 for three years. It aims to improve safety and minimise risk by developing a fully-integrated cross-modal set of innovative solutions and tools for the proactive management and design of level-crossing infrastructure.

SAFER-LC has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 723205.

The conference was opened by the EC project officer, Claudia Ciuca, who thanked the consortium for making this event possible despite this difficult period. She reminded the audience that SAFER-LC was one of the three projects funded in 2016 within the H2020 programme mobility for growth in the topic transport infrastructure innovation to increase safety of transport in Europe. She thanked the consortium for all the work done over the past three years and wished everyone a fruitful day.

Then UIC Director General François Davenne thanked all those who had been involved in this project. *"The 17 members of the consortium brought a range of complementary skills and were able to work together during 36 months in a spirit of collaboration to share their respective competences in their work on this human, societal and technical issue".*

He added: *"The results achieved are particularly interesting and effective for the stakeholders both in rail and road environment. The results take the shape of a toolbox, designed to help decision makers to increase safety at level crossings through practical recommendations. Moreover, it will enable policymakers and stakeholders to select and implement the most appropriate strategies, measures and cost-effective approaches to make Level crossing safer for all road user types at LC".*

He concluded that *"Level crossing safety is a very relevant safety and UIC will continue to exploit the results of the project both in Europe and on a global scale, first through the SAFER-LC toolbox which will be hosted and updated by UIC after the project, and secondly as UIC is very committed along with various institutional partners, and in particular within the framework of the annual "ILCAD International Level Crossing Awareness Day".*

The opening session was concluded by Vojtech Ekser (ERA – European Agency for Railways) who presented the latest data from level crossing accidents in Europe. He reported that each year, almost 300 people die in accidents at level crossings in the EU. He underlined that the distraction has

become even more visible with the explosion of technologies used in daily life. It unveils and emphasises the central role of a human at the intersection of road and rail.

After a quick overview on the project, a hands-on training of the toolbox developed within SAFER-LC was given by Grigore Havarneanu, Senior Research Advisor at UIC. He explained how the toolbox can be used as a decision support tool which regroups in a user-friendly manner several assessment methodologies as well as a wide range of cost-effective safety measures, accompanied by study results. He used a live online training session to illustrate some toolbox content and demonstrate how advanced search can be performed using different criteria relevant for level crossing safety.

The afternoon session started with the presentations of the work achieved by the SAFER-LC partners focusing on level crossing safety in Europe and beyond, the human processes at level crossing, the technical solutions developed and integrated for smarter level crossing, the pilot tests and evaluation, the Cost-Benefit Analysis and the final recommendations.

Beyond the SAFER-LC project, speakers from Japan East Railways and US Department of Transportation provided inspiring presentations on protection of level crossings outside of Europe.

To conclude, Marie-Hélène Bonneau, Head of UIC Security Division and SAFER-LC project coordinator, thanked the partners for the great cooperation during these three years, the external experts who contributed to the work through the various workshops and the attendees of the conference for their active participation, especially through the chat with hundreds of questions and comments. She underlined that the project is over, but the work will continue, especially the toolbox which will be continuously updated by UIC to provide users with a comprehensive decision-making tool for safer level crossing.

Further information can be found on the website at <http://safer-lc.eu/>

CONTACTS:

UIC Communications Department: com@uic.org

SAFER-LC Project, Marie-Hélène Bonneau: bonneau@uic.org

SAFER-LC Toolbox, Grigore Havarneanu: havarneanu@uic.org