

COVID-19 AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT

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STATE OF PLAY JULY 2020



EPF'S UPDATE

on the current health safety measures in Public Transport

This update is a result of the EPF research conducted over the last month (end June-2020 to end July-2020). It reflects the differences of health safety measures across Europe, focusing on Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, France, Italy and Spain.

COVID-19 AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Main highlights per country



THE NETHERLANDS

Low level of surveillance in public transport

- Mouth masks are only mandatory on public transport;
- PT staff is advised not to actively search for people without mouth masks but to supervise as the responsibility is on the passengers' side;
- The level of acceptance of the use of mouth masks is low and in July there were a couple of incidents with KLM flights where passengers refused to wear a mouth mask;
- Passengers with disabilities are gradually getting the necessary assistance in trains;
- Several Dutch cities have invested in walking and cycling by improving infrastructure, creating pedestrian streets and increasing of shared mobility.

Highlight of the week:

Due to the rise of cases in the Belgian region of Antwerp, the Dutch government discourages cross-border trips to Belgium.

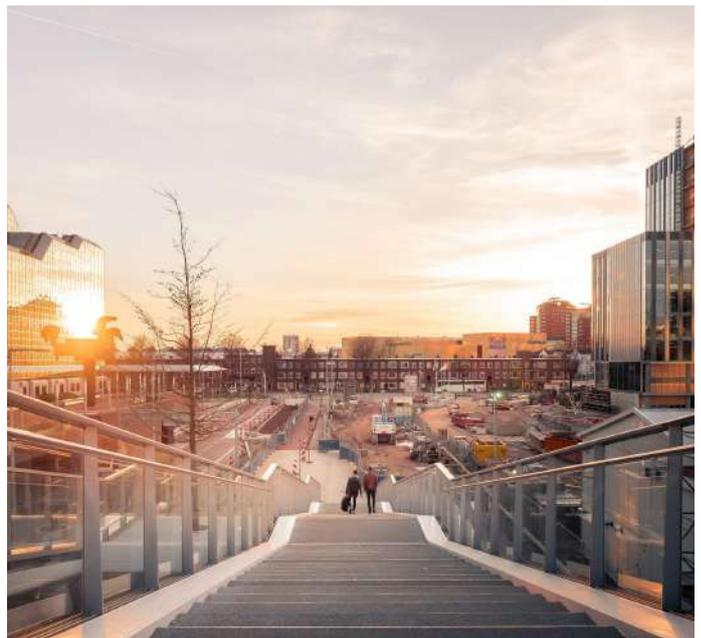
BELGIUM

Ups, downs and new measures

- The numbers of infections in Belgium increased rapidly during this month, resulting in a step back on the relaxation of contingency measures;
- Mouth masks are mandatory in closed spaces and local governments can decide to make them mandatory in their towns or specific streets; fines for not-wearing a mouth mask are quite high (up to 4 000€) and locals seem mostly respectful of the measures;
- Local governments have invested in walking and cycling, promoting sustainable mobility alternatives;
- Assistance for people with disabilities on train restarted (with limitations)

Highlight of the week:

With a rising number of cases, in the last week of July the Belgian town of Antwerp installed special precaution measures (such as mandatory curfew and the obligation of always wearing a mouth mask). Other regions/towns can follow if necessary.



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Main highlights per country



FRANCE

A return to harsher measures

- With a rise of infections in its neighbouring countries, France has decided to adopt more restrictive measures;
- The acceptance level of wearing a mouth mask in France is quite high, but there were reports of violence in public transport due to the lack of respect of the measures;
- Assistance on trains for passengers with disabilities is being restored;
- Video surveillance cameras in France have been helping to monitor how many people are wearing mouth masks in public transport;
- In Paris, there are plans to create 15-minute neighbourhoods where one could find everything you need within 15 minutes from home. This is a plan to further incentivize walking and cycling.

Highlight of the week:

SNCF, the French railway operator, is also using real-time passenger density data to monitor passenger density within train stations.

GERMANY

From public transport to cycling

- The obligation to wear a mask has been in force in Germany for more than ten weeks, but there is still controversy over the mask use. Studies conducted in Bavaria show that there is still some reluctance in wearing mouth masks, as some passengers feel uncomfortable with this new garment and seem to struggle in understanding emotions from fellow passengers;
- Fines for not wearing a mouth mask can reach 5000€
- Several German cities have invested in walking and cycling, creating temporary bike lanes and pedestrian zones. A rush to bike shops has even left some sellers without stock.
- Groups of volunteers have helped people with disabilities to return to public transport.
- Much has returned to "normal" and there is a generalised fear of the possible rise of infections.



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ITALY

Strong measures to prevent a second wave

- Italy is yet to lift its state of emergency. This means that all prevention measures in place in public transport continue, including the capacity limit of 50%.
- More than 8,000 passengers had rail journeys cancelled during the last weekend of July after the Italian government announced that trains could only travel half full.
- As one of the European countries most hit by the pandemic, Italy has strict measures on its public transport as: checks of passengers' body temperature, capacity limits and extra sanitizing of vehicles;
- Several Italian cities invested in walking and cycling; creating new bike lanes, pedestrian streets and promoting shared micro-mobility.

SPAIN

The interruption of the plans to return to normality

- Spain's plans to return to normality by Summer were stopped by a sudden increase of infections in several of its regions;
- With the lift of restrictions there were reports of crowded buses and trams, being hard to respect social distancing there;
- The use of mouth masks is different from region to region, but was kept mandatory in public transport. In some regions mouth masks are mandatory in all public spaces;
- According to a study by the Imperial College London, Spain is one of the most acceptant countries to the use of mouth masks;
- Nevertheless, cases in Spain are gradually increasing and new measures could be expected if numbers aren't stabilized.

