

Accessibility and Liberty

Accessible Websites

Imagine this scenario: a visually impaired visitor wants to book a trip with your organization. However, because they can only navigate your website using a mouse, they can't get past the homepage. Such visitors prefer to use keyboard shortcuts to minimize effort, but this functionality needs to be available. An accessible website can reach millions of potential customers who are often left out. This oversight causes businesses to miss out on significant revenue opportunities. When your website is more accessible, search engines reward this with higher rankings.

Requirements

Starting from 2025, businesses are legally obligated based on the European Accessibility Act to ensure their websites are accessible. One recommendation to make your website accessible is to adhere to WCAG 2.1 (link: <https://iederin.nl/doe-mee/zelf-lokaal-aan-de-slag/toolkit-toegankelijke-gemeentewebsites/toolkit-wat-moet-je-weten/wat-houdt-de-wcag-2-1-in/>). WCAG 2.1 outlines the accessibility requirements for web content. Additionally, you can find plenty of articles online about web accessibility.

Perform an Accessibility Check

After familiarizing yourself with the legal requirements, you can conduct an accessibility assessment. This is a thorough and time-consuming task, so it's essential to work consistently and systematically. Check each of the WCAG 2.1 criteria one by one.

When doing this manually, you can better understand the user's experience, as you'll personally encounter the issues users face. You can use text-to-speech software, for example, to check your content and systems.

MKB-Nederland, in collaboration with thuiswinkel.org and accessibility, has developed a tool that allows you to test the accessibility of your website. Visit: <https://ismijnsitetoegankelijk.nl/> for this purpose.

The international version of such checksites are: [WAVE Web Accessibility Evaluation Tools \(webaim.org\)](https://www.siteimprove.com/) en <https://www.siteimprove.com/>

Accessibility Declaration

After meticulously conducting the accessibility assessment, you need to make it clear whether you comply with the guidelines. For this, you require an accessibility declaration. This declaration indicates how accessible your website or application is: fully compliant, partially compliant, initial steps taken, or non-compliant.

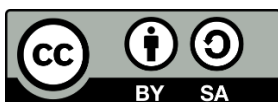
[Accessibility Declaration Form](#) | [Accessibility Declaration Form Assistant](#)

Transportation

NS Travel Assistance

If you want to travel in the Netherlands without a care in the world, the NS, Dutch Railways, ensures us that everyone is able to travel by train. The NS, a company owned by the Dutch government, have approximately 20,000 employees that make sure travelers are taken to their destination throughout the country. It is in fact the largest organization in the Netherlands when it comes to public transport and offers travel assistance to people who are either physically disabled but also to people who have limited or no vision or a hearing impairment.

People with impairments can be guided by NS employees when boarding and disembarking the trains. This to make sure that the traveler actually gets onto the right train. Different aids like for example wheelchairs, walkers and assistance dogs are of course permitted by NS free of charge. A person can plan a trip to



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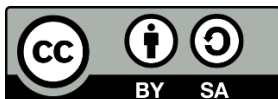


receive the right care and attention by going onto the website www.ns.nl/reisassistentie, use the NS app or by telephone.

Places to Visit

Most people will agree that everyone, whether or not they are 'disabled' in any form, way or shape, should be able to enjoy a visit to a museum or a night out to a restaurant. Unfortunately this is not always the case yet. In most Dutch cities, there are accessible attractions, restaurants and hotels and there is always the possibility to ask about the possibilities when special needs are involved.

An example of a place to visit is the 3rd largest amusement park in Europe (according to [Wikipedia](#)), the Dutch amusement park the Efteling. The Efteling is partner of the community '[accessible recreation](#)' and strives to provide all of its visitors with an unforgettable and safe day out, which means making the park accessible to all. They have therefore created special services for people with impairments. On their website they have created an overview of all the services they provide. This is a good way for people with impairments to check whether or not this is a suitable location for them to visit and could work as an example to other companies.



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