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15th edition of International Level Crossing Awareness Day (ILCAD), 15 June 2023

2nd edition of International Trespass Awareness Day (TRESPAD), 14 June 2023

Paris, Warsaw, 12 June 2023

Rail travel remains the safest land-based transport mode, due in large part to the rigorous focus on safe infrastructure and procedures. Quite properly, rail passengers can expect to safely reach their destination. But sadly, there remain a worryingly high number of accidents and fatalities to others at level crossings. There has been much progress but the [2022 Annual Safety Report](#) from the International Union of Railways ([UIC](#)) tells a grim story. The [UIC safety database](#) compiles rail safety statistics from over 30 countries. It reveals that in 2021 more than a quarter (27%) of all significant rail accidents and almost a third (32%) of all accidental fatalities are at level crossings. That is 276 lives lost on level crossings in just one year. External causes (trespassing, and level crossings) were responsible for nearly 80% of accidents. Third parties represented 96% of all fatalities and 86% of serious injuries. Worldwide, we can confidently say the toll will be many times greater.

Railways have a responsibility – in many countries, a legal duty – to assess the risks at each and every level crossing. That helps identify whether the risk controls are appropriate for the location, the number and type of users, the nature of rail traffic etc. But practices differ from one country to the next and there is real opportunity for railways everywhere to learn and apply better practice from [UIC's 2022 best practice guide for level crossing risk assessment](#), developed by members of the [UIC Global Level Crossing Network \(GLCN\)](#).

In addition to investment in better designs, a critical part of reducing the harm is to influence user behaviour. And that is why the UIC's railway family comes together every year to promote International Level Crossing Awareness Day ([ILCAD](#)). With campaigns, education and targeted enforcement, ILCAD helps encourage users to play their part in level crossing safety.

The 15th edition of ILCAD will be launched at an international conference on 15 June 2023, kindly hosted by [PKP](#) and [PKP Group Foundation](#) in Warsaw, Poland. Speakers from around the world will share best practice for improving level crossing safety through risk assessment, engineering, engagement, education and community outreach with a very international audience. [The 2023 ILCAD theme targets "Agricultural and industrial level crossing users" and the slogan is "Tracks are for Trains"](#).

Collisions with long and heavy vehicles, sometimes carrying dangerous goods, can result in considerable damage to the railway infrastructure and rolling stock, casualties on the train (passengers, staff), post-traumatic effects on our drivers, considerable traffic delays and related costs. The use of a level crossing is safe as long as the users respect the road signs and signals. In addition to misuse at crossings, some people take risks by walking, hiking, or riding along tracks, taking shortcuts in stations or on open tracks, or using tunnels or bridges. Walking in dangerous areas can result in serious injury or death by taking selfies on the tracks, making graffiti, entering railroad depots, climbing on cars or coaches.

Main casualties are people who are hit by trains, fall from heights, or are electrocuted by the third rail or overhead cables. Many of these people are simply unaware of the risks. That is why the railways are committed to raising public awareness through ILCAD and TRESPAD. This can also be done by technological measures, fences, and signs. If this is not enough, enforcement measures must be put in place to discourage inappropriate behaviour at level crossings, on and around railway tracks.

The [ILCAD launch](#) on 15th June will follow a day dedicated to [trespass and suicide prevention](#) on 14 June TRESPAD (International Trespass Awareness Day). Speakers from various countries will share knowledge and ways to reduce the largest contributors to railway casualties.

- *“Rail safety is the backbone of keeping our trains and passengers running safely and ensuring safe working conditions for train crews. Level crossing collisions, rail trespassing and suicides are the leading causes of death in the rail industry. That is why we are particularly proud to have spearheaded ILCAD, a public awareness campaign on level crossing safety, launched in 2009 first in Europe and then extended to all five continents. In 2022, UIC launched a second campaign called TRESPAD to address trespassing on railway tracks. Not only our members, but also road safety advocates, academics, and researchers will participate in our official launch conferences in Warsaw and/or conduct safety awareness activities in their own countries during ILCAD. We thank our Chairman, the staff of PKP SA and of the PKP Group Foundation for hosting us and for making these events another success.”* **François Davenne, UIC's Director General.**
- *“ILCAD is an important position in the calendars of many people associated with our industry. Let us remember that the main goal of ILCAD is to raise awareness about safety at road and rail crossings and to exchange valuable experiences from around the world. Nearly 150 people from all over the world taking part in this conference prove a very serious approach to the issue of railway safety. I am glad that this year we can host this event and welcome representatives of partner countries in Warsaw. Our meeting is a great opportunity not only to get acquainted with the latest global solutions in the field of safety at rail-road crossings, but also the opportunity to present solutions used in Poland. It is extremely important that we can share best practices that help improve safety in the railway sector and are aimed at reducing the number of accidents on the tracks”* **Krzysztof Mamiński, Chairman of the International Union of Railways (UIC), President of the management board of PKP S.A.**
- *“Improving safety in rail transport is a challenge, as well as one of the main goals set by the international railway community. The exchange of experiences on this subject has a global dimension which gives the International Level Crossing Awareness Day a special position. Therefore, I invite you to participate in the 15th edition of ILCAD, which this year will take place in Warsaw. I am convinced that together we will develop solutions that will contribute to the improvement of safety in railway transport”* **Katarzyna Kucharek, President of the Board of the PKP Group Foundation and Vice Chair of the UIC Global Level Crossing Network (GLCN)**

Some figures:

- UIC estimates that there are half a million level crossings in the world, with 96,000 in the EU representing 20% of the total number of level crossings in the world. Less than the half of them is passive (no light, no barrier).
- According to the European Union Agency for Railways (ERA) in recent years, a weekly average of six fatalities and an additional six serious injuries happened at EU level crossings. The total number of fatalities, excluding suicides, has fallen steadily in recent years. In 2021, on average six suicides were recorded every day on EU railways, totalling 2,234 in 2021 ([ERA safety overview report 2023](#)). They represented 77% of all fatalities on railways and, together with the unauthorised persons (trespassers) fatalities, constituted 90% of all fatalities occurring within the railway system; trespass fatalities, instead, have seen a steady decrease since 2006.

Note to the editor:

- **International Union of Railways (UIC)** is the worldwide railway organisation and is celebrating its centenary this year. ILCAD is part of the programme of major UIC events to mark this milestone. Visit:
 - <http://www.ilcad.org>
 - [UIC Youtube channel](#)
 - [ILCAD 2023 playlist](#)
 - [TRESPAD 2023 playlist](#)

- **Polskie Koleje Państwowe S.A. (PKP S.A.)** - Polish State Railways JSC is a parent company of PKP Group, which has been operating on a holding company basis since 2022. PKP S.A. is also one of the largest property managers in Poland - of land, buildings, structures and residential premises. Properties of PKP S.A. include both facilities with functions related to rail transport services and properties of a typically commercial nature.

- **PKP Group Foundation**: Our goal is to increase knowledge and awareness of railway safety, to promote new technologies and innovations for railways, and to protect rail assets of historical and artistic value. We also carry out initiatives for marginalized social groups and organize charity collections for those in need.

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