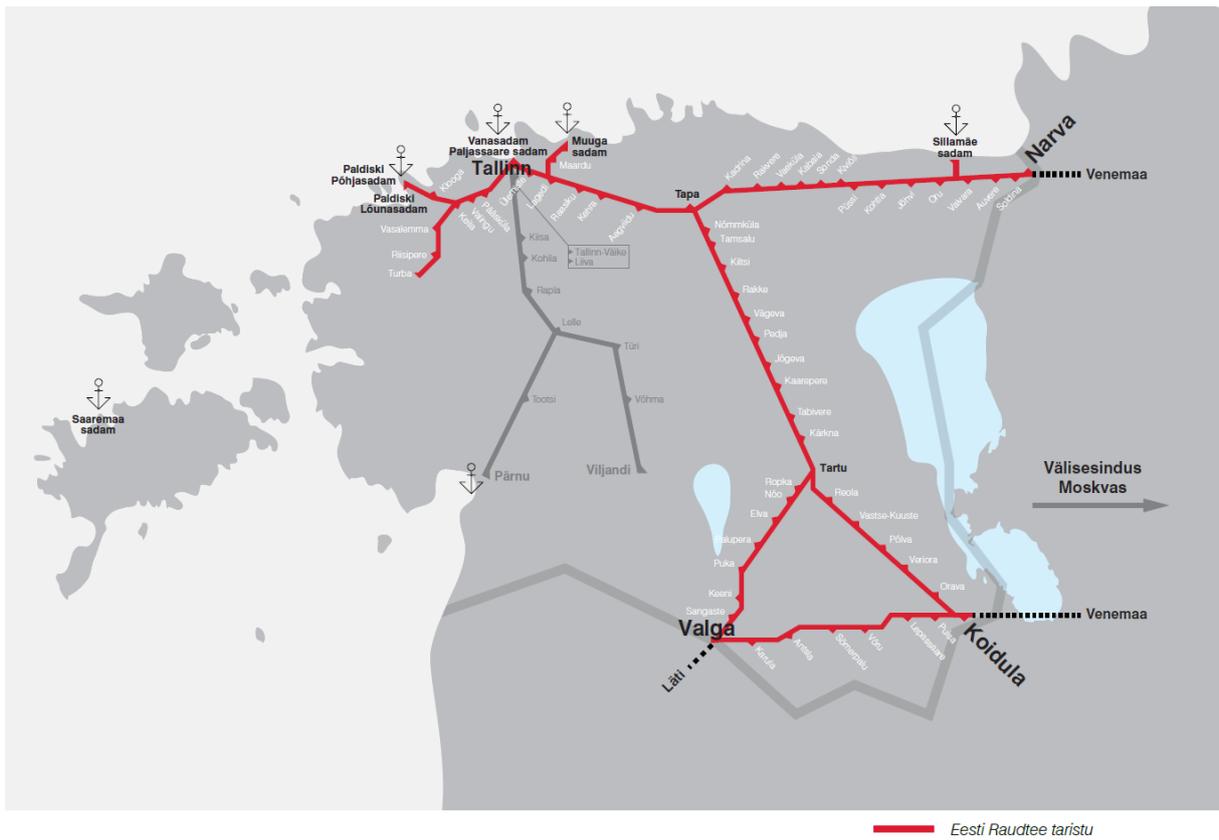




**ESTONIAN SAFETY
INVESTIGATION
BUREAU**

Report of the railway accidents
investigated in 2020

Tallinn 2021



Estonian Railways Ltd and Edelaraudtee Infrastructure Ltd infrastructure

(Source: Estonian Railways Ltd)



Preface to the report

Safety investigations of railway traffic accidents and incidents began in Estonia on 31 March 2004 when the Railway Safety Directive 2004/49/EC came into force. The Railways Act approved by Estonian Riigikogu (Parliament) included the nationally applied provisions of the Directive and from that day the safety investigation unit of railway accidents was formed as part of the Crisis Regulation Department of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications. On 1 January 2012, a multimodal Safety Investigation Bureau (ESIB) that investigates maritime, aviation and railway accidents and incidents was established. In 2020 the European Parliament and Council Directive (EC) 2016/798 on railway safety was applied to the Estonian judicial area. The annual report has been prepared taking into account changes in legislation under that Directive.

Occurrences influencing railway safety are classified as an accident, serious accident and incident. The existing classification is pursuant to the Railway Safety Directive. In 2020 no serious accidents or incidents that required a safety investigation took place in Estonia. Compared to the previous year, the number of incidents affecting railway safety decreased.

In Estonia safety investigations take place independently from all other investigations linked to the same occurrence and are pursuant to the national requirements and those set out by the Safety Directive.

The consequences of the Covid-19 coronavirus, which became widespread during the year and took on the scale of a pandemic, affected rail traffic, freight and passenger volumes. The number of people involved in railway traffic decreased, which in turn increased railway safety. The pandemic influenced the cooperation and its organisation between different administrative structures.



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1. Introduction to the Investigation Body

1.1 Legal basis

Railway accident and incident safety investigations began in Estonia on 31 March 2004 when, by amendments to the Railways Act, the European Parliament and Council Directive 2004/49/EC on Railway Safety was applied to the Estonian judicial area. The safety investigations would from then on be conducted by the railway investigation unit that was created at the Crisis Regulation Department of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications.

On 15 October 2020 the Riigikogu of the Republic of Estonia approved the new version of the Railways Act that provides the requirements of the European Parliament and Council Directive (EC) 2016/798 of 11 May 2016 regarding railway safety. With the application of Directive 2016/798 to the Estonian judicial area, the provisions in force until now were clarified in accordance with the renewed meaning of the Directive.

On 1 January 2012, the units for investigation of the three modes of transport were separated from the Crisis Regulation Department and a unified independent Estonian Safety Investigation Bureau (ESIB) was established. The legal basis of the Safety Investigation Bureau is provided by the Aviation Act, Maritime Safety Act and Railways Act.

Of the three sector-specific acts, Part 2 of the Railways Act, which regulates the activities of the Safety Investigation Bureau and was approved by the Parliament and entered into force on 31 October 2020, is dedicated entirely to safety investigations and consists of nine sections.

Section 47 of the Act "Safety Investigation Bureau" establishes that the safety investigations of accidents, serious accidents and incidents are conducted by the ESIB, a structural unit of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications. The same subsection establishes the ESIB's independence in conducting safety investigations and making any related decisions and that the ESIB is guided only by legal acts and other legislation and any international treaties that are binding in Estonia. There is no supervisory control of the ESIB's investigative activities. To clarify circumstances that require specialist knowledge the ESIB has the right to involve experts and form committees. The experts and the committee take part in the investigation under the supervision of the official conducting it. Authorities involved in the safety investigation are obligated to provide necessary assistance to the ESIB within their competence. The official conducting the safety investigation must provide his certificate of employment while performing his work duties.



Corresponding laws and regulations have been established for conducting safety investigations in the areas of transport concentrated in the Safety Investigation Bureau on a sector-by-sector basis. Subsection 48 (2) of the Aviation Act provides additional conditions that give the Safety Investigation Bureau greater independence than the other structural units of the Ministry have. Pursuant to legislation the Director of the ESIB is appointed and relieved of its duties by the Government of the Republic on the recommendation of the relevant minister. The Director of ESIB appoints the employees of the ESIB and relieves them of their duties as well as enters into and terminates the employment contracts with them. In addition, the budget of the Safety Investigation Bureau is independent and was approved by the Parliament – Riigikogu of the Republic of Estonia which in the 2020 State Budget Act was provided with item code 20SE070004.

The statutes of the Safety Investigation Bureau have been established in order to specify the rights and obligations established by law and it regulates the ESIB's relationships, connections, tasks and obligations. The Statutes specifies the ESIB's accountability to the Secretary General and the Minister regarding organisation of work and other matters. Legislation of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications, the Secretary General's Directives, internal procedure rules, operations procedures, current statutes, and other legislation are binding in the organisation of the Safety Investigation Bureau's work. The Ministry ensures the functioning of the ESIB in organisational and general matters. The Minister approves the list of employees for the Safety Investigation Bureau. On the proposal of the Director of the Safety Investigation Bureau, the duties of the employees are determined in the job descriptions approved by the Secretary General of the Ministry. Each ESIB employee is responsible for the legality, accuracy, and timely completion of their duties. The Safety Investigation Bureau Statutes form a part of the legal framework affecting the work of railway safety investigations and it has been approved by a Minister of Economic Affairs and Communications Directive.

The Safety Investigation Bureau is one of the structural units of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications. As it performs specific duties it has been granted with special rights and independence. The ESIB is functionally independent of the safety authority and the railway regulating authorities. The ESIB's organisation, legal structure and decision-making process are independent of all parties whose interests might conflict with the duties assigned to it, including railway infrastructure managers, railway undertakings, the charging body, the capacity allocation body and the conformity assessment body. While investigating, the official responsible for railway accident safety investigations performs the tasks of the investigator-in-charge. Nationally the ESIB's independence is pursuant to Article 22 of the Directive on Railway Safety 2016/798.

In Part 2 of the Railways Act "Safety investigation", accident, serious accident and incident are listed in Section 48 as "Cases affecting railway safety". At the same time,



it defines an incident and a serious accident, and a list of accidents is provided. Section 49 of the Act provides the notification of an occurrence affecting railway safety, Section 50 the launch of a safety investigation and Section 51 proceedings of a safety investigation.

Railway infrastructure managers or other railway infrastructure possessors and railway undertakings, as well as in the case of having been notified in the process of surveillance activities, the Consumer Protection and Technical Regulatory Authority, immediately must notify the Safety Investigation Bureau of an accident, serious accident or incident via means of public communication pursuant to Section 49 (1) of the Railways Act. The same Subsection also specifies submission of a written notification with clarified and verified facts within three working days. Additional information about an accident or serious accident is also provided verbally, immediately and in writing within three working days of receiving the information (Section 49 (2)). A written notification is always made for all accidents and serious accidents. Additional information for incidents is submitted as a report within three working days if the ESIB requests it (Section 49 (3)). Subsection 7 of the same Section provides the provision delegating authority for notifying about the occurrences affecting railway safety to enact the Minister's Directive. Pursuant to the provision delegating authority of the Minister of Economic Affairs and Infrastructure Directive No. 83 "Safety Management System, Safety Indicators, Verification of Compliance with Railway Infrastructure, Traffic Management and Safety Requirements, Their Reporting, Forms and Deadlines and Notification of Incidents Affecting Railway Safety" has entered into force on 12.12.2020. Annex 11 of the Directive provides the format for written notification of a serious accident or an accident. Annex 12 of the Directive provides the format for reporting an incident.

Section 50 of the Railways Act provides the obligation of the Safety Investigation Bureau to immediately initiate a safety investigation in the case of a serious accident. In order to initiate a safety investigation in other cases, the conditions for making a discretionary decision have been legalized. Subsection 5 of the same section allows a decision to be made within 2 months of the occurrence of an accident and incident to initiate a safety investigation. Section 51 (1) establishes the obligation by railway infrastructure managers and third persons to provide any relevant information they hold when requested by the ESIB. Subsection 6 of the same Section provides the provision delegating authority to establish the format for safety investigations by the Minister's Directive. Section 52 of the Act lists the procedural rights of the Safety Investigation Bureau. In the event of non-cooperation, the official conducting the safety investigation may issue a precept to the obligated person to ensure compliance with the obligations related to the safety investigation activities. This right has been provided by Section 52 (2). In the event of non-compliance with the precept the official conducting the safety investigation has right to impose a penalty charge pursuant to Subsection 4 of the same Section.



Pursuant to the Railways Act Section 53 the Safety Investigation Bureau may issue a safety alert during the safety investigation. The alert may be issued when circumstances and facts come to light during the investigation of the occurrence that have significance to more than one railway infrastructure manager or railway undertaking or one or more European Union member state. When issuing the alert, the ESIB assesses the determined circumstances affecting safety of the relevant rolling stock, railway infrastructure installations, railway traffic regulation, maintenance arrangements, handling processes and technical and legal guidelines. The safety alert includes only facts and descriptions but no recommendations or assessments. The safety alert is issued to those concerned and the European Union Agency for Railways.

Cooperation with the safety investigation and safety authorities of other countries is provided in Section 54 of the Railways Act. Cooperation is provided for the organisation of safety investigations into a case affecting railway safety at a border facility, for the involvement of the investigative bodies of another Member State and the European Union Agency for Railways, as well as for exchange of information and expertise, exchange of experience and participation in the expert assessment programme.

The Safety Investigation Bureau compiles different reports in the course of its work, the requirements for these are provided by Section 55 of the Railways Act "Reports Relating to a Safety Investigation". Pursuant to Subsection 1 of this Section the ESIB must complete a written report of a safety investigation in the shortest possible time and publish it immediately but no later than 12 months after the occurrence. The safety investigation report does not assess anyone's guilt of responsibility (Section 55 (2)). The safety investigation report is forwarded to all parties involved such as the railway infrastructure managers, railway undertakings, the safety investigation bodies of other European Union member states, victims and their families, owners and manufacturers of damaged property, Rescue Board, representatives of the employees and passengers and the European Union Agency for Railways. Subsection 5 provides the obligation of the Consumer Protection and Technical Regulatory Authority, other authorities, businesses or organisations that were subject to the ESIB's recommendations, to submit a report to the ESIB annually by 01 April about the measures taken or planned based on the recommendations. Pursuant to Subsection 6 of the same Section the Safety Investigation Bureau publishes an annual report on the cases investigated in the previous year, the recommendations, and proceedings, on its website by 30 September each year. A copy of the annual report is forwarded to the European Union Agency for Railways.

During the reporting year, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications Directive No 72 "Safety Investigation Procedures" was specified pursuant to the Directive 2016/798 requirements. The safety investigation procedures are common to all three ESIB's modes of transport. Pursuant to the Directive the safety investigation



ascertains the causes of the occurrences. During the safety investigation recommendations are developed and presented in the report with a view of preventing similar occurrences in the future. The Directive determines areas of a safety investigation according to modes of transport and its coordinator. It stipulates the procedures for commencing a safety investigation and notification of those involved. Depending on the complexity and workload associated with the occurrence, formation of a safety investigation committee is provided. Experts and any committees formed will work under the direction and supervision of the official conducting the safety investigation. The latter is also provided by Section 47 (3) of the Railways Act. The Directive establishes the procedures for a safety investigation and the tasks of the investigator-in-charge, issuing a safety alert, the format, signing, confirmation and publication of the safety investigation report, completing the safety investigation, proceedings of the safety recommendations, if necessary, the reopening of the safety investigation and procedures for registration of the cases being investigated. The Directive contains annexes of which Annex 3 lays down the format "Report to the Safety Investigation Bureau on the action taken or planned in response to a recommendation in an accident, serious accident or incident safety investigation report ". The safety investigation report is prepared in accordance with the European Commission Implementing Regulation 2020/572 on the reporting structure to be followed when compiling investigation reports on railway accidents or incidents.

1.2 Role and aim

The Safety Investigation Bureau's role in increasing safety in maritime, aviation and railway traffic is carried out by performing safety investigations of individual cases. The purpose and task of each individual safety investigation is to determine the circumstances and causes of the accidents and incidents investigated. The safety investigation assesses the impact of the causes on traffic safety. Based on the causes of the case under investigation, a sequence is constructed through logical connections to various circumstances affecting traffic safety and from there to the formulation of recommendations. The developed recommendations are case-specific, and their implementation will help to reduce or even prevent cases with similar causes in the future. The role of safety investigations is realised through reports safety investigations of traffic accidents of the three areas of transport. Based on the findings of the investigation the report makes recommendations for improving traffic safety in the respective area of transport. Additionally, it is the task of the Safety

Investigation Bureau to contribute to the formulation of legislation related to maritime, aviation and railway safety. If necessary, the ESIB will make recommendations for additions or amendments to current legislation. The multimodal ESIB participates in



formulation and implementation of projects, policies, strategies, development plans and international projects related to its areas of activity.

The Safety Investigation Bureau Statutes have defined the following obligations:

- 1) Complete all its tasks in a timely manner and to a high standard.
- 2) Ensure the confidentiality of the professional information pursuant to legislation.
- 3) Utilize any assets and resources that it has been allocated purposefully and rationally.
- 4) Forward to other structural units of the Ministry information that is necessary for them to perform their tasks.

The objective of the safety investigation has been provided by Section 1 of the Minister's Directive "Safety Investigation Procedures". The objective of the safety investigations of accidents and incidents is to determine the causes and make recommendations and proposals to prevent such occurrences in the future. The purpose of a safety investigation is not to appoint blame or liability.

The Statutes of the Safety Investigation Bureau specify the following rights to fulfil its role and aim:

- 1) Access to documents and information necessary for fulfilling the tasks assigned to the Safety Investigation Bureau from ministers, secretaries general and deputy secretaries general, other departments, government authorities within the jurisdiction of the Ministry and legal persons governed by private law which are subject to the Ministry's founding, membership, stockholder or shareholder rights.
- 2) In accordance with arrangements or agreements, engage employees of other departments in resolving issues within the Safety Investigation Bureau remit.
- 3) Work in cooperation with other government and local authorities and legal persons governed by private law and make recommendations to form committees and working groups within its areas of activity.
- 4) Within limits of its competence, communicate information to other authorities and persons.
- 5) Make proposals for contracts required for fulfilling its tasks.
- 6) Get further training to improve the specialist, occupational or professional level of the Safety Investigation Bureau employees.
- 7) Receive necessary office equipment, resources and literature and technical and information support.

Pursuant to the Statutes, while fulfilling its main objective, The Safety Investigation Bureau



- 1) Works in cooperation with other government departments, local government units, foundations, non-profit associations, business and consumer organisations, businesses, private persons and respective authorities of other countries and international organisations.
- 2) Represents the state in the international organisations related to its areas of activity in agreement with the Ministry.
- 3) Takes part in fulfilling any duties of the Republic of Estonia pursuant to the international agreements relating to the ESIB areas of activity.
- 4) Prepares the draft budget for ESIB and the report on the execution of the previous year's budget.
- 5) Develops and implements its development plan and work schedules.
- 6) Monitors, analyses and assesses the situation in its areas of activity and informs The Aviation Authority, Consumer Protection and Technical Regulatory Authority and Estonian Maritime Administration, the Aviation and Maritime department and the Roads and Railways Department of the Ministry as well as other authorities and businesses of its findings.
- 7) Performs tests and expert analysis on machinery, engines, equipment, their details and assemblies and other devices to assess their compliance with requirements to clarify the circumstances of a case under investigation.
- 8) Makes recommendations and takes decisions within its jurisdiction provided by legislation.
- 9) Ensures the confidentiality of information containing business and technical details and personal data if legislation does not provide that it should be published.
- 10) Implements measures for witness protection.
- 11) Performs the duties assigned by legislation as a chief or authorised processor of the database of cases investigated.
- 12) Preserves the items, equipment, assemblies, and details in its possession that are relevant to ascertaining the causes of the occurrence.
- 13) Organises information days about safety and development activities.
- 14) Possesses, uses, and disposes of public property in its possession in cases provided by and in accordance with legislation.
- 15) Advises individuals in matters relating to the Safety Investigation Bureau's areas of activity.
- 16) Performs other tasks assigned by legislation.

Section 52 (1) of the Railways Act provides that the official conducting the safety investigation has the right to

- 1) Immediate access to the rolling stock, railway infrastructure and traffic control and signalling devices involved in an accident, serious accident, or incident.
- 2) Restrict unauthorised access to the scene of the accident and prohibit handling, removing, or destroying items from the scene of the accident.



- 3) Ensure immediate inventory of all evidence and controlled removal of the wreck, rolling stock, infrastructure equipment or components for investigation or analysis.
- 4) Immediate access to the on-board and other recording equipment and their recordings and to subject them to their control.
- 5) Immediately receive into their disposal autopsy reports of the casualties and the results of the analysis of any samples taken from the deceased.
- 6) Question witnesses and persons who might have important information regarding the safety investigation and demand confirmation or provision of information necessary for the safety investigation.
- 7) Access to all relevant information and documents independently or in cooperation with the authority conducting the preliminary criminal investigation.
- 8) Immediate access to the results of an investigation of a person connected to the case.
- 9) Have access to the relevant information and documents held by the Infrastructure Manager involved in the occurrence, the entity in charge of maintenance and the Consumer Protection and Technical Surveillance Authority.

1.3 Organisation

The Safety Investigation Bureau is one of the many structural units of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications. Unlike other structural units of the Ministry the ESIB is located in a separate building. In order to perform specific tasks, a corresponding special status has been granted to ESIB. The ESIB's special status among the Ministry's departments has been guaranteed by relevant articles of the Aviation Act, Maritime Safety Act and Railways Act. As a structural unit of the Ministry the ESIB utilises other departments' competencies and works in cooperation with them but maintains complete independence in decisions relating to the requirement of cooperation and the extent of utilising of their competencies. Other structural units of the Ministry have the role of providing ancillary services to the ESIB. The main ESIB activities are reflected in its work schedule which forms one part of the Ministry's work schedule.

The Safety Investigation Bureau has its own logo, letterhead, website, and an independent budget that has been approved by the Parliament. All other departments use the Ministry's relevant general attributes. An ESIB official has a certificate of employment. The certificate of employment enables its carrier to exercise the special rights granted to him by legislation while carrying out his official tasks. The certificate of employment can be used as a form of identification and includes a brief list of the objects to which it grants access as well its European Union and national legal



bases. The certificate of employment of a railway accidents investigator is valid until 1 February 2022.

The Safety Investigation Bureau's work is led by a director. There are three officials working under him, an aviation accident investigation expert, a chief specialist in marine accident investigation and a chief specialist in railway accident investigation.

Only the Safety Investigation Bureau has the right to make the decision whether to begin a safety investigation of an accident, serious accident, or an incident. The safety investigation must be conducted within 12 months during which an investigation report must also be completed. The report is signed by all members of the committee or in the absence thereof, the investigator-in-charge who conducted the investigation. The report is signed off by the director of the ESIB. The report is then forwarded to all relevant parties and published on the ESIB website. An interim report is published after 12 months if during this time the safety investigation has not been completed.

1.4 Organisational flow

The Safety Investigation Bureau is a part of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications. The Ministry consists of departments and a structural unit that is named differently and that is called the Safety Investigation Bureau. Depending on the size the departments may be divided into services. The ESIB has a small number of officials and is therefore not divided into smaller structural units. The ESIB fulfils tasks requiring special rights so therefore is different and legally more independent than other departments.

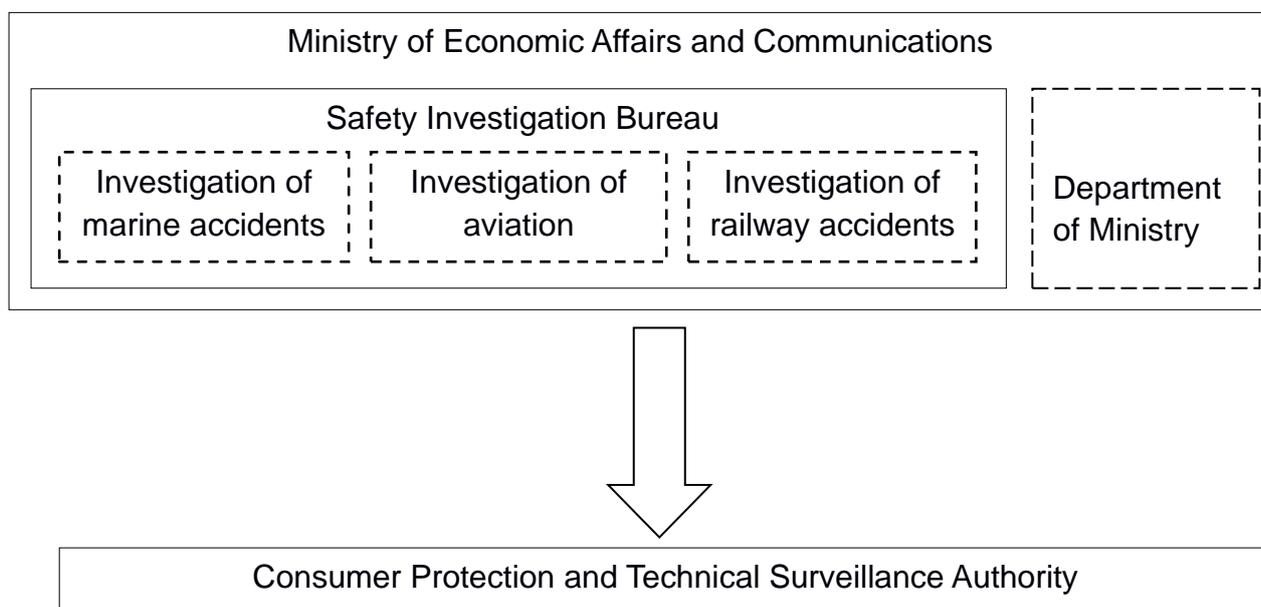




Figure 1 The Safety Investigation Bureau in the organisational structure of the Ministry

The Safety Investigation Bureau is structurally an entity, and its work is managed by the director. Only officials who are permanent staff work at the ESIB although on some special cases other specialists can be employed. Each official is responsible for conducting safety investigation of the specific area of transport assigned to them. They are responsible for the accurate, lawful, and timely completion of the duties of this area.

The title of each ESIB official contains the name of the transport sector within which they are responsible for conducting safety investigations. An official is independent in conducting safety investigations within his area. Officials of the other areas of transport may assist their colleague in their investigation if necessary. All officials can be substituted by a colleague for a limited period during extended absences. Upon their return, the official shall receive all relevant information in order to continue and complete the work. All officials take turns to be involved in the 24-hour telephone service.

Only the Safety Investigation Bureau has been granted the right to conduct safety investigations of railway accidents in Estonia. An ESIB safety investigation is not dependent on any other investigation or procedures of a given case that might be taking place in parallel. The safety investigation is a completely autonomous process. The independence of the safety investigation must be maintained even in the event of possible cooperation with other proceedings of the same case. No other investigation or proceedings conducted by law enforcement, surveillance authorities or other authorities and institutions are related to it. Only the ESIB decides the content and results of a safety investigation.

The Consumer Protection and Technical Regulatory Authority (CPTRA) is an independent department of administration of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications with a separate budget, structure, and management. The CPTRA performs the function of the railway safety authority and a regulator in Estonia.

All railway infrastructure managers and rail operators and other undertakings that manage or own other railway infrastructure or rolling stock are independent manufacturing enterprises acting as legal persons. The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications is a shareholder for three of the infrastructure managers. These are the railway infrastructure manager Estonian Railways Ltd, railway freight transport undertaking AS Operail and the railway passenger transports undertaking AS Eesti Liinirongid (Elron). The Estonian state does not participate in the ownership of the rest of the infrastructure and freight companies. The relationships between the Safety Investigation Bureau and railway undertakings are regulated by legal acts and directives.



2. Investigation processes

2.1 Cases to be investigated

The list of cases that require the Safety Investigation Bureau to conduct a safety investigation is specified in the Railways Act. It includes a list of occurrences affecting railway safety in Estonia which is identical to the classification presented in the European Parliament and Council Directive (EC) 2016/798 from 11 May 2016 about railway safety. The terminology concerning railway safety used in Estonian legislation is in accordance with that used in the Directive.

The Safety Investigation Bureau must immediately begin a safety investigation of severe or serious accidents. The ESIB has a right to begin a safety investigation if the circumstances of an accident or incident or similar circumstances might have caused a serious accident, including at least one death or significant physical harm to five or more people, also technical failure in the subsystem of the Trans-European conventional or high-speed rail system or interoperability constituent. In making the decision the ESIB must consider the severity of the accident or incident and whether it is part of a series of accidents or incidents that affect the system as a whole and its effect on railway safety. When initiating a safety investigation of an accident or incident the ESIB considers applications submitted by a safety investigation body of another European Union member state, the Consumer Protection and Technical Regulatory Authority and infrastructure managers and railway undertakings.

In addition to law and the Ministry's Directive the Safety Investigation Bureau also has an organisational "Safety Investigation Manual". Appendix R3 of the manual is called "Characteristics of a railway accident or incident for making the decision to begin a safety investigation or formulating an opinion". It describes the process of making the decision to begin or not to begin a safety investigation and what will be addressed in the process. The same appendix prescribes that, in addition to the legal bases, the decision-making process should also include a risk-based assessment of the case. While collecting additional information about the occurrence the ESIB assesses the potential risk of the occurrence, the number of fatalities or injuries, fatality of a person who was known to the railway infrastructure manager to be or work at the railway as a result of the railway infrastructure manager's equipment failure, obvious mistake or oversight of the railwayman as a probable cause of the occurrence, circumstances of similar cases, collision of rolling stock with a group of people, depending on the number of injuries and fatalities.



2.2 Institutions involved in investigations

Involvement in safety investigations is regulated by provisions in the Railways Act and specified in the Directive establishing the procedure for safety investigations. The rules and principles are common and compulsory to all parties and it takes place under the direction and supervision of the official conducting the safety investigation who is the investigator-in-charge of the case in hand. Interference in the safety investigation decision-making process in the event of a potential interest is prohibited by law. The purpose of inclusion is first and foremost to obtain the necessary information about the occurrence and the circumstances surrounding it and to achieve the required standard of safety investigation. Infrastructure managers and third parties are obliged to provide the relevant information they hold when requested by the ESIB. The official conducting the safety investigation has the right to question railway employees and other witnesses involved in the occurrence. The official conducting a safety investigation has a legal right to make a precept to the person under obligation to fulfil the obligations related to the safety investigation. In the event of non-compliance, the official conducting the safety investigation has the right to impose a penalty charge of up to 60 000 euros to a legal person and up to 1500 euros to a natural person.

A cooperation agreement between the Safety Investigation Bureau and the Police and Border Guard Board, the Office of the Prosecutor General, the Rescue Board and the Emergency Centre was signed in spring of 2015. The cooperation agreement ensures the coordinated activities of the various authorities when fulfilling the duties assigned to them by legislation. Both parties guarantee that a criminal investigation and the safety investigation do not interfere with each other. The Emergency Centre sends an immediate notification to the ESIB email address of any occurrence they have been informed of which will arrive in the inbox of all the ESIB officials. If possible, the Police and Boarder Guard Board and the Rescue Board ensure safeguarding of the scene. If necessary, they will assist ESIB with the investigations once the rescue operations have finished. All parties allow access to evidence and information, unless forbidden by law. Disclosure of data collected as part of the criminal proceedings is decided by the prosecutor's office. Ensuring access and disclosure of evidence cannot hinder the safety investigation or criminal proceedings. If necessary, the parties consult each other and where possible, exchange information. The safety investigation and criminal proceedings are conducted separately even if they work in cooperation with each other.

During safety investigations, supported by legislation, pragmatic cooperation methods have evolved with various businesses, authorities, institutions and private individuals. The Safety Investigation Bureau has signed cooperation agreements with the safety investigation authorities of neighbouring European Union member states Latvia and Finland.



If an accident involves a railway infrastructure manager established or licenced in another Member State of the European Union and a railway rolling stock that has been involved in an occurrence affecting railway safety that has been registered or maintained in that Member State, the legislation provides an obligation to invite investigative bodies of that country to participate in the safety investigation and they are given access to the relevant information. So far, there has been no requirement to use this provision. Neither has it been necessary to ask for help from safety investigation bodies of other countries or European Railways Agency with specialist knowledge, technical inspection, performing analysis and giving assessments although legislation allows this.

The investigator-in-charge has extensive powers when conducting a safety investigation. He decides on inclusion, interpretation of the information obtained and systematic treatment of facts, knowledge, and circumstances. The results will be reflected in the content of the investigation report. During the investigation, the investigator-in-charge contacts all the parties involved, listens to their viewpoints and opinions and if necessary, asks clarifying questions. Before the end of the investigation the investigator-in-charge provides the parties concerned an extended summary of the results of the safety investigation. In accordance with established practice, the extended summary includes the following elements of the investigation

report: discussion, conclusions, additional observations, actions taken and recommendations for improving railway safety. Since the Directive 2016/798 was adapted to the Estonian judicial area and the establishment of the implementing regulation 2020/572 relevant experience has not been established due to the absence of relevant cases. The summary is always discussed with the relevant authorities, companies, institutions and, where interested, individuals. As a result of the discussion, the investigator-in-charge prepares the safety investigation report for signing and subsequent publication.

Since 2004 when the safety investigations of railway accidents and incidents began, neither the investigator-in-charge nor members of the investigation committee have ever been part of a police criminal investigation, an internal investigation, misdemeanour proceedings of the Consumer Protection and Technical Regulatory Authority or any other proceedings or investigation of the given case conducted by another authority. Neither has any person involved in the investigation of a given case participated in a safety investigation.



2.3 Investigation process and approach of the Investigation Body

The proceedings of all occurrences start with the Safety Investigation Bureau receiving the initial, verbal notification of accidents, serious accidents and incidents that have happened on Estonian railways, from the railway undertaking. The immediate initial notification arrives from the Emergency Centre and is usually duplicated by the railway infrastructure manager if they have anything to add aside from the fact that it happened. The Emergency Centre notifies the ESIB 24 hours a day by email of all occurrences in air, water, and rail that it has become aware of. In the railway sector, railway infrastructure managers and possessors and railway undertakings and if they have become aware during regulatory activities, the Consumer Protection and Technical Regulatory Agency, notify the Safety Investigation Bureau by means of public communication immediately. The publicly available means of communication is the phone that the investigator of railway accidents has access to 24 hours a day. In the case of an accident or a serious accident the infrastructure manager that made the initial notification also makes a written notification to the ESIB in the agreed format within three working days. The written notice contains the location of the occurrence, specified and verified factual details about the rolling stock, casualties, victims and measures taken. In addition, it contains a short summary of the occurrence and the causes that have been ascertained by the time the notice being drawn up. If the ESIB requests it, a written report with additional information about an incident will also be made within three working days in an agreed format. The incident report is analogous in content to the accident report. All written documents received by the ESIB are systematically stored within a digital document management system Delta as part of the ancillary services.

The railway infrastructure manager is immediately informed of any railway accidents and incidents through its internal information channels. They forward the notification by phone to the official dealing with the safety investigations of railway accidents. Over time, such pragmatic and rational agreement has been established with the infrastructure managers. This will allow the safety investigator to obtain the necessary information as soon as possible and will not unnecessarily burden the 24-hour helpline service. The notification received by the helpline must be forwarded to the safety investigator of railway accidents anyway. Information is relayed to the helpline if the caller does not know the phone number of the official conducting the safety investigation. This has happened a couple of times in ten years. The official dealing with safety investigations of railway accidents acknowledges the initial notification, assesses the circumstances, asks additional questions, and if necessary, requests clarification of any circumstances but in summary, takes note of the initial notification. Based on the Railways Act and the Safety Investigation Manual, the official dealing with the safety investigation makes an initial assessment of the



occurrence and makes a proposal to the Director of the ESIB either to begin a safety investigation or not. The official will only propose deferring the decision of beginning an investigation only if gathering necessary additional information requires more time. A requirement to visit the scene is based on the verbal notification. In case of a serious accident the official notifies the Director of the Safety Investigation Bureau immediately by telephone, in other cases an email is sufficient. The Director of the ESIB maintains records of notifications received. If necessary, the official conducting the safety investigation and the ESIB Director keep in regular contact to clarify the initial circumstances. The Director's position on whether to begin a safety investigation is final and binding to the official dealing with the railway accident investigations.

The decision whether to begin an investigation of an accident, serious accident or incident is made within two months after receiving notification of the occurrence. The decision whether to begin an investigation is made pursuant to Section 50 of the Railways Act and the Railway Safety Directive 2016/798. To notify the European Union Agency for Railways, after collecting the relevant information the investigator of railway accidents enters the information in the correct format to the database, at the latest one week after the decision to begin a safety investigation has been made. The obligation to notify the ERA has been specified in Section 50 (7) of the Railways Act. Up till now the deadline for notifying the European Union Agency for Railways has never been missed.

The Safety Investigation Bureau applies a unified multi-modal approach to conducting safety investigations of accidents and incidents of the different modes of transport. This has been confirmed by The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications Directive No 72 "Safety Investigation Procedures" and the ESIB Director has approved the "Safety Investigation Manual" of work procedures. The manual consists of a common main part and annexes which can be common to all three areas of transport or can be area-specific. In 2020 the manual contained one common annex and 5 annexes specific to railways.

The whole safety investigation is usually conducted by the official responsible for investigating railway accidents who performs the duties of investigator-in-charge. The investigator-in-charge informs all relevant parties of the launch of a safety investigation and drafts an investigation plan. He may make changes and clarifications to the draft during the safety investigation but is fully responsible for conducting of the entire safety investigation as well as its quality and compliance. The investigator-in-charge coordinates the gathering, storage and analysis of data and evidence as well as the contracting of experts and communications with relevant individuals or organisations. The investigator-in-charge organises and performs all necessary activities.



Depending on the specifics of the case, the investigator-in-charge selects the working methods and style that are suitable for him and most appropriate for achieving the objective. When communicating with natural and legal persons he chooses the means of communication and methods that seem the most expedient. The objective is to ascertain the causes and circumstances of the occurrence in cooperation with the victims, state and local government authorities, businesses, and organisations. The more important verbally obtained information is recorded and written information is stored within the document management system Delta. Railway undertakings retain all evidence and details of items, technical assemblies, documents, recordings of the data recording equipment and other information which might be important in determining the causes of the occurrence. If requested by the investigator-in-charge, they would present this to the ESIB. The safety investigation identifies the causes and circumstances of the case, which shall be in accordance with the requirements established with the European Commission implementing regulation 2020/572 regarding the reporting structure to be followed when compiling the investigation reports. The provisions of Annex R5 of the Safety Investigation Manual are also considered when determining the causes of the occurrence. Information about the safety investigation is usually issued by the investigator-in-charge. By prior agreement, a member of the investigation committee or the Director of the ESIB may also do this. An alert is issued on behalf of the Safety Investigation Bureau in the event of a persistently high risk.

A joint Annex (AMR1) of the Safety Investigation Manual includes instructions for hearing, questioning, and taking statements from all individuals and parties concerned, specifies the objectives, planning, conducting, and documenting the activities. The safety investigation is conducted as publicly as possible. Disclosure must not start hindering identification of causes or development of recommendations necessary for increasing safety. All parties concerned whom the investigator-in-charge addresses or who turn to the investigator-in-charge themselves have an opportunity to present their opinions, attitude, position and understanding of the proceedings of the safety investigation and its results. Information that has restricted access pursuant to cases specified by The Public Information Act is not disclosed during or after the safety investigation. Specific dates have been designated by law to restrictions of disclosure.

In most cases connections with human behaviour play an important part in the circumstances of railway accidents and sometimes incidents. Analysis of human factors during the safety investigation is based on the implementation regulation 2020/572 and the guidelines set out in Annex R6 of the Safety Investigation Manual.

The effect and impact of the infrastructure manager's safety management system in the context of the case under investigation is important for ensuring railway safety. The safety investigation assesses the aspects of the safety management system that are connected to the case under investigation. Guidelines on what to concentrate on



are provided in Annex R4 of the Safety Investigation Manual. In cases that are not related to the management of infrastructure managers, an assessment is given to the operation of the infrastructure manager's safety management system as part of the ascertainment of the causes of the occurrence and elimination of consequences.

The investigator-in-charge is responsible for the investigation report to be completed in a timely manner and in the prescribed format. The recommendations presented in the report are subject to proceedings by the addressees of these recommendations. The status and results of the proceedings are to be presented to the ESIB by the addressees in the annual report. The ESIB monitors the proceedings that take place prior to the report being presented. Monitoring of the proceedings by the investigator-in-charge is set out in Annex R5 of the Safety Investigation Manual.



3. Safety Investigations

3.1 Overview of completed investigations

During the reporting year the Safety Investigation Bureau received 10 verbal accident notifications of accidents. This does not include known suicides which, as a deliberate act by one of the parties, is not classed as an accident. In addition, a verbal initial notification was received of track breakage, this is classified as an incident. Of the accidents, 4 were trains hitting a person, 3 level crossing accidents, the rest were classified by individual cases.

Looking back to the previous year, 2019, the Safety Investigation Bureau received 19 verbal accident notifications of railway accidents and in the years previous to that, 33 and 24 initial notifications of accidents. The ESIB received notifications of 5, 9 and 3 incidents in the respective years.

No serious accidents took place during the year. None of the 10 accidents had characteristics that would have required a safety investigation. They all involved relatively minor damage.

Summary of the safety investigations completed in 2020

Table 1

Type of case investigated	Number of cases	Casualties		Estimated losses (EUR)	Trend compared to last year
		Deaths	Seriously injured		
Accident	-	-	-	-	-
Incident	-	-	-	-	-

3.2 Safety investigations completed and commenced in 2020

All safety investigations conducted in Estonia have, without exception, concluded with a timely presentation of the report. There were no safety investigations that needed to be completed in 2020.

Safety investigations completed in 2020

Table 2

Date of occurrence	Title of the investigation (Occurrence type, location)	Legal basis	Completed (date)
-	-	-	-

Basis for investigation: i = pursuant to the safety directive

The following table shows that no safety investigations were launched in 2020 that could not be completed in the same year.

Safety investigations commenced in 2020

Table 3

Date of occurrence	Title of the investigation (Occurrence type, location)	Legal basis
-	-	-

Basis for investigation: i = pursuant to the safety directive

3.3 Summaries of the safety investigations concluded in 2020

Although no safety investigations were carried out in 2020, all reported accidents and incidents have been processed. The proceedings have started with the receipt of the initial verbal notification, continued with the receipt of the written notification and ended with the processing of the materials collected by the undertaking. Where appropriate, the supervisory authority has also been consulted. Cases of suicide that were identified as such at the time of writing are excluded from the report.

The two-month period before the safety investigation pursuant to Directive 2016/798 is usually sufficient for ESIB to have a complete overview of the case, the risks involved, the work organisation documents, the work culture based on them, and the



measures planned and implemented by the undertaking to prevent similar incidents in the future.

In its communication with the undertaking, the Safety Investigation Bureau expresses its views, which are consolidated in the course of the communication. All this is reflected in ESIB's decision to close the proceedings or open a safety investigation.

3.4 Comments of investigations

Based on safety investigations conducted over the last five years, the following table shows the deaths and injuries.

Total number of deaths and injuries

Table 4

Year	Deaths	Injured in road vehicle / of them seriously	Injured in rolling stock / of them seriously
2016	-	-	-
2017	2	-	-
2018	-	1/1	8/-
2019	-	-	-
2020	-	-	-
Total	2	1/1	8/-

The following table shows the number of injuries and deaths over the past five years

Breakdown of the injured and deaths

Table 5

Breakdown by type of persons		Year, number				
		2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Deaths	Passengers	-	-	-	-	-
	Staff	-	-	-	-	-
	Third parties	-	2	-	-	-
	Total	-	2	-	-	-
Injured	Passengers	-	-	6	-	-
	Staff	-	-	2	-	-
	Third parties	-	-	1	-	-
	Total	-	-	9	-	-

3.5 Accidents and incidents investigated during the past five years (2016 – 2020)

During the past five years there have been safety investigations of two accidents. The 2017 accident resulted in the deaths of two people. Several people sustained injuries in the 2018 accident. There were no deaths. Based on the initial assessment of damages a safety investigation was conducted after the 2018 level crossing accident. During the investigation the cost of damages was clarified, and it exceeded 2 million euros. In both cases the train collided with a truck which resulted in a derailment of the train.

The ESIB collects data about every accident it is notified of and assesses their impact on the safety situation in general. Cooperation of infrastructure managers and other structures on safety issues has steadily intensified. The total annual number of accidents as a statistical indicator is too small to draw any conclusions about the trend from the annual change. Based on a significantly longer period than the five years covered in the annual report, the downward trend in the number of accidents is noticeable. In the next few years, the number of accidents may sometimes increase, sometimes decrease. The number of safety investigations conducted reflects the situation in railway traffic and railway safety in general.

Breakdown of investigated cases by years

Table 6

Title of the case		Year, number of investigations					
		2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Art 19.1,2	Train collision	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Train collision with an obstacle	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Train derailment	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Level crossing accident	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Accident to person caused by RS in motion	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Fire in rolling stock	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Accident involving dangerous goods	-	-	-	-	-	-
Art 21.6	Train collision	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Train collision	-	-	-	-	-	-



	with an obstacle						
	Train derailment	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Level crossing accident	-	1	1	-	-	2
	Accident to person caused by RS in motion	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Fire in rolling stock	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Accident involving dangerous goods	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Incident	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Total	-	1	1	-	-	2



4. Recommendations

4.1 Short review and presentation of recommendations

The recommendations contained in the safety investigation reports are fulfilled by railway undertakings, the safety authority or any other authority or institution responsible for the given issue relating to railway safety. They all report annually on the follow-up to the recommendations addressed to them. The final report is presented to the ESIB the year following the conclusion of the proceedings. The Consumer Protection and Technical Surveillance Authority monitors and directs the proceedings of recommendations addressed to railway undertakings, and they also present a report on proceeding the recommendations.

The Safety Investigation Bureau issues the recommendations together with the safety investigation report directly to all addressees of the recommendations. The Consumer Protection and Technical Surveillance Authority receives the report even if they are not themselves involved in any of the proceedings of recommendations in any way.

Recommendations for improvement of safety

Table 7

Field of activity of recommendation	Year, number of recommendations				
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Maintenance and care of railway infrastructure	-	-	-	-	-
Care, maintenance and managing of rolling stock	-	-	-	-	-
Organisation of supervision	-	1	-	-	-
Road traffic management, road traffic control devices	-	-	2	-	-
Winter maintenance of roads	-	-	-	-	-
Dissemination of information concerning traffic, training	-	1	-	-	-



Amendments to legal acts and regulating instructions	-	-	1	-	-
Operation of traffic lights, railway traffic control	-	-	1	-	-
Organisation of operation of railway communication devices	-	-	-	-	-
Use of information recording equipment	-	-	-	-	-
Professional qualifications of railwaymen	-	-	-	-	-
Other arrangements	-	-	1	-	-
Total	-	2	5	-	-

The following table shows the status of implementation of recommendations of the past five years based on data as of 1 April of each year.

Implementation of recommendations

Table 8

Recommendations issued		Recommendation implementation status							
		Implemented		In progress		Not to be implemented		Implementation suspended	
Year	No	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
2016	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2017	2	2	100	-	-	-	-	-	-
2018	5	2	40	3	60	-	-	-	-
2019	-	3	60	-	-	-	-	-	-
2020	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	7	7	100	-	-	-	-	-	-

In order to obtain an interim overview, the ESIB will verbally contact the addressee of the recommendation before submitting the report.