

Press Release

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NS six-monthly figures: Passengers more often on time and more satisfied

- **Van Boxtel: sustaining performance will be a major challenge**
- **Customer satisfaction rises to 84%**
- **Cost savings in overheads and at head office**

In the first half of 2018, NS maintained its good performance it had delivered in 2017. This is shown by the six-monthly figures for 2018 that NS has published today. Substantially more trains are running, including trains every ten minutes between Amsterdam and Eindhoven, and the Eurostar to London. On top, the Intercity Brussels now runs on the high-speed line. More passengers are arriving on time: 93.1% as opposed to 91.4% in the same period last year. That has led to more passengers being satisfied with their train journey: 84% of passengers give a score of seven out of ten or higher, compared with 78% a year earlier.

Challenge is to sustain performance

Roger van Boxtel, the CEO of NS: "We are continuing to focus on sustaining this performance. To keep the Netherlands accessible, we have already committed to an investment programme of €3 billion in acquiring new trains and upgrading of existing trains. New trains, the improved timetable and the hard work put in by our colleagues have led to a rise in customer satisfaction. But we are coming up against the limits of this system. The Netherlands is facing a huge mobility challenge, and the railway network is no exception. More people are choosing to travel by train every year. We are pleased about that. At the same time, this increases the risk of crowded trains and delays, despite all the measures we are taking together with our partners to prevent this."

In the first six months of 2018, NS exceeded the targets that were agreed for this year with the Dutch government. Looking ahead to 2019, the year in which there will be an interim evaluation of NS, the company is on course for all 12 targets. Van Boxtel says, "Given the growth in passenger numbers and how busy the railway network is, it will be a huge challenge to maintain the performance we have delivered this spring."

1. *Achieved values for main NS KPIs, first half of 2018*

	Actual, H1 2018	Actual, H1 2017	Minimum value for 2018	Target value for 2019
Customer satisfaction	84%	78%	74%	80%
Passenger punctuality	93.1%	91.4%	88.9%	91.1%
Passenger punctuality, HSL	84.8%	81.2%	82.1%	84.1%
Seat availability at peak times	95.5%	95.2%	94.3%	95.5%
Seat availability at peak, HSL	94.9%	96.9%	91.2%	94.9%

The chance of getting a seat

The chance of getting a seat in peak periods was 95.5% in the first six months of 2018, compared with 95.2% in the first six months of 2017. NS now has far more seats available on the Amsterdam–Eindhoven route as it is running trains every ten minutes. The preparations for the introduction of the next generation of Sprinters (SNG) are in full swing. They will be brought into operation from December onwards. The popularity of the fast Amsterdam–Rotterdam route is exceeding expectations. Passenger numbers on that route rose by 19%. NS has fulfilled the agreements made on seat availability in peak periods on the high-speed line, although the chance of getting a seat did fall from 96.9% to 94.9%. At present, NS is working on extending the length of the trains on this route. Furthermore, the number of trains per hour on this line will increase from four to five as of December.

Personal safety

Passengers feel increasingly safe in trains and at stations. 90% of passengers are satisfied with the safety. The figure for the previous year was 88%. NS deploys Safety & Service staff specifically for this purpose. The access gates at stations also help our passengers feel safe. It is still very important to be alert to personal safety as an issue. After a successful trial, bodycams have now been introduced for our Safety & Service staff.

Finances

Revenue for the NS Group rose by €342 million from €2,529 million in the first half of 2017 to €2,871 million in the first half of 2018. The comparative figures for 2017 still include Qbuzz, with revenue of €99 million. Qbuzz was sold on 13 July 2017.

The number of people opting to travel by train in the Netherlands is growing. Like-for-like revenue for the Dutch passenger company grew by 5.5% from €1,156 million to €1,220 million¹. This increase is largely the result of growth in passenger-kilometres and the fare increase.

The revenue from Abellio UK grew to €1,180 million (2017: €831 million). This increase was mainly due to the new West Midlands franchise, which got off to a vigorous start, and the organic growth of the existing British franchises. NS is continuing to closely monitor Brexit and any impact it may have on the British railway market.

The revenue from Abellio Germany grew to €168 million (2017: €117 million). This growth was primarily achieved through the consolidation of WestfalenBahn, operating in North Rhine-Westphalia and Lower Saxony, as Abellio acquired full ownership at the end of December.

The result from operating activities (EBIT) was a profit of €19 million in the first half of 2018 (compared with a loss of €10 million in 2017). The underlying result from operating activities² in the first six months of 2018 amounted to €50 million, compared with €38 million in the same period in 2017. In the first half of 2018, a significant component of the exceptional items concerned a change in the estimation for a franchise settlement mechanism for East Anglia (one of our franchises in the United Kingdom); this had a total negative impact on the result of €19 million. An important component of the exceptional items in the first half of 2017 was the penalty of €41 million imposed by the Netherlands Authority for Consumers and Markets (ACM).

¹ Adjusted for the transfer of the Hoekse Lijn and the regional franchise for Zwolle-Enschede and Zwolle-Kampen.

² The underlying result is the result excluding exceptional items, which is a better indicator of the financial results from the operating activities.

NS is reporting a net profit of €6 million for the first half of 2018, compared with a net loss of €14 million in 2017.

The improved operational performance for passengers – such as higher punctuality and customer satisfaction – was partly realised due to the substantial investments made by NS in recent years for the benefit of passengers. These include better customer service, IT improvements and the start of an investment programme of €3 billion in modernising and purchasing trains. This also presents a financial challenge. NS has taken measures to improve profitability and has announced a programme aimed at reducing the costs of overheads and at the head office by €50 million in the next few years. This is how NS will make sure it can carry on investing in keeping the Netherlands accessible in the future.

Key financial figures for NS, first half of 2018 versus 2017		
(in millions of euros)		
	H1 2018	H1 2017
Revenue from passenger and station activities in the Netherlands	1,523	1,482
Revenue from Abellio	1,348	948
Revenue from Qbuzz	0	99
Total revenue	2,871	2,529
Underlying result from operating activities	50	38
Exceptional items ³	-31	-48
Result from operating activities (EBIT)	19	-10
Net result	6	-14
Investments	349	324

Note for editors

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For more information about NS, see <https://www.ns.nl/en/about-ns>.

³ The exceptional items for the first six months of 2018 include a non-cash pension contribution by Abellio UK of €16 million and the change in the estimation regarding the franchise settlement mechanism of €19 million. The exceptional items for the first six months of 2017 include the ACM penalty of €41 million, a non-cash pension contribution by Abellio UK of €11 million and a change in the estimation regarding the franchise settlement mechanism of -€8 million (adjustment for comparative purposes).