



**1st UITP SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
CONFERENCE**

***" Sustainable Cities and Public Transport
Bringing Quality to Life"***

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The Hague Sustainable Development Platform

1. Biographical note

Since 2001, dr Jeroen V. Groenendijk (1960) is Head of Strategy at HTM Personenvervoer NV, the public transport operator of the city of The Hague. As such, he is concerned with stakeholder relations, institutional and international affairs, political developments, matters concerning privatization and competition, and partnerships with other companies or institutions.

Previously, he worked for the EuroTeam of UITP, the international organisation for public transport that is seated in Brussels. There, he was mainly concerned with public affairs as regards the European institutions, and informing public transport operators and authorities in the European Union about EU affairs and developments.

From 1994 until 1999, he worked for the Dutch employers' association in transport (KNV), seated in The Hague. During that period, he wrote his Ph.D. thesis, an international comparative study of competition in public transport in Europe.

From 1988 until 1994, Jeroen Groenendijk belonged to the international staff of the Dutch Railways (NS), and was involved with all EU affairs and cross-border relations with other railway companies.

Jeroen Groenendijk has studied international and European law at Leiden University (NL).

3. Full text

Ladies and gentlemen,

As you may know, my country is one of the most densely populated countries in the world. Especially the western part of the Netherlands, the so-called Randstad area, is crowded. This area lies between our capital, Amsterdam, and our main shipping port, Rotterdam. Right in the middle lies The Hague, which is the governmental centre and the third city of the country. Just to give you an impression, the city of The Hague has a density of not less than 6.600 inhabitants per square kilometre. That is a density comparable to cities like San Francisco, Sydney and Singapore, and double that of Berlin or Helsinki. A dense occupation goes with a lot of economic activity and, therefore, an equal lot of urban mobility. It is no surprise that the city of The Hague is well aware of the environmental challenges it faces.

As you can see from the picture, at its western limit the city of The Hague borders the North Sea coastline. To the south lies a large agricultural area. The city is therefore mainly accessible from the east and the north, where most of the population in the larger area live. In these directions, traffic to and from the city increases every year. Road congestion is becoming more and more of a problem, and parking space in the inner city becomes a scarce commodity. The Hague, so to speak, is not very much different from other large cities in Europe and elsewhere.

HTM and The Hague

About 480.000 people live in the city, but the region has more than double that amount – just over one million. My company, HTM, is the main public transport operator of The Hague. It is a company with a private legal status, but all the shares are still owned by the municipality. By operating light rail, tramway and bus services, we face the challenge to help create a modal shift from the private car to public transport. In the city centre, we currently have a share of 45% of all passenger traffic. Overall, we carry around 15% of all travellers in the city. Since 1995, ten years ago, our transport volume has increased by 11%, which is about equal to the total growth of traffic. A few days from now, HTM will start the operation of a new light rail connection to one of the major suburbs, about 15 kilometers to the east of The Hague. No doubt, this new line will further increase the number of passengers, and we hope that it will provide some relief from the daily traffic jams to and from the city.

NO2 and PM10 forecast

But despite the increasing volume of public transport, the negative effects of car traffic and heavy goods traffic in the city are clear. The municipality of The Hague is well aware of this. Just to give two examples, the NO₂ (nitrogen dioxide) forecast for the city centre for 2010 amounts to over 40 nanograms per cubic meter due to traffic on local roads. High concentrations of NO₂ may affect health of the citizen, as you will know.

As the next slide shows, the forecast of the level of PM 10 particles in the city centre results in the same value and has inspired the municipality to limit the amount of heavy traffic at the main corridors. These are just two examples that show the need for measures regarding the emission of harmful substances. But the main question is: what can be done to curb this trend towards increasing emissions of harmful substances? Is it the responsibility of the municipality only, or can other concerned parties be involved?

Must we find the solution in severe governmental measures to reduce traffic in the city, which will undoubtedly also affect economic life, or can we find other ways? Must we work top-down or bottom-up? As the title of my presentation indicates, the strategy of the city of The Hague lies with an integrated and voluntary public-private approach, in which both the local government and commercial enterprises, educational institutes and public companies recognize the need for change.

The Hague Foundation

In order to share with you which way has been chosen, we must go back to the year 2001. In that year, a number of large organisations, having their seat in The Hague, joined forces to improve a balanced growth of the city. Among these organisations were a large national bank, the local energy company, the municipality and my own company, HTM. They came together in the conviction that they form an essential part of the local community; that they have a responsibility that goes beyond their individual commercial objectives. In other words: a common responsibility to support the sustainable development of their city.

The first concern of this group of companies and organisations was not only the improvement of environmental conditions, but also to improve safety and security in the city and to strengthen the social climate. Cultural events, language courses for foreign inhabitants, support for the homeless, initiatives to create employment for young people, etcetera. To these ends, they established the 'Hague Development Foundation', a joint foundation that would be engaged in undertaking research and studies, consultancy and advice, and the promotion of public awareness as regards the 'liveability' of the city.

The Hague Sustainability Platform

The Hague Foundation has worked effectively, since it has brought organisations together with a joint concern and a joint commitment. But the purpose of the Foundation has always had a general character, providing a framework for cooperation in general terms. By the end of 2005, following an alarming report on air quality in the city centre of The Hague, the partners of the Foundation recognized the need for further action, aimed specifically at air quality and energy consumption. To that end, it was only logical that the Foundation took the initiative to create a formal agreement and a joint platform for the improvement of sustainable development of the Hague and the surrounding region. Some of the 'founding fathers' of the Foundation, accompanied by a couple of new private parties, decided to establish the Hague Sustainability Platform and sign the Hague Sustainability Charter in order to strengthen their efforts as regards the reduction of energy consumption and harmful emissions.

Partners

As far as we can judge, this partnership between public and private organisations to approach sustainable development is quite unique. It shows that sustainable development is not just a responsibility of the government or the authorities, but that it is shared by all those that are concerned with the future of the city. The partners in the Sustainability Platform are the Municipality, Eneco Energy, the local energy company, the Haagse Hogeschool, which is a large high-level educational institution, Shell Netherlands, the headquarters of the fuel producer, the Dutch branch of Siemens, a large housing corporation, and finally HTM, the public transport operator of the city. All partners play an equal role in the Platform; all have equal voting rights; all have equal financial obligations. The cooperation between them is purely voluntary, which makes it flexible, transparent and accessible.

The Hague Sustainability Charter

The Hague Sustainability Platform is established by a joint agreement between the partners, called the The Hague Sustainability Charter. The Charter was signed in March of 2006 – seven months ago, strongly supported by the national government. The Charter lays down the considerations and commitment of the partners. It describes the general objectives as regards sustainable development. It recognizes the importance of the partners setting a clear example for others, how to improve environmental conditions in the city. Thereby, it intends to raise awareness among the citizens and among other organisations in the Hague about sustainable development. Practically speaking, the Charter contains agreements as regards the way the partners will cooperate, establish joint projects, and organise and finance the common initiatives.

Draft projects

Annexed to the Charter is a list of draft projects in the three major areas of traffic and mobility, the use of energy and buildings and housing. These draft projects have been formulated provisionally by the partners in order to provide a broad guideline, reflecting the scope of their cooperation and the basis from which to define actual projects. Among the mentioned draft projects are such things as the use of solar panels on rooftops of offices, the building of so-called 'smart houses' aimed at a reduction of energy consumption; the constant monitoring of air quality throughout the city and the use of sustainable forms of traction in public transport. Other possible projects envisage certification procedures, raising awareness among the public and education campaigns for young people. The list of possibilities could be virtually endless, but of course, the viability of projects must be determined on a case by case basis. The list therefore serves as a starting point.

Proposed initiatives

As mentioned, the Charter has only been signed in March 2006. Since then, several investigations have started to see which projects may have priority. As regards my company for instance, we study the use of so-called 'NaturalHy' fuel for some of our buses. NaturalHy is a mix of hydrogen and natural gas, and the use of this fuel would be an experiment for wider use. The study is undertaken together with the Municipality of The Hague. At the same time, we consider the changeover from conventional (Euro-3) diesel fuel towards natural gas for several public transport buses. Other partners to the Platform are oriented towards different projects. For instance Siemens, the Municipality and the educational institute have proposed to install equipment for the measurement of air quality on various places in the city. The housing corporation and the energy company consider the use of solar panels on rooftops. And all partners discuss the possibility of a 'company label', intended as a certification system as regards sustainable business procedures. By meeting the requirements of the company label, organisations would – for instance – prove to use sustainable ways of purchasing, to limit the use of energy, or provide sustainable ways of mobility to their employees, and so on.

Future developments

Important to mention is, that these proposed initiatives must be seen as the start of public-private partnership under the Charter for Sustainable Development in The Hague. Already, new candidates such as a major bank have shown interest in joining the Sustainability Platform, and the extension of membership to other companies and organisations is of course fully supported. The essence of the Charter is that employers in The Hague have a platform where they can find a basis for knowledge, for cooperation and for practical ways to participate in projects for sustainable development. They can share their experiences, and also share the risk of taking new and sometimes experimental initiatives. And also, they can approach sustainable development not as a global, abstract or wide-ranging issue, but as a local issue that starts in your own back yard. Thereby, the threshold towards sustainable development is lowered and support is

facilitated. By effectively communicating about the results, we believe that the Charter and the Platform on Sustainable Development will promote public awareness in the local community, so that sustainable development becomes a 'way of life' for all citizens and organisations in The Hague.

Information

Ladies and gentlemen, it has been an honour for me to tell you about the unique approach regarding sustainable development in my city. Unique, we believe, for the combination of three reasons: 1) it is voluntary; 2) it is a public-private partnership, and 3) it has a primarily local character. For more information, you will find the address of the Platform indicated on this sheet, and of course you may contact me after this session. I thank you very much for your kind attention.

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