

Office of Rail Transport

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IX Rail Safety Forum 2022

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Several dozen companies from rail industry, the Office of Rail Transport and railway journalists participated in IX Railway Safety Forum in Warsaw. The Forum is an annual conference on rail safety in Poland and is organised by Tor-Audytór and the Office of Rail Transport Office.

The safety of the railway system is a supreme value and everything must be done to constantly increase it. The Forum is a place, where as representatives of the industry we can exchange our views and experiences with experts and practitioners - said Ignacy Góra, President of the Office of Rail Transport, opening IX Rail Safety Forum. He also emphasised the role of changes in law, which make rail transport even safer, and thanked Andrzej Adamczyk, Minister of Infrastructure, and Andrzej Bittel, Secretary of State in the Ministry of Infrastructure, for their involvement in the legislative processes of such projects as the Examination and Monitoring Centre for Train Drivers, ETCS Limited Supervision and introduction of the new systems to monitor level crossings.

The Forum started with a debate on the activities and plans of the Office of Rail Transport in Poland and together with the European Union Agency for Railways. Ignacy Góra answered questions of Jakub Madrjas from rynek-kolejowy.pl and Piotr Duda from kolejnaprawo.pl.

Ignacy Góra commented on the recent failures of several Local Control Centres in Poland. He also spoke about SPAD incidents (when a train passes a stop signal when not allowed to do so, called a 'signal passed at danger', i.e. SPAD) and ways of preventing them. In addition to the ETCS system, proper training for train drivers is also important. Candidates for train drivers will be examined by the Office of Rail Transport, starting from next year. Ignacy Góra assured that the Examination and Monitoring Centre for Train Drivers has already three simulators and work is in progress to calibrate the equipment. He also summed up the European Year of Rail. Thanks to the Office of Rail Transport project, young people can learn that railways are not only the most environmentally friendly mode of transport, but also a great and promising place to work.

RAIL SAFETY ASSESSMENT

Kamil Wilde, Vice-President of the Office of Rail Transport discussed the state of rail safety in 2021 in Poland. According to the first estimates, the accident rate in 2021 was 2.22, which is a slight increase compared to the results from the previous two years. There were 713 accidents on the railway network and railway sidings. Invariably, about 75% of all accidents on the railway network were incidents involving a third party. There were 221 accidents at level crossings and 199 incidents in which trains injured people who were trespassing railway area. Still the most dangerous are level crossings of D category, which have only St. Andrew's cross or St. Andrew's cross and a stop sign. The Office of Rail Transport is involved in introducing innovative monitoring systems at level crossings of this category.

The Office of Rail Transport representatives also discussed current issues related to the implementation of the 4th Railway Package, the Examination and Monitoring Centre for Train Drivers, which will be operational by the end of this year, and SMS audits and inspections.