



To: University Council
Via: university.council@eur.nl

Date
12-4-2023

Subject
Response to 38557 Plan of Action
Accessibility

Our reference
CvB/EvS/RP/275.753

Your reference
UC/LvS/38557

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Enclosure
Appendix 1-4

Department
Executive Board

Visiting address
Burgemeester Oudlaan 50
Erasmus Building
A2-01

Postal address
P.O. Box 1738
3000 DR Rotterdam
The Netherlands

T +31 10 408 1751
E cvb@eur.nl
W www.eur.nl/English

Dear members of the University Council,

As stated by the University council, accessibility can be approached from many different angles. In the *Plan of Action Accessibility*, Academic Affairs specifically focusses on how all students at EUR who have the potential and ambition to successfully achieve and progress through higher education. This will be achieved by focussing on optimising both inflow and progression (study success), and outflow of different student groups (for example, first generation students and students with a migration background). The ambition is that our education system is equally accessible to all students, in terms of equal opportunities. The physical accessibility is not a focus point for this Plan of Action specifically.

However, we totally agree with you that accessibility is a multifaceted issue. In this letter, we want to inform you on the situation regarding accessibility on two other levels. First, the plans of RE&F make our university physically accessible to all our students, staff and visitors. Second, the efforts of the E&S Team 'Studying with a Functional Impairment'. This team is currently working on an Action Plan Studying with a Functional Impairment.

Real Estate and Facilities (RE&F)

In June 2022, the Executive Board approved the action plan for the start-up of the physical accessibility project (Appendix 1). The results and recommendations of the CPC Audit '*De borging van toegankelijkheid voor studenten met een functiebeperking*' are included in this action plan. The project started in September 2022, and consists of five components:

1. Visie & beleid (*Vision & policy*)
2. Bewustwording & communicatie (*Awareness & communication*)

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3. Kennisontwikkeling & vastlegging eisen/normen/richtlijnen (*Education & recording requirements/ standards/guidelines*)
4. Compliance wetgeving (benodigde technische en facilitaire aanpassingen) (*Compliance legislation (required technical and facility adjustments)*)
5. Implementatie & verankering (beheer) (*Implementation & embedding*)

In October 2022 we organized two awareness sessions for employees of RE&F, E&S, HR and IDEA Center, given by Ben Kaelen, physical accessibility advisor ([Accesso Advies](#)) and Nadia van den Heuvel, experience expert and social entrepreneur ([lctoria](#)). These sessions were part of the component 'Awareness & Communication' and crucial for the project. These awareness sessions will be organised again in April and May 2023.

Partly because of the UC's comments, we realize that we must start communicating about the project, the project goals, the awareness sessions, the use of a focus group, the project progress and so on. We will start with this in May 2023.

The project components 'Knowledge development & recording requirements/standards/guidelines' and 'Compliance legislation' have also started, also with the help of Ben Kaelen, who has been given a 2-year assignment for this. A multi-year budget plan and associated action plan has been made, product sheets of key issues are being drawn up (Appendix 2), physical accessibility is being included in the new real estate projects, including the renovation of the Tinbergen Building. We are also busy solving various quick wins, such as adjusting the accessible toilets, adjusting the doors in the library, adjusting the pavement on the campus. In addition: resolving the issues in the Langeveld Building also takes place in close consultation with Ben Kaelen.

The reviewing of processes and procedures you mentioned, is part of the project component 'Implementation & embedding'. For example, we will use the project 'Renovation Tinbergen Building', which is currently in the design phase, as an opportunity for applying our ideas and lessons learned (of course, amongst others, those of the Langeveld Building).

Talking about processes: the problem you indicated with access to the elevator at the P Building is unknown to us. Employees and students with reduced mobility can be authorised, with a simple and quick procedure, to use the wheelchair platform lifts, standard elevators and several specific doors that give access to public spaces. The

application procedure is communicated on both [MyEUR](#) and [EUR.nl](#). It would help us if the members of the University Council could give us the names of the people who have experienced these problems, so that we can pinpoint the exact problems.

Unfortunately, an important part of the project, 'Vision & Policy', has not yet started. We are in the process of hiring a policy advisor in the field of integral accessibility combined with physical accessibility, who can guide the EUR in arriving at a detailed vision. This process takes more time than expected, it turns out that such experienced advisors are hard to find.

As an organization, we will have to determine the desired degree of physical accessibility, the devoted resources and possible time frame. The application of an official standard (the EUR has been using [NEN-ISO 21542](#) for some time now, in anticipation of the [Dutch NEN-standard in development](#)) is only part of such a vision. In order to arrive at a vision and policy, including the determination of mandate within the organization, first, awareness and commitment among all actors is necessary. Subsequently, physical accessibility must be an integral part of the policy, plans and projects of, in particular, HR, E&S, IDEA Center, ABD and actually addressed within the whole organization. which is rather difficult in practice (RE&F and E&S do work closely together to ensure that their plans are aligned).

We appreciate the interest of the University Council in this topic. Support for - and awareness about (physical) accessibility is of utmost importance. We would like to invite the members of the University Council to attend one of the awareness sessions (24-april, 4-may, 8-may, 22-may, 09:15-13:00h). To register, you can send an email to Laura Hofstee (laura.hofstee@eur.nl). If you want more information about the project or discuss specific issues, you can also contact Laura Hofstee.

Education & Student Affairs (E&S)

The team Studying with a Functional Impairment is currently working on an Action Plan Studying with a Functional Impairment (not to be confused with the Plan of Action Accessibility from Academic Affairs). In September 2022, an audit was conducted by CPC entitled "Ensuring accessibility for students with disabilities." Based on the outcomes of this audit, team Studying with a Functional Impairment (SMF, part of E&S) was assigned the task to draw up an EUR-wide action plan, revolving around the theme of studying with a functional impairment.

Based on the outcomes of the audit, a proposal was written containing 8 themes. The proposal was approved by the Executive Board on 22 December 2022. The proposal was discussed during the University Council meeting of March 7th, 2023. By the end of May 2023, the action plan will be ready. For each theme, different departments will be involved including examination boards, Marketing and Communication and the exam organization.

The 8 themes are:

1. Physical accessibility
2. Digital accessibility
3. Flexibility of education
4. Individual provisions
5. Testing and examining
6. Student counselling
7. Information supply
8. Monitoring and advising

For more information about the action plan, see Appendix 3 Proposal PvA SMF – 11 januari 2023.

The University Council has asked for information about how many students request adjustments from their faculties. Recent numbers of (granted) requests for adjustments/provisions can be found in the audit report, see Appendix 4, Audit Report Accessibility SMF, p. 40. Team SMF has no answer to the question why requests are rejected, as this concerns decisions that are made by the exam boards of the faculties. From experience, team SMF knows that requests are often denied because of a lack of evidence. Within EUR, there is no data available on the number of students with physical and invisible functional impairments. Due to privacy legislation (AVG), it is not allowed to register and share this type of data.

The Executive Board of Erasmus University Rotterdam,



dr. E.M.A. van Schoten RA
Vice-president