



A Safe Ride at the Heart of the Building

ELA Conference, 10 April 2014

Mövenpick Hotel, Amsterdam

Opening statement by Philippe Lamalle, President of ELA

Dear Mr. Sluijsmans, representative of the Dutch authorities, honoured guests, Dear Colleagues and friends of the lift and escalator industry, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, let me express the pleasure we have to gather here in the beautiful city of Amsterdam at the invitation of our Dutch member association VLR. Our special thanks for hosting our yearly ELA event go to Joop Thissen, President of our Dutch association and to Kees van der Sluijs, secretary general of VLR.

Mentioning Joop Thissen, a long-standing member of the ELA Board, it is with some emotion that I have to mention that Joop today attends his last ELA meeting representing VLR! Indeed, after many years of dedicated services to the lift industry in the Netherlands and in Europe, Joop has decided to pass the ELA torch to Mr. René Hansen who will henceforth represent the Netherlands in the Board of ELA. We are happy to welcome him in our midst.

The Netherlands has a well developed economy and has always played a special role in the economic development of Europe. Since the 16th century, shipping, fishing, trade and banking have been leading sectors of the Dutch economy which, in some areas, even developed world hegemony during what is still called the “Dutch Golden Age”. Traces of the VOC – the Dutch United East-India Company – are still to be found here in Amsterdam and in many cities around the country.

Today, the Netherlands is one of the world’s ten leading exporting nations. If the food and beverage industry forms the largest industrial sector, other major sectors include chemistry, metallurgy, machinery and electrical goods. The country has the 18th largest economy in the world and ranks 10th in GDP per capita.

Amsterdam is the financial and business capital of the Netherlands. The Amsterdam Stock Exchange is the world’s oldest stock exchange and remains one of Europe’s largest bourses to this day.

The location of the country gives it prime access to markets in neighbouring countries, with the natural hinterland of the port of Rotterdam – Europe’s largest port – reaching as far as Switzerland through the Rhine River and an excellent road and rail network. With a population of nearly 17 million people, our host country today is the 10th most densely populated country in the world. Finally, the country is one of the leading European nations for attracting foreign investment and is one of the five major investors in the USA.

Ladies and Gentlemen, in one word, today we are welcomed in the fifth- most competitive economy of the world! Dear Joop and René, your country has a lot to be proud of!



I come now to the subject of our Conference: **“A Safe Ride at the Heart of the Building”**. Without lifts, vertical building would be no longer possible, and any building with floors would be unable to function properly. Therefore, I believe we can correctly say that lifts are indeed **at the heart of the building**, as stated in our title. Lifts bring people together; **they** play not only a vital **functional** role but also a **social** role as a place where people meet, talk and exchange! They insure mobility and accessibility for all – young and old.

Not surprisingly, those of you who attended our ELA conference in Istanbul in 2013 will recall seeing the word **“SAFE”** in last year’s title as well. This is certainly not a coincidence, nor a lack of imagination! On the contrary, it is a clear indication that **“Safety”** firmly remains in the forefront of the ELA concerns. EN 81-80 – the Safety Norm for Existing Lifts (SNEL) – is again one of the main topics of our conference. We will highlight how SNEL is being implemented in various countries and where the main obstacles remain.

In the Netherlands, there are nearly **90.000 lifts in operation** - which gives it a density of about 5 lifts per 1000 inhabitants. This is a rather **low** figure compared to other countries, but it is well in line with the main building pattern of **low**, one family housing and in line also with the very name of the country which means **“low lands”**!

However, many of the Dutch lifts are due for renovation, so I think our host country will be interested in learning about modernisation experiences elsewhere in Europe!

Regarding SNEL, I am today very happy to announce that the **ELA SNEL White Paper** has now formally been endorsed by ELCA and EFESME. Speaking with **one voice** on this important issue for our whole industry, we have a new version on SNEL with an introductory statement signed by the three Presidents of these associations. Also, after our **French and Belgian** member associations in the recent past, our **Swiss** member VSA has just issued a brochure on SNEL in Switzerland using many of the drawings produced by Zack for ELA and available to all members on the ELA website. Also our **Polish** member association - PALM - is preparing a brochure based on the ELA SNEL White Paper to be published on the occasion of the **Eurolift** fair at Kielce in October of this year, where ELA will participate. It is very gratifying to see our work in ELA used and disseminated at national level!

As all else in society, lifts and escalators must operate within a well-defined legal framework. As this legal framework is presently undergoing significant changes, it is important that our professionals know the details of it. Therefore, I am happy to welcome **Mrs. Raimonda Sneigiene**, representing the European Commission, to bring us up to date on the subject.

On the same issue, but seen from the angle of the Notified Bodies, we are honoured today to have **Mr. Franck Lesage, co Vice Chairman of NB-L’s** who will address the impact of the new legal framework on NB-L’s. In view of our continued drive to improve the cooperation with NB-L, we are looking forward with interest to his presentation.



One other topic remains at the core of the lift industry interest, namely the revision of EN 81-20/50 and its consequences for the lift industry. Once again, we are fortunate to have **Mr. Ian Jones**,

Chairman of CEN TC10-WG1, to speak on the subject. Ian is well known to all of us for his outstanding work in CEN and it is not an exaggeration to call him the “**father of the standard**”! Thank you again, Ian, for your excellent work and for addressing us today.

As I already mentioned, we will have a panel discussion on **SNEL**, moderated by our Secretary General, Mr. Jean-Pierre Jacobs, with the participation of **Mr. Philippe Casteleyn for Belgium, Mr. Inaki Aranburu, representing Spain, and Mr. Jean-Luc Detavernier for France. But first, Mr. Ko Legez, representing the Dutch lift sector**, will report on the situation of SNEL in his country and the difficulties encountered. With this example as with the other countries’ experiences, we will aim to show that national regulations on the topic are taking quite some time to mature first because of the crisis but also due to changes of government and lack of political will. However, I am convinced that our continued efforts towards **a safe ride in all countries** will pay off in the end!

Unfortunately, accidents also continue to happen on escalators. Today, we have as a speaker the **Chairman of CEN TC10-WG2, Mr. Gero Gschwendtner**, to examine causes and remediation of accidents on escalators in the framework of SNEE, the safety norm for existing escalators. **Mr. Ignasi Oliver, Director of the Barcelona Underground**, whom we are very glad to welcome here today, will highlight the major renovations which have been realised in the Barcelona Underground in order to ensure a **safe ride** there as well.

Finally, I think it is fitting that the last speaker of our conference should be a key player who is in close touch with the **reality of Europe’s built environment**.

EuroACE, the European Alliance of Companies for Energy Efficiency in Buildings, is one such player continuously stimulating more and better policy making for improving the energy efficiency of Europe’s buildings.

Mr. Adrian Joyce, our last speaker today, is Secretary General of EuroACE. Moreover, he is also Campaign Manager of the **Renovate Europe campaign** – which ELA joined last year. This campaign aims at stimulating a coordinated renovation policy with EU decision makers. In view of the coming European elections, a Manifesto has recently been issued aimed at the European Parliament. Adrian Joyce will inform us of the latest developments of the campaign and the reception of the Manifesto by Members of the European Parliament. However, we have also asked him to present his views on vital issues for the lift industry such as mobility, safety, accessibility and, of course, energy efficiency. Thank you Mr. Joyce for being with us today!

Ladies and gentlemen, I wish you an interesting ELA conference and now give the floor to the representative of the EC Commission, **Mrs. Raimonda Sneigiene**.

Raimonda, the floor is yours.