

Project no.: **44289**  
Project acronym: **PTaccess**  
Project title: **Public Transport Systems' Accessibility for People with Disabilities in Europe**

**Specific Support Action**

**CALL IDENTIFIER: FP6-2005.SSP-5A**

**Priority Area 2.4: Quality of life issues relating to handicapped/disabled people**

**Task 1: Accessibility of public transport systems for people with disabilities**

Title of Report:

# **State of the Accessibility of Public Transport Systems for People with Disabilities in The Netherlands (NL)**

**Status: final**

Start date of project: **1. February 2007**

Date of preparation: **3.November 2008**

Duration: **24 months**

Prepared by: **FGM-AMOR**

Quality control by: **JMP**

Dissemination level: **PU (public)**

## PTaccess – Public Transport Systems' Accessibility for people with disabilities in Europe

One specific area, for which there is still a lack of EU level data, is the accessibility of public transport for people with disabilities and its impact on their employment and social integration prospects.

The European project 'PTaccess' offers the chance to fill this gap in knowledge and obtain information on the current state of accessibility of urban and rural public transport systems in 25 EU member states. For each member state PTaccess analyses the state of accessibility of public transport from the point of view of national disabled organisations, national transport operators, and governmental authorities. For regions where public transport is not accessible PTaccess identifies and analyses applied alternative transport solutions (WP1).

PTaccess also identifies and analyses good practices and innovation in making public transport accessible, and enhances the scientific base of policy by providing a sound assessment of the costs and benefits of making public transport accessible (WP2).

Furthermore PTaccess deepens the understanding of the transport-related contexts of social exclusion of disabled people, and draws conclusions about the effects that accessible public transport has on the employment and social inclusion prospects for disabled people. (WP3).

The PTaccess-project runs from the 1st of February 2007 until the 31st of January 2009.

More information about PTaccess can be found on the project's website: [www.ptaccess.eu](http://www.ptaccess.eu)

The PTaccess consortium:

- FGM AMOR (Austria)
- Independent Living Institute ILI (Sweden)
- TU Dresden, Lehrstuhl für Verkehrsökologie (Germany)
- JMP Consultants Limited (United Kingdom)

This project is supported through the **Research for policy support** heading of the **European Union's Sixth Framework Programme**, PRIORITY 8.1 Policy-oriented research, Scientific support to policies – SSP CALL IDENTIFIER: FP6-2005.SSP-5A

Priority Area 2.4: Quality of life issues relating to handicapped/disabled people, Task 1: Accessibility of public transport systems for people with disabilities]

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## 1 Introduction

This document aims to give an overview on the current state of the accessibility of public transport in The Netherlands (NL).

This document has been prepared within the framework of the European project PTaccess by FGM-AMOR based on interviews conducted with representatives of people with disabilities, transport operators and governmental authorities in 25 European countries.

In order to draw a comprehensive picture of the current state of the accessibility of public transport in Europe, the following topics have been discussed with the interviewed national experts:

- Statistical data
- Legal and regulatory framework conditions
- Organisational framework conditions
- Accessibility of passenger information
- Accessibility issues in ticketing
- Accessibility of stops and stations
- Accessibility of vehicles
- Safety, reliability and services
- Alternatives to public transport

### How this report has been made

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In order to obtain actual information on the current state of accessibility of urban and rural public transport systems in Europe, the PTaccess team has directly contacted and interviewed national experts within 25<sup>1</sup> EU member states. In each of these 25 member states a representative of a national disabled organisation, a representative of national transport operators, and a representative of a governmental authority have been interviewed and asked to provide their point of view regarding the accessibility of public transport in their country. In order to obtain comparable interview results in each of these countries, interview guidelines and questionnaires have been prepared by the PTaccess consortium. The interviews (at least three per country) have been conducted personally by “national contact persons” in their national language.

For each of the investigated 25 countries the results of all the interviews with the national experts have been compiled into a draft “country report” by FGM-AMOR. These “country reports” describe the state of the accessibility of public transport from the point of view of disabled people, transport operators and governmental authorities. In order to make sure that the interview results have been interpreted correctly, these draft country reports have been checked and corrected by the national contact persons, who had conducted the interviews with the national experts. This is the finalised country report for The Netherlands (NL).

### What can be expected from this report

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This report gives an overview of the state of the accessibility of public transport in The Netherlands (NL). However, this report does not provide only “official” data and information, since in most countries such data and information does not exist. Instead the report provides spotlights on the current situation regarding the accessibility of public transport from the subjective, but informed, point of view of people with disabilities,

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<sup>1</sup> At the time of the preparation of the PTaccess-project Bulgaria and Romania haven't been member states of the European Union, yet. Therefore no interviews have been conducted in these two countries.

transport operators and governmental authorities. Since each interview-partner brought in her/his subjective viewpoint, it must not be expected to get an objective overview of the situation in the country. However, by asking different experts (representing three important stakeholder groups) about their point of view, and by taking into account the viewpoints of all these concerned stakeholder-groups the authors of this report hope to be able to draw a picture of the situation regarding the accessibility of public transport for people with disabilities in The Netherlands (NL) that is not too biased.

**Important:** The reader of this report must always keep in mind that this report is based on the viewpoints of individual people (i.e. each interview partner has brought in her/his personal point of view and her/his personal experiences), and therefore the information given in this report must not be interpreted as an objective official “national” view!

### How to use this report

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People, who are interested to get **more (detailed) information on the accessibility of public transport in The Netherlands (NL)**, should read this “country report”. There are also “country reports” for each of the other 24 countries, where PTaccess surveys have been made.

People, who are interested to get **a quick overview on the actual state of the accessibility of public transport in Europe**, should read chapter 3 of the summary report “State of the Accessibility of Public Transport Systems for People with Disabilities in Europe”.

People, who would like to know more **details about the interviews** which form the basis of this report, should read Annex II of the summary report “State of the Accessibility of Public Transport Systems for People with Disabilities in Europe”, where all interviewers, interview-partners and questionnaires are listed.



## 2.1 General Information

### 2.1.1 About the PTaccess interviews

<b>Interviewer:</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
PTaccess National Contact Person	Tim Asperges	University of Hasselt, Instituut voor Mobiliteit (IMOB)
<b>Interview partners:</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Representatives of Transport Operators	Mr. Rene de Beer	Veolia Transport
Representatives of People with Disabilities	Pascal Budding	CG-Raad, Utrecht
Representative of Governmental Authority	H. Bohn	Province of Limburg

**Table 1: Interviewer and Interview-partners the Netherlands**

## 2.1.2 Statistical Data from the Netherlands

Statistical Data for the Netherlands	
Number of inhabitants	16,400,000 <sup>2</sup>
Inhabitants with disabilities	ca. 1,500,000 <sup>3</sup>
Inhabitants with motor impairments	600,000
Inhabitants with visual impairments	500,000
Inhabitants with hearing impairments	400,000
Inhabitants with cognitive / learning impairments	100,000
Inhabitants who are functional illiterates	no data available
Share of disabled people living in urban areas	no data available
Share of disabled people at working age	20% <sup>4</sup>
Share of disabled people at working age who are actually working	among 15-64year: slightly disability = 60%; other/severe disability = 30% <sup>5</sup>

Table 2: Statistical data for the Netherlands

## 2.1.3 Legal and regulatory framework conditions in the Netherlands

The Netherlands have legislation on equal treatment of people with a disability or chronic illness which will be active in the area of public transport in 2010. Nevertheless, there is already a law that guarantees mobility for people with disabilities. These people get discounts while travelling.

### Anti-discrimination law

According to DG Passenger Transport of the Ministry of Transport, there is legislation on the equal treatment of people with a disability or chronic illness. This legislation is not yet active in public transport; although this will be the case in 2010.

According to Mr. Gerard L.M. van Egmond, a study was conducted in 2005 on the appropriateness of a Disability discrimination act in relation to public transport. Results have been reported in: "Analyse toepasbaarheid wetgeving gelijke behandeling voor het openbaar vervoer" RebelGroup Advisory B.V., 15-12-05;

<sup>2</sup> Source: [www.cbs.nl](http://www.cbs.nl) Statistics of The Netherlands

<sup>3</sup> exclusive people with cognitive impairments; with cognitive impairment: ca 100.000 persons  
Source: "7th Report on people with an impairment", Mirjam De Klerk, 2002; [www.scp.nl](http://www.scp.nl)

<sup>4</sup> SCP, Mirjam De Klerk, 2002

<sup>5</sup> "Meedoen met beperking", SCP, 2007

This study has been the basis of a proposal of national government to Dutch Parliament concerning the implementation of a Disability discrimination act d.d. 17-05-07. <sup>6</sup>

### Regulations regarding the accessibility of public transport

Since 2002 there has been legislation on the equal treatment of people with disabilities or chronic illness. This legislation is not yet active in the area of public transport. The aim is that this legislation will be active in the area of public transport by 2010 <sup>7</sup>. The policies to provide accessible public transport are rooted on a letter to the Dutch Parliament (nr. 23 645 nr. 81) sent by the Minister of Transport, Public Works and Water Management, dated 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2004, regarding the development of action plans to improve the accessibility of public transport, by rail and by road. Legal arrangements to protect rights of people with disabilities (Disability discrimination act) are to be developed in 2007-2008, followed by implementation in 2010. <sup>8</sup>

The letter describes:

- Policy goals on accessibility of public transport: accessibility of public transport by railway should be attained in 2030; accessibility of public transport by road in 2010;
- The distinct responsibilities concerning accessibility of public transport: national railway vs. city and regional public transport;
- The development of action plans concerning accessibility of public transport by rail and by road;
- The implementation of a Disability discrimination act in The Netherlands.

In 2005 and 2006 this letter has been followed by four letters<sup>9</sup> to the Parliament regarding:

- The development of an action plan concerning accessibility of public transport by rail and bus vehicles d.d. 12-10-05 (Kamerstuk 23645 nr. 112);
- The development of an action plan concerning accessibility of bus stops d.d. 17-05-07 (Kamerstuk 23645 nr. 140);
- A proposal concerning the implementation of a Disability discrimination act d.d. 17-05-07 (Kamerstuk 29355; 23645 nr. 29)
- A plan for implementation of accessibility of public transport by rail d.d. 29-09-06.

According to CG-Raad, Utrecht, there is no specific law for accessible public transport yet. There is a law "Equal Treatment", but not yet operational for public transport; this will take place around 1.1.2010.

Mr. Van Egmond /Euro-access project stated that in 2005-2007 CROW, the national institute on knowledge of infrastructure, traffic and public space, has published two Handbooks:

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<sup>6</sup> Both documents can be found at: <http://www.verkeerenwaterstaat.nl> or <http://www.kenniscentrumto-do.nl>.

<sup>7</sup> [www.overheid.nl](http://www.overheid.nl) => Kamerstukken => Eerste Kamer => vergaderjaar 2001-2002, Kamerstuk 28169, nr. 411

<sup>8</sup> Source: Mr. Van Egmond /Euro-access project

<sup>9</sup> All letters mentioned above can be found on [www.verkeerenwaterstaat.nl](http://www.verkeerenwaterstaat.nl) => Openbaar vervoer => Toegankelijkheid OV => Kamerstukken.

1. Handbook on Accessibility of public transport, consisting of 7 volumes: general principles, bus, taxi, roads, sidewalks, ticketing and information services. The volume on accessibility of railway is still in development.

2. Handbook on places to stop (bus stops etc.).

Those guidelines have been developed on the base of best practices, laws and regulations on the several topics. Participants in public transport worked together to create these guidelines: university, public transport companies, organisations of handicapped people, governmental bodies and research centres.<sup>10</sup>

#### “Priority” of the accessibility of public transport on the political agenda

According to CG-Raad, Utrecht, accessibility is not a main item. But there are plans for improvement:

a) "Implementatieplan Toegankelijkheid Definitief", oct.2006. And

b) "Halteplannen", end 2006. But according to the council CG-Raad things can be done better and faster.

According to Mr. Gerard L.M. van Egmond to finance measures and provisions within the framework of the Implementation plan on accessibility of railway infrastructure, a budget of €450 mln concerning the period until 2030 has been allocated.

To stimulate authorities at regional and local level to improve accessibility of bus stops in the period until 2015, a budget of €87 mln has been made available by national government (about 40% of total costs), to be allocated in the period 2008-2010.

Requirements and financing accessible buses, trams, trains are part of transport concessions.

#### Monitoring of the accessibility of public transport

According to the Province of Limburg the only monitoring of the accessibility of public transport done on national level is “Halteplannen”.

According to CG-Raad, Utrecht there is no national monitoring of the accessibility of public transport done on national/regional/local level. There are some studies done by several organisations for disabled persons.

According to Gerard L.M. van Egmond Regarding city and regional public transport an indicator system is developed to measure accessibility of buses/vehicles and is in development to measure accessibility of the (46.000) bus stops in The Netherlands.

ProRail and NS will develop an indicator system to measure accessibility of railway transport.

#### Special fares and public transport tariffs for people with disabilities

According to the Province of Limburg there is a law "Wet Voorzieningen Gehandicapten" to guarantee mobility for people with disabilities.

According to CG-Raad, Utrecht there are several rules to guarantee mobility; among others for school-going youth and working people. There are also special tariffs for people with disabilities. It is worthwhile mentioning:

a) "Wet Voorzieningen Gehandicapten, WVG" (Law for facilities for disabled people,

b) the so-called Valys-transport (by order of the Ministry for Transport V&W).

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<sup>10</sup> The publications and /or further information can be found at: <http://www.CROW.nl>.

The interview partner of Veolia Transport stated that older people and people with a disability can travel cheaper. Regional and local authorities pay the difference.

According to Mr. Van Egmond /Euro-access project there are no systems for pricing strategies to reduce economic barriers to the use of public transport systems by people with disabilities, like concessionary fares, personal subsidies or others.

#### 2.1.4 Organisational framework conditions

The Netherlands has four governmental authorities: one of them deal with the anti-discrimination and social inclusion issues in relation to people with disabilities, while the other three are responsible for public transport. Moreover, there are three main transport operators and two main disability organisations.

Regional and local institutes in the Netherlands work together. Collaboration between governmental authorities and public transport operators is high, however, between transport operators and disability organisations cooperation is moderate.

The process of improving accessibility of public transport is slow in the Netherlands due to a lack of financing and techniques. All interview-partners agree that people have a positive attitude towards people with disabilities and public transport.

##### Governmental authorities dealing with anti-discrimination and social inclusion issues referring to people with disabilities

- **Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (Ministry of SZW)**

##### Governmental authorities responsible for public transport

- **Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management**
- **Ministry of Public Health, Well-being and Sport (Ministry of VWS)<sup>11</sup>**
- **Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (Ministry of SZW)**

##### Main transport operators and Public Transport associations

- **VEOLIA**  
Rene de Beer, rene.beer@veolia-transport.nl, 0031 76 5281000
- **ARRIVA**
- **CONNEXION**

<sup>11</sup> Under the Ministry of VW there are 19 PT-Authorities (12 provinces and 7 regional city-authorities).

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## Main disability organisations

- **CG-raad**  
Pascal Budding, [pbudding@cg-raad.nl](mailto:pbudding@cg-raad.nl)
- **Unie-KBO**  
[info@uniekbo.nl](mailto:info@uniekbo.nl); tel. 0031 73 6891015

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## Cooperation among stakeholders

### Cooperation between the governmental authorities and disability organisations

According to the Province of Limburg regional and local institutes work together. There is also a consumer-panel.<sup>12</sup>

According to CG-Raad, Utrecht there is cooperation among several institutes. However it remains a complex situation with many actors and there is a lot of perseverance needed.

According to Gerard L.M. van Egmond, the following user groups have had influence on the development of the legal framework regarding accessible public transport in the Netherlands: National user groups of disabled (CG-Raad: Council of organisations of chronicle ill or handicapped people) or older people (CSO: Co-ordination board/Co-operating Organisations of older people in the Netherlands).

Specific user groups, e.g. Viziris: co-operating organisations of visually impaired people.

### Cooperation between the transport operators and disability organisations

In the opinion of the interview-partner of CG-Raad, Utrecht, the cooperation is moderate. Especially within greater infrastructure-projects there is hardly any co-operation with organisations for disabled people.

According to Veolia Transport there is a good deliberation with the organisation for people with a disability.

### Cooperation between the transport operators and governmental authorities

According to the Province of Limburg there is a co-operation between governmental authorities and public transport operators in defining and developing better accessibility of public transport.

Veolia Transport also stated that there is a co-operation. Objective setting belongs to the authorities while operators are responsible for the implementation.

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## Attitude of the stakeholders regarding the importance of accessibility of public transport

### Attitudes of the stakeholders towards alternatives to public transport

According to the Province of Limburg the main barriers that hinder faster improvements of the accessibility of public transport is funding and the technique, if you want to guarantee public transport access fully.

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<sup>12</sup> Other local institutes involved in public transport for people with a disability, among others: a) ROVER, b) "Stichting Reizigersoverleg Limburg".

Veolia Transport stated that according to laws, it is an obligation to offer accessible public transport, but it is also a question of the finance. Taking care of the people with a disability can require increased waiting time at the stations/stops and therefore sometimes there is more input of buses needed or the timetables may become unreliable.

According to CG-Raad, Utrecht, in principle people with disabilities want to be self-supporting! Technical improvements for this self-supporting are therefore very welcome.

#### Attitudes of the stakeholders regarding the use of public transport by people with disabilities

In the opinion of the interview-partner of the Province of Limburg there is a positive attitude of people with disabilities regarding public transport in the Netherlands. Via the so-called "Pakket van Eisen" the public transport operators are obliged to do the things the authority wishes.

The interview-partner of the Province of Limburg and Veolia Transport believe accessible public transport would help disabled people to find/keep a job. The interview-partner of Veolia Transport stated that the solution is found in the so-called "Doelgroepenvervoer" (Door-to-door Transport for specific groups of people, involving people with a disability).

The interview-partner of CG-Raad, Utrecht also thinks that there is a positive attitude of disabled people regarding public transport, this applies also for the organisations for people with disability. In the opinion of the interview-partner of CG-Raad, Utrecht, as long as the accessibility is low, no (or few) persons will use public transport.

## 2.2 Accessibility of Public Transport

**Pre-trip information:** Pre-trip information regarding the accessibility of public transport stations, stops, vehicles and services is barely available for disabled people. Planning information can be found on websites, printed timetables or by telephone.

**On-trip information:** According to the interview-partner of Veolia Transport approximately 50% of vehicles are accessible for people with motor, visual or hearing impairments. However, it is not well developed; travel information in buses, trams and underground stations for motor impaired people is modest.

**Ticketing:** There are special tariffs for people with disabilities and older people in the Netherlands. Disabled people can buy a ticket at the ticket-window. Ticket vending machines are accessible for people with hearing impairments but not for motor or visual impaired people.

**Stops and stations:** Some stops and stations are accessible for people with disabilities, but only a very low percentage of them. However, there are already several plans to improve railway and bus systems so that accessibility of stops and stations for disabled people would be increased.

**Vehicles:** Municipalities and public transport operators are working together in order to improve accessibility of vehicles. So far some of the buses, trams and trains are accessible for people with disabilities. The proportion of accessible buses increased up to approximately 70 % in 2007. The aim is to have almost 100% accessible busses in 2010.

**Safety, Reliability, and Service:** Despite the fact that not all vehicles (less than 10% of buses and less than 50% of trains) have safety equipment, disabled people are quite satisfied with safety when using public transport. They do not think that using public transport is dangerous. However, there is little attention given to plans for evacuating people with disabilities in case of an emergency. In general, reliability of buses, trams, undergrounds and train stations in the Netherlands is low, but punctuality is satisfactory. Customer service for people with visual impairments is quite convenient, but not so good for people with hearing impairments. Veolia Transport has no specific staff-training, just a general one. Connexion, the biggest public transport operator in the Netherlands, has started large scale programme to train staff to recognize the needs of people with difficulties when using public transport and to support these people.

### 2.2.1 Accessibility of passenger information

#### Pre-trip information

The interview-partner of the Province of Limburg believes that things are better with regard to the accessibility of public transport passenger information, but for people with visual impairments and also those with learning impairments it is more difficult.

For the interview-partner of CG-Raad, Utrecht, public transport passenger information is reasonable for disabled people. There are websites, information by telephone and printed timetables to get travel planning information. Information concerning pre-trip regarding the accessibility is hardly available. If information is available, it is often unreliable. This is a great problem. Information about the whole journey is not available for disabled people; this is a great problem.

According to Veolia Transport, travel planning information (inclusive door-to-door transport information), special transport services and information about tariffs and tickets are available. Pre trip information regarding

the accessibility of specific locations is poor. Regional taxis are a part of the public transport system. The so-called Regio-taxi is a part of the "Doelgroepenvervoer", therefore also available for people with a disability.

### On-trip information

According to Veolia Transport, 95% of bus stops in urban and rural areas provide accessible passenger information.

According to CG-Raad, Utrecht, passenger information for people with motor impairments is not available, except tables/plates to elevators and toilets. Tables/plates are often too high and uncomfortable for wheelchair users. People with motor impairments have to plan (by telephone or internet), or can ask at the ticket-window or call in service-staff of the operator involved (as far as present). In buses, trams and underground stations travel-information for motor impaired people is modest. Information on public transport tariffs and tickets is available via websites, brochures, by telephone and ticket-window which is as accessible as regular travel information. In the opinion of the interview-partner of CG-Raad, Utrecht, information is in small letters and positioned too high so that it is less accessible for visual impaired people. Most of the information is also offered visually. Problems arise when there is a change in timetable or delays. Information then is only given by loudspeakers.

The interview-partner of Veolia Transport stated that approximately 50% of vehicles (buses, trams, undergrounds, trains) are accessible for people with motor, visual or hearing impairments.

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## **2.2.2 Accessibility issues in Ticketing**

There are special tariffs for people with disabilities in the Netherlands. Older people and people with a disability can travel cheaper. Regional and local authorities pay the difference. According to CG-Raad, Utrecht, the usual way for disabled people to get a ticket is to buy it at the ticket-window. In future they will probably use the internet or public transport chip cards. Ticket vending machines are accessible for people with hearing impairments but not for motor or visually impaired people.

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## **2.2.3 Accessibility of stops and stations**

According to the Province of Limburg, the average share of bus stops in urban areas accessible for impaired people is 2%. The target is 50%; although this demands on the demand.

In the opinion of the interview-partner of CG-Raad, Utrecht, people with motor impairments are generally not satisfied with the accessibility of stops and stations.

According to Veolia Transport, 20% of bus stops in urban areas are accessible for motor and visual impaired people.

### Strategy regarding the improvement of the accessibility of public transport in the Netherlands

Action plans are available concerning:

- accessibility of public transport by rail: "Implementatieplan Toegankelijkheid Definitief" by ProRail and NS/Dutch Railways, sent to Parliament by letter d.d. 29-09-06. The responsible authority is the Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management. These documents are to be found at [www.verkeerenwaterstaat.nl](http://www.verkeerenwaterstaat.nl).

The plans describe what measures are to be taken in the period to 2030 to realize an optimal accessible railway system;

- accessibility of bus stops: "Halteplannen", published at the end of 2006 by the 19 decentral authorities, to be found at [www.kenniscentrumto-do.nl](http://www.kenniscentrumto-do.nl).

These (19) plans describe the locations and numbers of bus stops to be renovated in the period to 2010-2015 to realize an optimal accessible transport by bus.

Railway transport: In December 2004 the Ministry of Transport requested the national operators on infrastructure (ProRail) and transport (NS) to develop a common strategic plan to improve accessibility on the railway including: infrastructure, rolling stock and information services.

Bus transport: In May 2006 the Ministry of Transport requested the responsible regional public transport operators to develop action plans improve the accessibility of bus stops. Following an investigation conducted in 2005 on the development of accessible bus vehicles in urban and regional public transport, the conclusion was drawn that existing plans of public transport authorities, concerning the introduction of accessible buses class I and class II, are sufficient to attain policy goals up to 2010. In relation to taxis no strategic plans are required or are in development.<sup>13</sup>

According to Veolia Transport, the strategy regarding the accessibility of stops and stations is a governmental task. As public transport operator, Veolia Transport is taking care of dynamic information as much as possible (Dynamic travel information systems).

#### Current state regarding the accessibility of bus stops and stations in the Netherlands

According to the Province of Limburg, a very low percentage of stops and stations are accessible for people with disabilities. A program has just started on the bus network ("Halteplannen").

According to CG-Raad, Utrecht, stops and stations are not sufficiently accessible, although there are plans such as "Implementatie Toegankelijkheid" and "Halteplannen".<sup>14</sup>

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## **2.2.4 Accessibility of vehicles**

#### Strategy regarding the improvement of the accessibility of the public transport vehicles

According to Veolia Transport, most things are prescribed in tenders, by the public transport authorities. In the implementation province, municipalities and public transport operators are working together. It is also important to look for stations/stops where there is a reasonable demand of passengers.

#### Actual state of the accessibility of the public transport vehicles in the Netherlands

According to the Province of Limburg, buses have low entrances, so the accessibility is ok. All buses have barrier-free interior designs and there is one space reserved for wheelchair users per vehicle.

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<sup>13</sup> Source: Mr. Van Egmond /Euro-access project

<sup>14</sup> By 2007 all 19 PT-Authorities have made a "halteplan". Next step = financing (National Government) and implementation (2008 and further)

The general perception of the interview-partner of CG-Raad, Utrecht regarding the accessibility of vehicles is insufficient. Accessible boarding/alighting is a kernel-problem. The satisfaction of motor impaired people is poor. Bus and trains are different in height; trams and metros are ok. For people with hearing impairments, the accessibility of boarding/alighting is ok.

According to Veolia Transport, low entrances of public transport vehicles are going to be the standard. The barrier-free interior design of buses is for the interview-partner of Veolia Transport relatively ok.

According to Mr. Van Egmond, most regional governments tender their public transport by using the procedures of directive 204/18 in city and regional public transport (mainly passenger transport by bus). They prescribe the level of accessibility in their procurement documents. Legislation (i.c. Wet personenvervoer 2000, see: [www.wetten.nl](http://www.wetten.nl)) obliges them to add standards on accessibility for buses into their contracts. The proportion of accessible buses increased up to approximately 70 % in 2007. The aim is to achieve 100% accessible buses by 2010.

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## 2.2.5 Safety, Reliability and Service

### Safety aspects

CG-Raad, Utrecht thinks that safety is not the most important issue with mobility taking priority. When asked about safety aspects, people with motor impairments complain about good anchoring-systems for wheelchairs in buses. In the opinion of the interview-partner of CG-Raad, Utrecht people with disability do not think that riding by trams, undergrounds and trains is dangerous. The satisfaction of users with the special safety equipments is sufficient, but it could be improved. Information channels are often acoustic. On railways there are also display-boards where emergency information is shown. Insufficient attention is given in case of a diversion. There is a little attention to special plans for evacuating people with disabilities in the case of an emergency.

According to Veolia Transport, accidents with wheelchairs will always exist as a result of anchoring problems. In the Netherlands less than 10% of buses and less than 50% of trains have safety equipments. In the province of Limburg all buses and trains have the equipment. In buses emergency information can be given by the driver and in trains, trams and underground it can be given by the driver, stewards or the conductor. At underground and bus stations there are displays and speakers. At train stations in rural areas the possibility of giving information is poor. At train stations in urban areas the information is the best of all modes. In general there is an evacuation plan for transport but not specific plans for disabled people.

### Reliability and Punctuality

According to CG-Raad, Utrecht, the reliability of buses, trams, undergrounds and train stations in urban areas is moderate. Buses are equipped with wheelchair-platforms. However occasionally there are problems (operating system, lack of assist by the staff, i.e. the bus driver). The level of reliability of local trains and long distance trains is low. In local trains there are almost no (in long distance trains no) low entrances. At underground stations there are often many chairs, few elevators and not always guidelines, so the reliability is also low. At train stations in urban areas there are often elevators and guidelines, but elevators often do not work. 1% of trams and undergrounds, 3% of city buses and 5% of regional buses and trains arrive with a delay of less than 5 minutes.

According to Veolia Transport, the reliability of regional buses and trams is moderate, of city buses and trains it is moderate to high and in undergrounds it is high. The interview-partner stated that 10% of regional buses, trams, undergrounds and local trains and 15% of city buses and long-distance trains arrive with a delay of less than 5 minutes.

## Customer Service

According to CG-Raad, Utrecht, luggage storage at bus stations do not exist. At train stations they are generally accessible. There are sometimes thresholds at counters and information desks at bus stations. Ticket-windows at underground stations are often too high. At train stations the counters are undermanned and at smaller stations there are no counters present. The level of satisfaction for people with visual impairments regarding the provision of accessible counters and information desks at stations is in general ok; for people with hearing impairments it is moderate. Train stations offer assistance via the service-staff.

## Staff Training

The interview-partner of the Province of Limburg thinks that training is an important issue.

Veolia Transport stated that they have no specific staff-training. The "Doelgroepenvervoer" (CVV) has general training.

There are special (but not structural) training for transport operators' staff but according to Veolia Transport this is not provided to everybody.

According to Mr. Gerard L.M. van Egmond, Connexxion, the biggest operator in city and regional public transport in The Netherlands, has started a large scale programme to train public transport personnel to recognize the needs of people with difficulties when using public transport and to support these people;

CROW gives special courses for planners at regional level etc. on accessibility of bus stops: "Cursus Halteplaatsen openbaar vervoer"<sup>15</sup>

Recently a small scale initiative has been taken to support pupils of special schools with mental and/or cognitive disabilities to use public transport: "Lespakket voor special onderwijs over openbaar vervoer"<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> <http://www.CROW.nl>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.Mobycon.nl>.

### **2.3 Alternatives to public transport**

In the Netherlands they have the "Doelgroepenvervoer" = Transport for specific groups of people, especially for persons with a disability, but also for school-youth, people who travel with social motives, also recreational. They have the Valys-system (paid by the National Government), regional transport by the municipalities. The right to use special transport depends on an 'indication".

According to Mr. Gerard L.M. van Egmond, besides general public transport, in The Netherlands there are six national programmes facilitating individual door-to-door-transport for people with disabilities. These minibuses and taxis concern special groups and/or destinations (e.g. transport of disabled people to schools, transport of employees to welfare services), and also transport of disabled people for social or recreational reasons.