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Správa železnic Continuously Spends Increasing Amounts on Better Safety at Level Crossings

Accidents at level crossings are among the most serious railway incidents. There are about 160 collisions a year, in which dozens of people die. One way to prevent collisions between road and rail vehicles, often with tragic consequences, is to increase level crossing protection.

"The approval of additional funds for our organisation will, among other things, allow us to accelerate the preparation of investment actions that aim to increase the protection of many dozens of level crossings. We will invest in total 1.36 billion crowns in mentioned area this year. We intend to continue the trend of increasing money for safety at level crossings, we are already counting on the amount of 1.5 billion crowns for next year," said Jiří Svoboda, Director General of Správa železnic.

There are 7,789 crossings of railway lines and road communications with various levels of protection on the network of Správa železnic. The infrastructure manager is gradually modernising them and thus increasing the safety of road and railway traffic. Priority is given to increasing the degree of protection at level crossings that are assessed as potentially risky. This includes the addition of warning lights, the installation of barrier crossbars and the new technology of composite barrier crossbars with LED diodes as well.

Správa železnic is accelerating the speed of level crossing protection increase, which is proven by the following data: The volume of investments in level crossings (repairs and maintenance excluding) reached 1.1 billion crowns last year, thanks to which 130 crossings were reconstructed. Already 142 level crossings will be modernised for 1.36 billion crowns this year. More than 170 actions at crossings are being prepared for next year, with an estimated cost of over 1.5 billion crowns. Replacement of the barriers crossbars at level crossings on second-class roads significantly accelerates at the same time. Out of the total number of 565 crossings, 267 crossings are already equipped with the light warning equipment with barrier crossbars.

How will increasing safety at level crossings look like in exact numbers this year?

- In 52 cases, the barrier crossbars will be replenished where the light warning equipment was without barrier crossbars.
- In 70 cases, the light warning equipment will be set up instead of warning crosses.
- In 49 cases, the barrier crossbars with LED diodes will be installed.
- In 14 cases, the intelligent level crossing cameras will be added to record offenses.

The installation of modern level crossing camera systems is one of the preventive measures. After a pilot project in Úvaly u Prahy, Správa železnic launched the operation of intelligent level

crossing cameras in Uhersko in mid-May this year. Records from this equipment will assist the Police of the Czech Republic in administrative proceedings. In the extreme case, an undisciplined driver may lose his driving license.

Improvement in places of tragic collisions

When planning investments in railway level crossings, Správa železnic based inter alia on statistics of collisions between road and rail vehicles. For next year, it is preparing to start the modernisation of the level crossing of the third-class road with the Městec Králové – Chlumec nad Cidlinou railway line in Běrunice near Městec Králové. There were a total of 6 accidents with a consequence of 2 deaths and 3 injuries in the past. Today the crossing is equipped with warning crosses, which have been equipped with reflective highlighting, in addition, horizontal traffic sign has been added. Thanks to the investment of Správa železnic, the warning lights protection equipment with barriers crossbars will be built there.

A significant change is awaited at the level crossing on the third-class road at the Studénka station, where a truck accident with a Pendolino claimed 3 deaths, 5 serious injuries and 11 minor injuries. Barriers crossbars with modified tilting and LED highlighting of logs are installed here at present. Construction of a road underpass should begin here in 2022, which will replace this level crossing.

Replacements of level crossings with grade separation structure

For the period from 2021 to 2027, it is also planned to replace level crossings on transit railway corridors; 13 actions at level crossings are being prepared, with an estimated cost of more than CZK 3.6 billion.

As an example, we present replacement of the existing level crossing in Holická Street in Olomouc on the Olomouc – Přerov railway line with a new overpass, which will be located north of the current level crossing. The costs are estimated at CZK 236 million, the expected realisation date is from December next year to December 2023.

Prevention is an important tool

Prevention plays an important role in safety on places with crossings of the road with the railway. The topic of correct behaviour at level crossings appeared in both parts of the preventive-safety film of Správa železnic *You can't do that!* *"During last year's holidays, we also looked at crossings in some safety videos that were inspired by real events. We always incorporated shots of them into featured scenes, which showed risky behaviour in the railway environment. We published educational videos on our social networks with instructions on how to proceed correctly when driving across the crossing this spring. We will deal with this steadily present topic in other safety videos, which we prepare for this year's holidays as well,"* reminded Jiří Svoboda, Director General of Správa železnic.

Examples of improvements at specific level crossings:

Completion of warning lights with barrier crossbars

P687 Light LCPS => LCPS with barrier crossbars - line Domažlice – Planá u M. Lázní, first-class road
P2885 Light LCPS => LCPS with barrier crossbars - line Frýdlant v Č. – Jindřichovice p. S., first-class road
P1348 Light LCPS => LCPS with barrier crossbars - line Březnice – Strakonice, first-class road
P3148 Light LCPS => LCPS with barrier crossbars - line Hradec Králové – Turnov, first-class road
P5440 Light LCPS => LCPS with barrier crossbars - line Jaroměř – Trutnov hl. n., second-class road
P7140 Light LCPS => LCPS with barrier crossbars - line Zaječí – Hodonín, second-class road
P558 Light LCPS => LCPS with barrier crossbars - line Zdice – Protivín, third-class road
P5535 Light LCPS => LCPS with barrier crossbars - line Liberec – Tanvald, third-class road

(Note: LCPS – Level Crossing Protection System)

Completion of level crossings with crosses of warning lights and barriers crossbars

P1800 Warning crosses => LCPS with barrier crossbars - line Rakovník – Bečov nad Teplou, second-class road
P5909 Warning crosses => LCPS with barrier crossbars - line Kolín – Ledebčko přezjezd P5909, third-class road
P1801 Warning crosses => LCPS with barrier crossbars - line Rakovník – Bečov nad Teplou, third-class road
P5381 Warning crosses => LCPS with barrier crossbars - line Hradec Králové – Jičín, third-class road
P5399 Warning crosses => LCPS with barrier crossbars - line Hradec Králové – Turnov, third-class road

P4867 Warning crosses => LCPS with barrier crossbars - line Choceň – Týniště nad Orlicí, third-class road
P5735 Warning crosses => LCPS with barrier crossbars - line Vrané n. Vltavou – Dobříš, local roads
P6931 Warning crosses => LCPS with barrier crossbars - line Svitavy – Žďárec u Skutče, local roads

Examples of crossings where there will be barrier crossbars logs with LED diodes (they are mainly the level crossings with first-, second- and third- class roads):

3 level crossings (P1348, P1360, P1367) on the railway line Blatná – Strakonice with the road I/20
4 level crossings in Prague – e.g. at the crossing of Prague's Bubenská Street with the line to Kladno
Level crossing P6382 line Horní Cerekev – Tábor, first-class road
Level crossing P6865 line Svitavy – Žďárec u Skutče, first-class road
Level crossing P8053 line Hranice n. M. – Vsetín, first-class road
Level crossing P4246 line Šternberk – Hanušovice, first-class road