

ACCESSIBILITY

The Dutch Exhibitors Association (Nederlandse Vereniging van Bioscopen en Filmtheaters, NVBF) underwrites the interests of people with a (physical) disability. An enjoyable cinema or movie theatre visit should naturally be possible for people with disabilities. In the Netherlands, a good deal of cinemas and movie theatres state on their website how to access the building, the parking etc. If not, visitors can contact the cinema or movie theatre by telephone or mail for help.

The NVBF has, in association with MKB Nederland (largest entrepreneurs' organisation in the Netherlands), drafted an action plan on accessibility in 2019 (see, in Dutch: [Actieplan NVBF - MKB Toegankelijk](#)).

The Dutch Exhibitors Association actively informs its affiliated members on accessibility. Through joint campaigns, and by providing targeted information to members (via specific meetings, general meetings, via the login section of the NVBF website and via newsletters).

During the general meeting of November 2018 Nico Vertommen (facility director, Pathé Theatres) spoke on the *Nederlands Keurmerk Toegankelijkheid* (Dutch Quality Mark for Accessibility) and how the Dutch division of Pathé tackles accessibility, including their collaboration with the *Stichting Ongehinderd* (Foundation Unhindered). During the general meeting of November 2016, Marianne Dijkshoorn (expert on accessibility) informed members of the association on the subject.

Members of the association are regularly informed about legislation and regulations regarding accessibility. In addition to information about 'what has to be done', simple tools and new technical developments are presented.

Accessibility for visitors who are deaf or hard of hearing

By means of technical facilities such as an audio induction loop or the Sennheiser system ([Sennheiser - official website and online-shop](#)), visitors with a hearing impairment can still enjoy a performance. An audio hearing loop ensures that the hearing impaired can hear the sound with their hearing aids without disturbing ambient noise.

In the Netherlands deaf and hard of hearing visitors can also use the app Subcatch. Which was supported by the NVBF with a contribution of 20.000 euro. The association spoke on the new app during the general assembly of November 2019 and informed members on its use and asked them to support and promote the app.

Subcatch is an app in which subtitles are automatically synched with the images on the screen after the visitor activates it. Dutch films without subtitles are not accessible for deaf and hard of hearing visitors, with the app they can visit these films. More information (Dutch) on: [Subcatch - Home](#)

Accessibility for visitors with a visual impairment

Earcatch is an app in which audio description is synched to the images on the screen. Through the headphones, visitors who are visual impaired, hear a voice that describes exactly what is happening on screen in between the dialogue. More information (Dutch) on: [Earcatch - Home](#).

With this app, which was released in September 2015, everyone who is blind or visually impaired can visit the cinema and movie theatres and 'watch' a film.

In addition to Earcatch, there are also providers such as Sennheiser that offer technical options for people with a visual impairment.

On Earcatch and Subcatch

The Dutch cinema and movie theatres 'caught up' with the arrival of both Earcatch and Subcatch and is now one of the global leaders in terms of accessibility.

"The way in which Earcatch makes audio description available is, in particular, a major innovation." Says Gulian Notlhenius, managing director NVBF.

The technique both apps, Earcatch and Subcatch, use is audio recognition software (fingerprinting technology). Prior to the screening in the cinema, the user downloads the audio description file of the film. The app recognizes the movie by its original soundtrack and automatically plays the correct audio description on the phone. If audio description for a film is available in Earcatch, the app can also be used at home if the film is broadcast via television, DVD, or video-on-demand. It is precisely this smart application of the technology that makes these apps unique.

The association supports Earcatch and Subcatch were possible, and underwrites the importance of accessibility for everyone and in particular for visitors of cinemas and movie theatres. Therefore, members of the association collaborated in the autumn of 2015 during a collective introductory campaign "Together to the cinema", which was aimed at welcoming the new target group. The campaign invited future Earcatch users to take someone for free to the cinema or movie theatre to watch a Dutch film with audio description: to go together to the cinema.

Accessibility for visitors with reading difficulties (dyslexia)

SubReader is a platform that allows people with reading difficulties, such as dyslexia, to have subtitles read to them at the movies in the cinema (as an indication: 7 to 10% of the population has dyslexia). SubReader originally started in Denmark and now supports more than 100 cinemas, mainly in Denmark and Sweden. From a technical point of view, there is little involved: the moviegoer downloads SubReader on her or his phone and listens to the subtitles through her or his own headphones. The cinema must be equipped with a SubReader server. More information on [SubReader | Read out subtitles](#) and this video (in Dutch): <https://youtu.be/42vHcN9m6II>.

In 2021 the first SubReader server was installed in the Netherlands. The NVBF informed its members via their newsletters about the possibility.

Please note: both Earcatch and Subcatch are free to use, the platform SubReader is not (users pay a monthly fee).