

SUMMARY
Performance Audit Report
“Management of Safety Risks at Level Crossings“

Management of safety risks at level crossings would be more efficient if the normative framework were more precisely defined and harmonized, and the activities of competent entities more coordinated and aimed at eliminating the causes of risk

In the Republic of Serbia, out of a total of 2,114 level crossings, 78% are not equipped with a warning and/or protection system that is activated in the event when it is not safe to use the level crossing. In the period from 2017 to 2019, 155 accidents occurred at level crossings in which 24 people lost their lives. The common interest of all entities in charge of railway crossing management is defined in the direction of reducing the number of railway crossings or equipping them with modern signaling devices with half-gates and traffic lights, in order to improve traffic safety and reduce the number of accidents.

Fig. 1 – Level crossing Rabrovac Fig. 2 – Level crossing at Budjanovac road



Due to insufficient coordination between the competent state bodies, strategic framework has not been fully established, and the normative framework has not been precisely defined and incorporated. The railway infrastructure operator company has not based the selection of level crossings, planned to be fitted with modern safety features, on a previously performed risk assessment, which would include all existing level crossings. The state roads operator company and the City of Novi Sad have not sufficiently planned activities within their competence that would enable more efficient maintenance and management of road infrastructure in relation to level crossings. The railway infrastructure operator company, the state roads operator company and the City of Novi Sad have not undertaken all activities within their competence, which may create a risk that traffic safety at level crossings is not at the appropriate level:

- in more than a half of level crossings with modern road pavement, there are no traffic lights installed, while the „Stop“ sign is installed in a non-uniform manner and without clear criteria,
- 77% of level crossings are located at a distance less than 2,000 meters, even though the Law on Railways prescribes that the distance between two level crossings may not be less than 2,000 meters except in specific cases laid down by the minister in charge of transportation affairs,
- in 2019, the safety level was improved at nine level crossings, even though the Operational program had envisaged the improvement of safety level at 60 level crossings, using the funds from loans and own sources,
- inspection control in 2019 identified that 45% observed level crossings at state roads had no appropriate traffic signaling devices.

Supervision of the implementation of the law in relation to level crossings has not ensured the full implementation of all provisions, and adequate coordination between the competent entities has not been achieved. Around 20% of road operator companies / LSGs (which covers 285 level crossings) failed to conclude contracts for maintenance of level crossings with the railway infrastructure operator company.

Recommendations

State Audit Institution has issued the following recommendations:

To the Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure, to:

- undertake activities in order to specify and harmonize the normative framework governing the area of level crossings, so that there is no possibility that the railway operator company and road infrastructure operator company interpret certain provisions differently and fail to act on them.

To the Serbian Railways Infrastructure, JSC, to:

- submit a request for removing the existing level crossings that are not in the category of recognized specific crossings among which the distance may be less than 2,000 meters, with the prior opinion of the road infrastructure operator company, in order to restrict the level crossings to a legally prescribed distance (priority 3).

To the PE Putevi Srbije, to:

- install the prescribed traffic signaling devices at all level crossings located at the intersection with state roads and eliminate the deficiencies identified in the inspection procedure.

To the City of Novi Sad, to:

- pass a Decision appointing a company in charge of operating municipal roads, streets and uncategorized roads on its territory.