

**ABVV BTB**  
Samen sterk

**LACK OF SPACES**  
**LACK OF SAFETY**  
**LACK OF COMFORT**

**BLACKBOOK**  
**MOTORWAY PARKING AREAS**  
**IN BELGIUM**  
**june 2023**

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## Foreword

The BTB-ABVV parking book, a survey into the state of Belgian (motorway) parking areas has now reached its 10th edition. A nice anniversary, perhaps, although the big question is this: do we have anything to celebrate this time around?

Because, ultimately, we would like to conclude this series of insights with the message that there are sufficient, comfortable and safe parking areas in Belgium that enable all of our professional drivers to take their rest periods in the right conditions.

But, after 16 years of following up on this topic and publishing and asking questions, are we really any further along the road than we were when we started this journey back in 2007?

And, to our great regret, the answer is still a resounding **NO**.

Yet again we have to come to the same conclusions:

- **Too few**
- **Too insecure**
- **Too expensive**
- **Too dirty**

So, has nothing changed?

Of course it has, because little by little (motorway) parking areas are being upgraded.

But once the upgrades are complete, will they meet all of the conditions required to provide a comfortable place for professional drivers to take their rest periods? And with all the necessary facilities?

No, to our great regret the answer is still 'no'.

That's why, for this particular parking book, we are taking a slightly different tack.

We won't just be looking at what is lacking in these facilities, but we also want to provide some inspiration and set out our clear expectations, because for the average driver, a motorway parking area is just a short, occasional stop. But for our professional drivers (those working behind the wheel of both heavy goods vehicles and coaches), parking areas are a part of their lives. A place where they can not only take a break and have a rest, but also relax, have a shower and go to sleep.

And if that's the case, then you ought to be able to expect more than what's available at the moment!

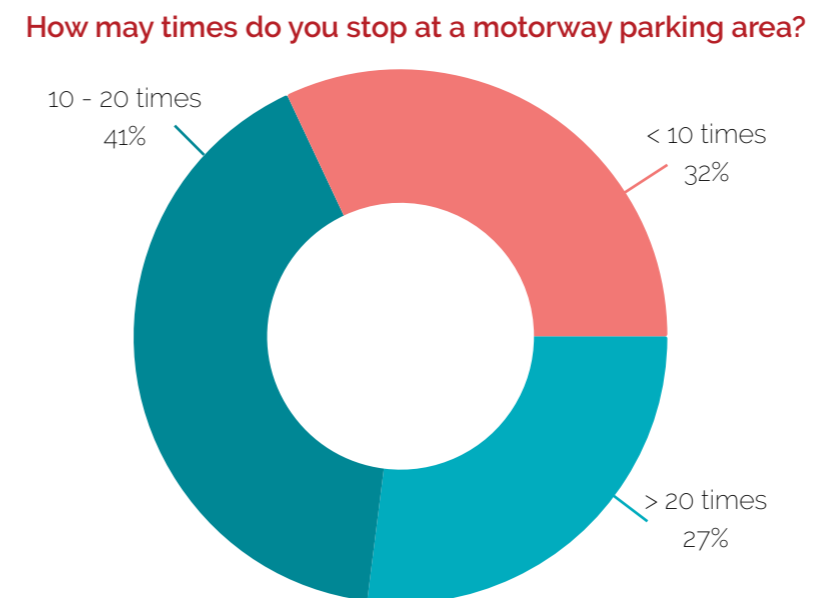
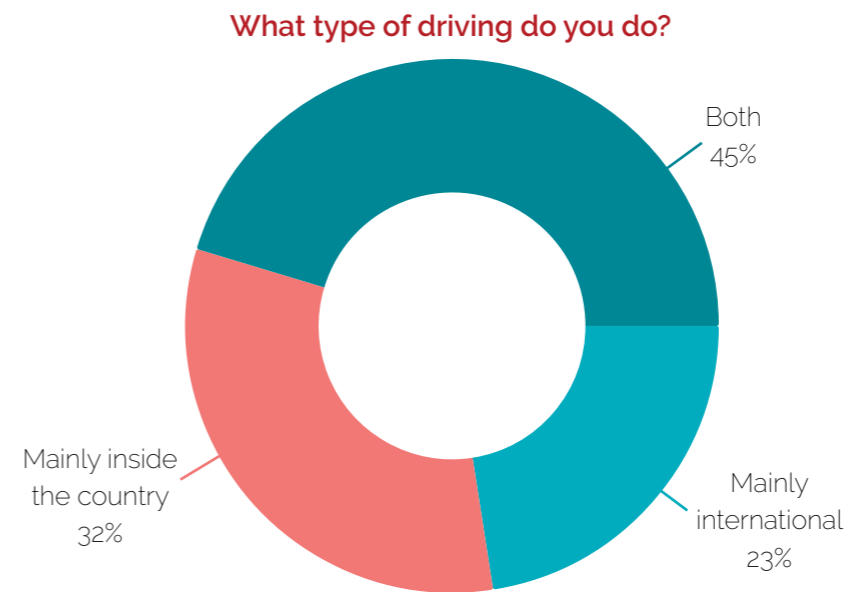
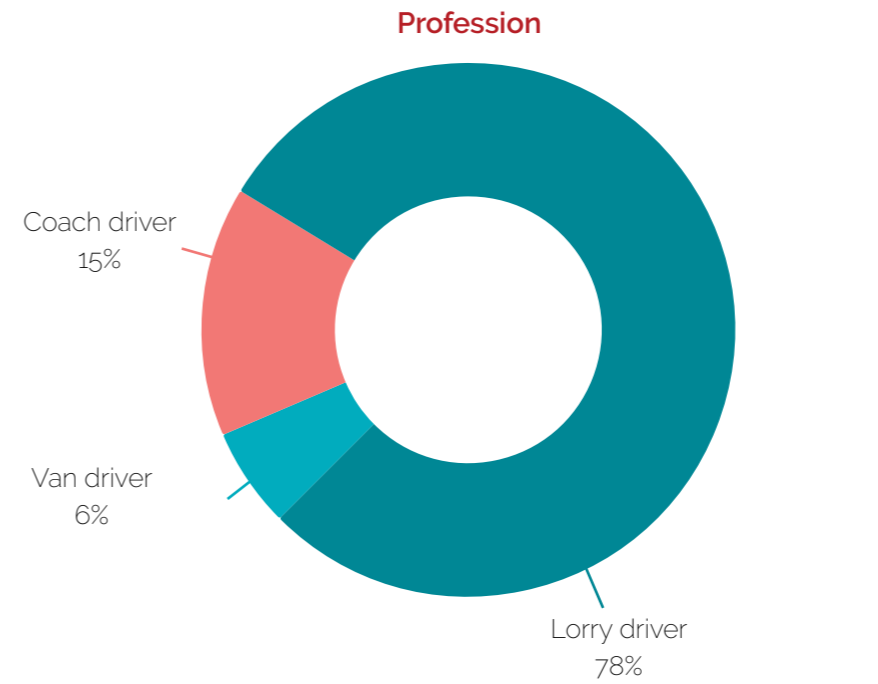
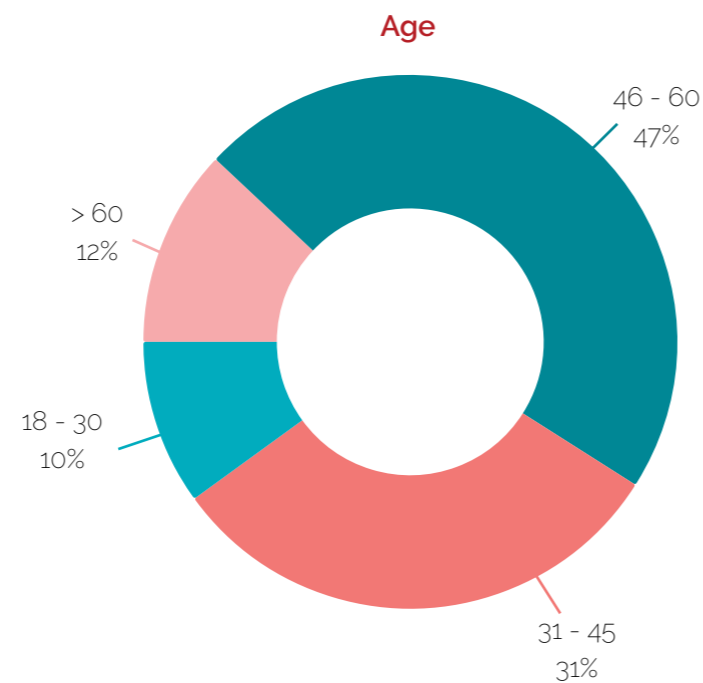
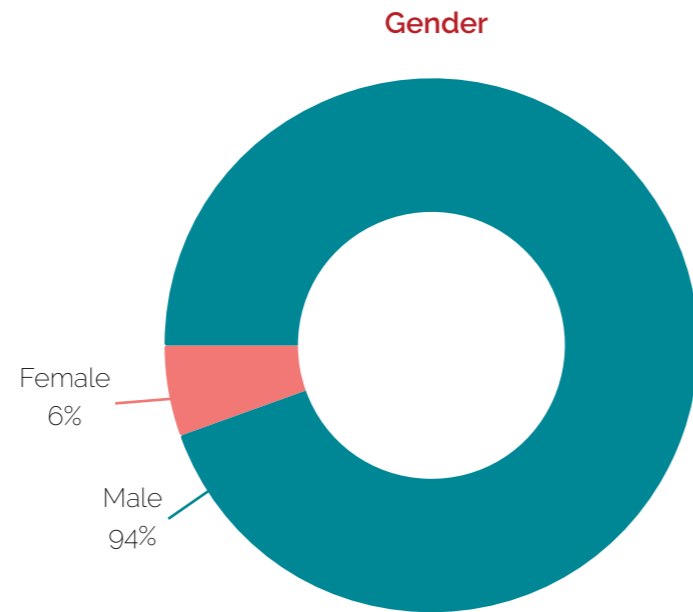
**Frank MOREELS**  
President of BTB



# What our drivers have to say

Of course, for this edition of the survey, we have kept our ear to the ground with our drivers, too. No one is better placed than they are, with their day-to-day experience, to make an accurate assessment of the situation in Belgium today.

This time around, 389 drivers completed our survey. A minority of them (6%) are women.



The vast majority of respondents (78%) are drivers of HGVs (heavy goods vehicles - trucks), while a little over 15% are coach drivers. The other 6% are van drivers.

23% of the respondents drive within Belgium only, while the remainder work either internationally or a mixture of both.

There's plenty of experience with motorway parking area among our respondents, with most stopping at motorway parking areas more than 10 times a month. More than a quarter do so more than 20 times a month. Consequently, no one is better placed to judge quality than these experts.

**Finding a parking space remains problematic: 90% of drivers have to search for a long time for their night's rest.**

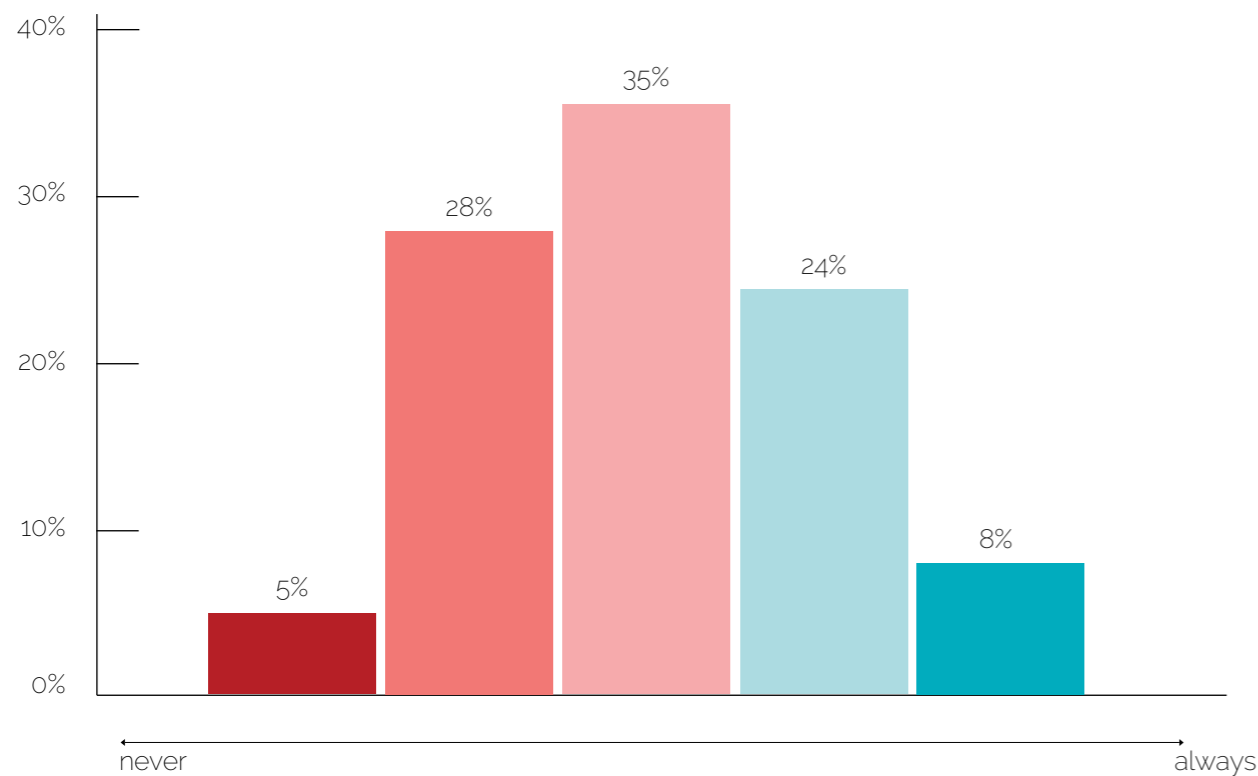
Finding somewhere to park is essential for any driver. Not just for complying with statutory driving times and rest periods, but also for their own wellbeing. Being able to stop and park provides drivers with a moment to rest, stretch their legs, have a chat with colleagues, use the sanitary facilities or get something to eat and drink.

When it comes to taking a short rest, mostly during the day and so with the ability to spread the actual stopping time over a reasonable period, almost 4 in 10 indicate that they find it difficult to find place to park their vehicle in a safe and proper way.

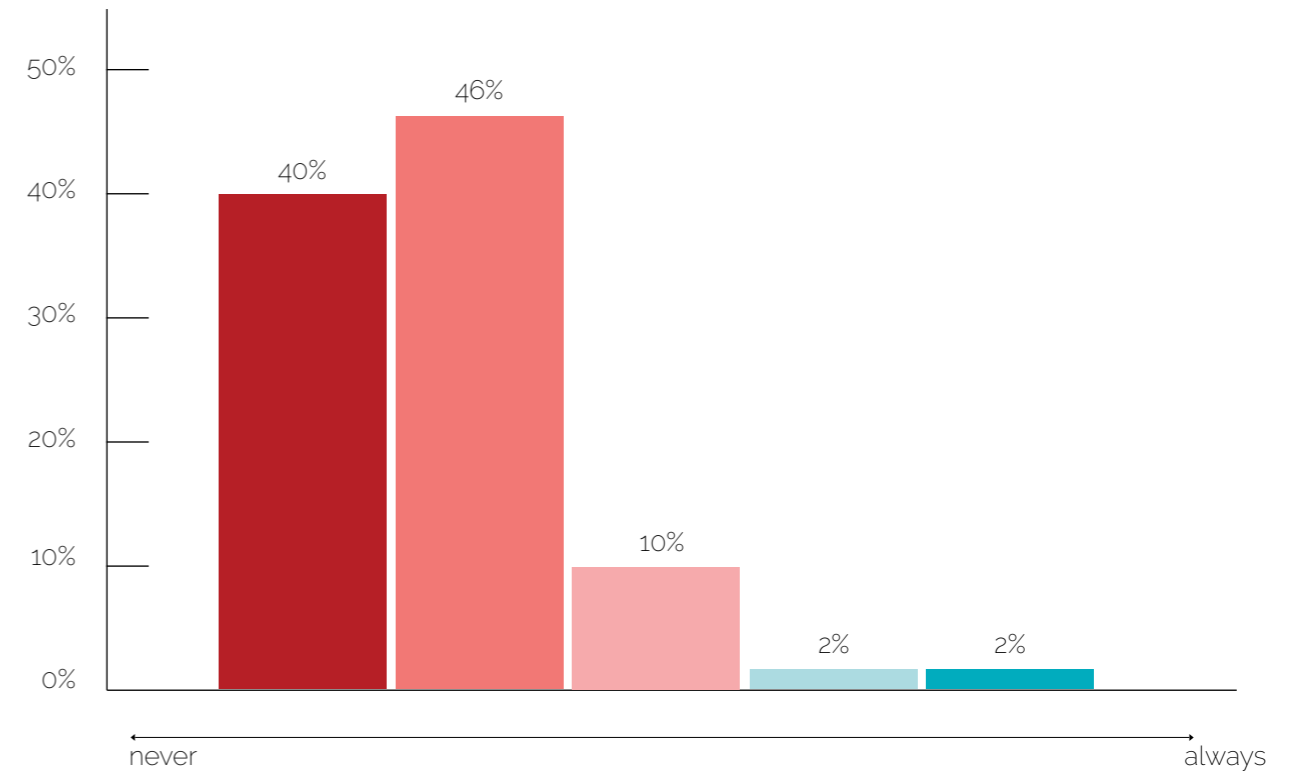
Fewer than 1 in 10 say they can always find a place quickly.

For finding a place to stay overnight, the situation is nothing short of appalling. Almost 9 in 10 drivers report that they can pretty much never find a place right away.

**For my short break, I can find somewhere quickly**



**For my overnight break, I can find somewhere quickly**



**Drivers now have to choose between plague and cholera: a fine for wrong parking or a fine for exceeding driving hours. This cannot go on like this.**

This is a problem for several reasons. First, it is important to be able to take your rest in a well-equipped and safe place. If there is a lack of places, this obviously means that this is not possible.

**Bound by driving times and rest periods.**

In any event, a driver cannot just keep looking endlessly. They are bound by strict driving times and rest periods. On the one hand, the employer expects the driver to go as far as possible within this time, while on the other, it is important to find a good spot, especially for taking an overnight break.

Then there's the weekend break. Drivers may no longer stay in their cab (except for the shortened weekend rest). This means that not only does there need to be a safe parking space, but also an appropriate place to spend weekend rest period away from the vehicle cab.

**Life-threatening situations.**

Also, we regularly see this lack of parking space, combined with the obligation to respect driving times and rest periods, resulting in life-threatening situations on our roads.

Drivers have to double-park, go into the breakdown lane/hard shoulder or find just about anywhere to park. Conditions such as these must be avoided and, in any event, they place huge negative pressure on the profession and its image.

Worse still, this clear lack of parking and facilities tends to create conflict and nuisance in other places.

## Finding a suitable place remains a challenge.

More than half of the respondents try to plan in advance which parking area they can drive to in order to stop.

There are many options for finding somewhere to park. Yet one of the most common of these options is simply driving around to see where you might find a suitable spot. This is possibly due to the difficulty of getting correct information (see below). Most drivers still use the signs on the main roads and motorways, but GPS searches are also used often.

The latest method is to use a specialised app to find a spot. These specialised apps may be the future, but are not yet established with everyone and clearly they still have yet to prove themselves if they really aim to become a fully fledged solution in which all of the information needed for the app to be effective is collated in one place for drivers constantly moving through different countries and regions.

### Information on available parking spaces cannot be found.

As a result, finding an available parking space to park with truck and/or coach can be something of a nightmare for drivers.

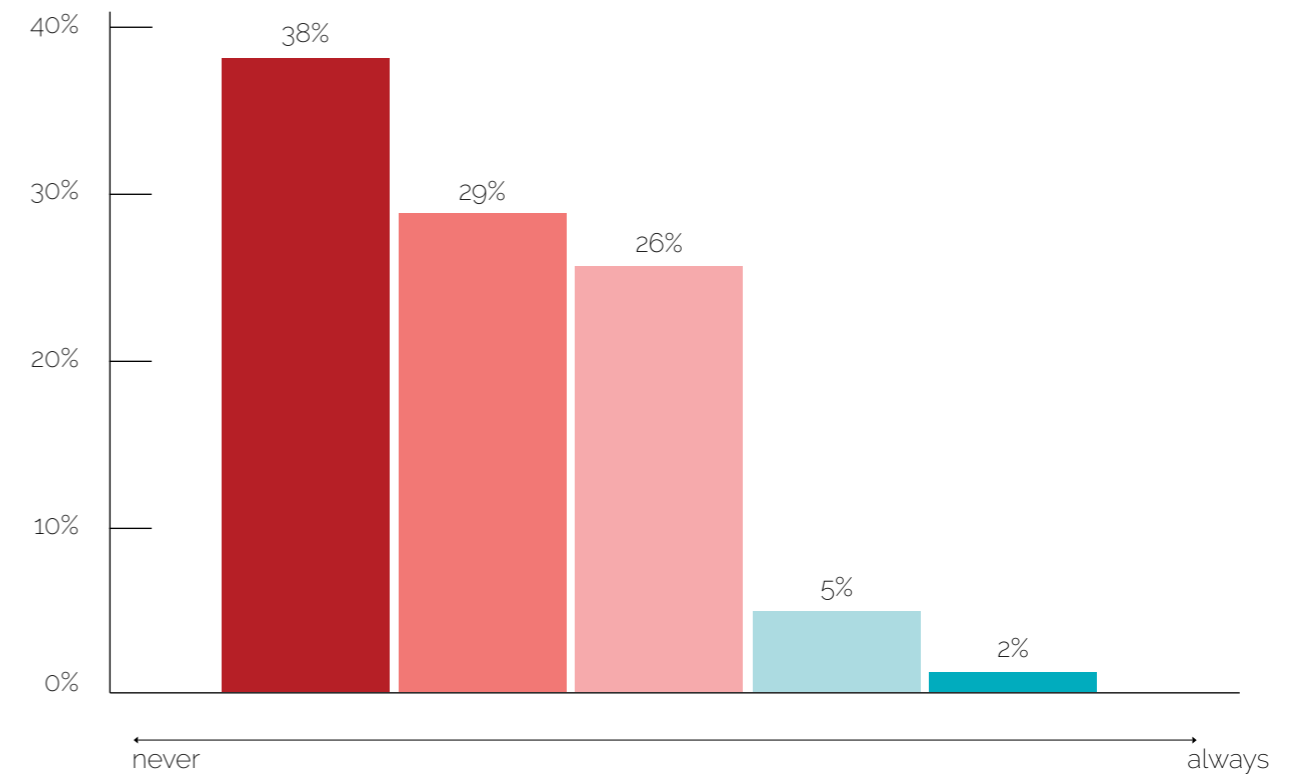
In addition the general lack of available parking spaces, it is also almost impossible for drivers to find information about space availability quickly and easily.

### On good luck.

This means it is a gamble every time for drivers when they are looking to find a space. In these times of technology and connected devices, it is absurd to think that a whole group of vital workers (just witness how important they were during the coronavirus pandemic) has to work in this way.

Without transport, the world stands still, but the people behind that transport are forgotten time and time again.

## I am able to find information about available parking spaces quickly and easily



## For half of the drivers, the quality of the shop is substandard.

The parking area shop clearly does not meet drivers' expectations and requirements. Almost half of respondents think the offering is substandard for both food and drink, with 1/3 somewhere in the middle. Fewer than 4% think that the offering is very good.

### Range of goods.

This is not unimportant: many drivers do not just stop for a quick snack, but rely on what is available from the parking area shop to provide them with good nutrition for when they're on the road. This means that having a varied, healthy and affordable range of goods for sale is essential.

### 60% think the shop is far too expensive.

In terms of cost, things are even worse: as many as 60% of respondents say that the goods available are very expensive, while another 28% find it expensive to buy things in the shops at motorway parking areas.

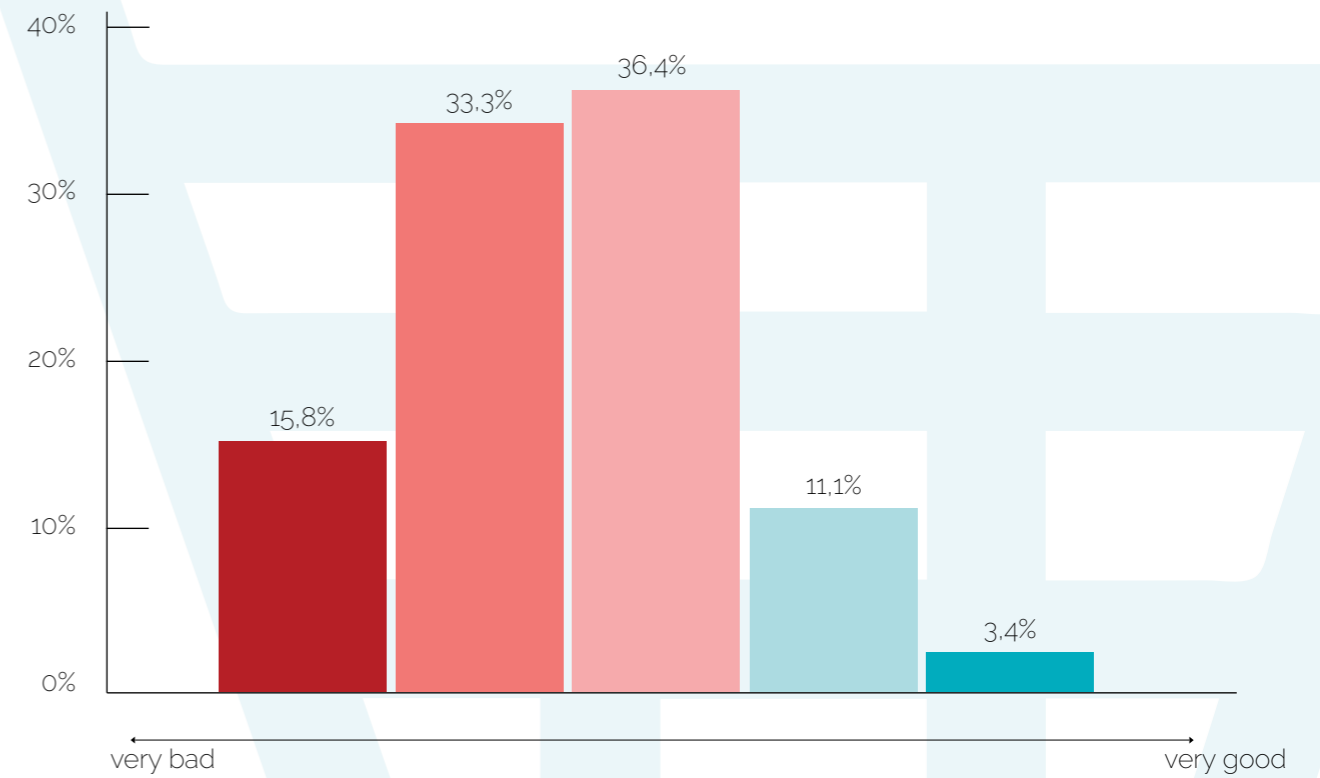
### Insufficient

The conclusion is again very clear: neither the offering nor the prices meet drivers' requirements. Yet they often rely on these shops while carrying out their work.

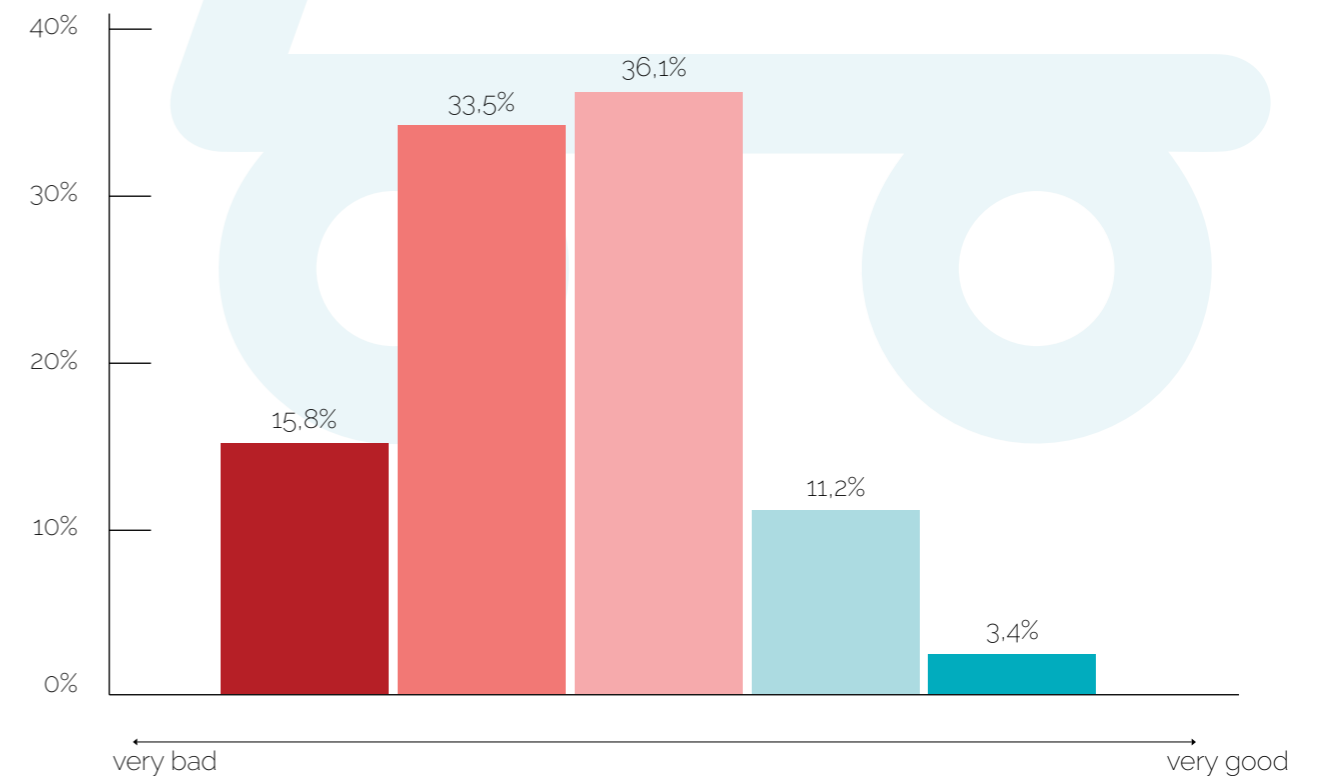
After all, just popping to a local shop that has a better-priced range of products is simply impossible when you are on the road with your truck (or coach).



## Range of food in the shop



## Range of drink in the shop



**The quality of the environment negatively affects the experience and comfort of drivers.**

Off course, the parking area and the services on offer there are important for our drivers. After all, taking a break in a clean and pleasant environment contributes to a better working experience for drivers.

The same problem emerges here, too: there's too little of everything. Too little seating, too few picnic benches, too few waste bins.

Motorway car parks are important points for professional drivers, but unfortunately their needs are not yet taken into account sufficiently when these areas are being (re)designed.

**Lighting and sense of security.**

Also, in terms of lighting (and hence part of the driver's sense of safety), there is still a lot of progress to be made. More than 4 in 10 drivers find lighting substandard.

We can't call the results positive, but at least things are already less negative than they were.

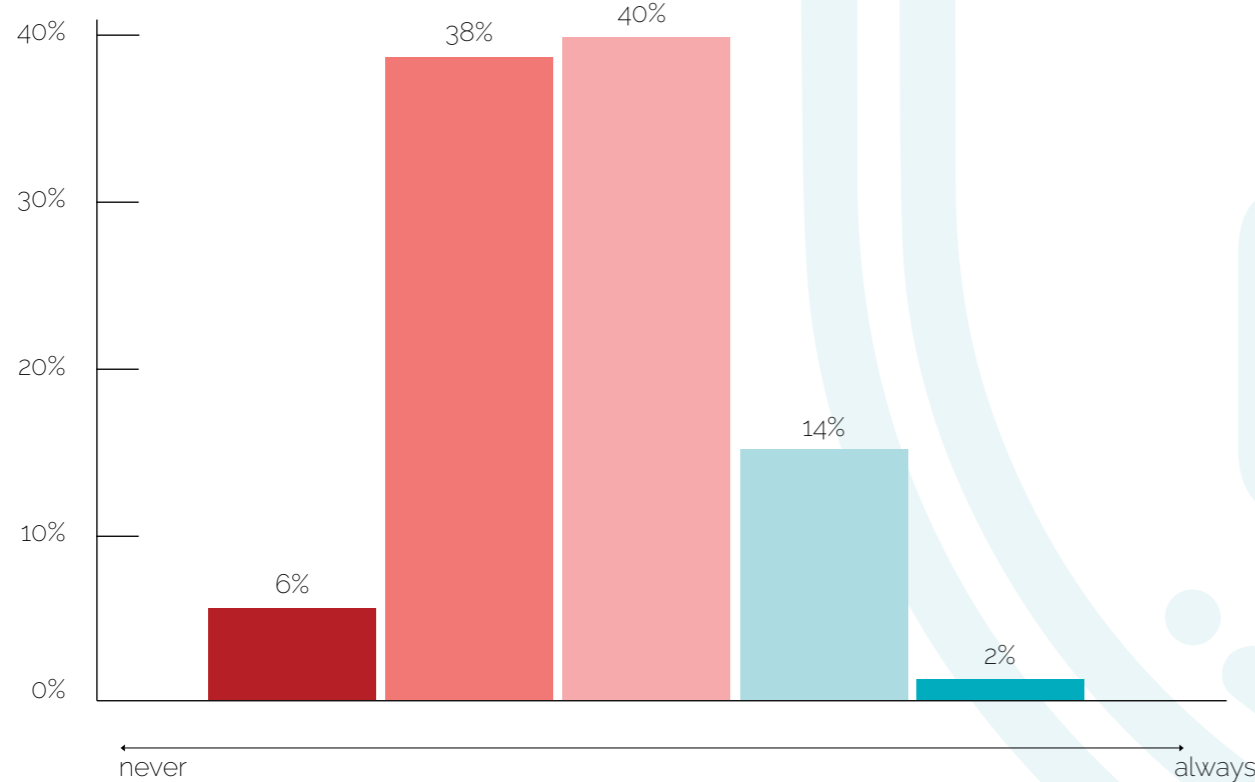
**Much work remains to be done on catering for modern needs.**

A modern and stable wi-fi connection (reaching as far as the truck) is still a far-off dream.

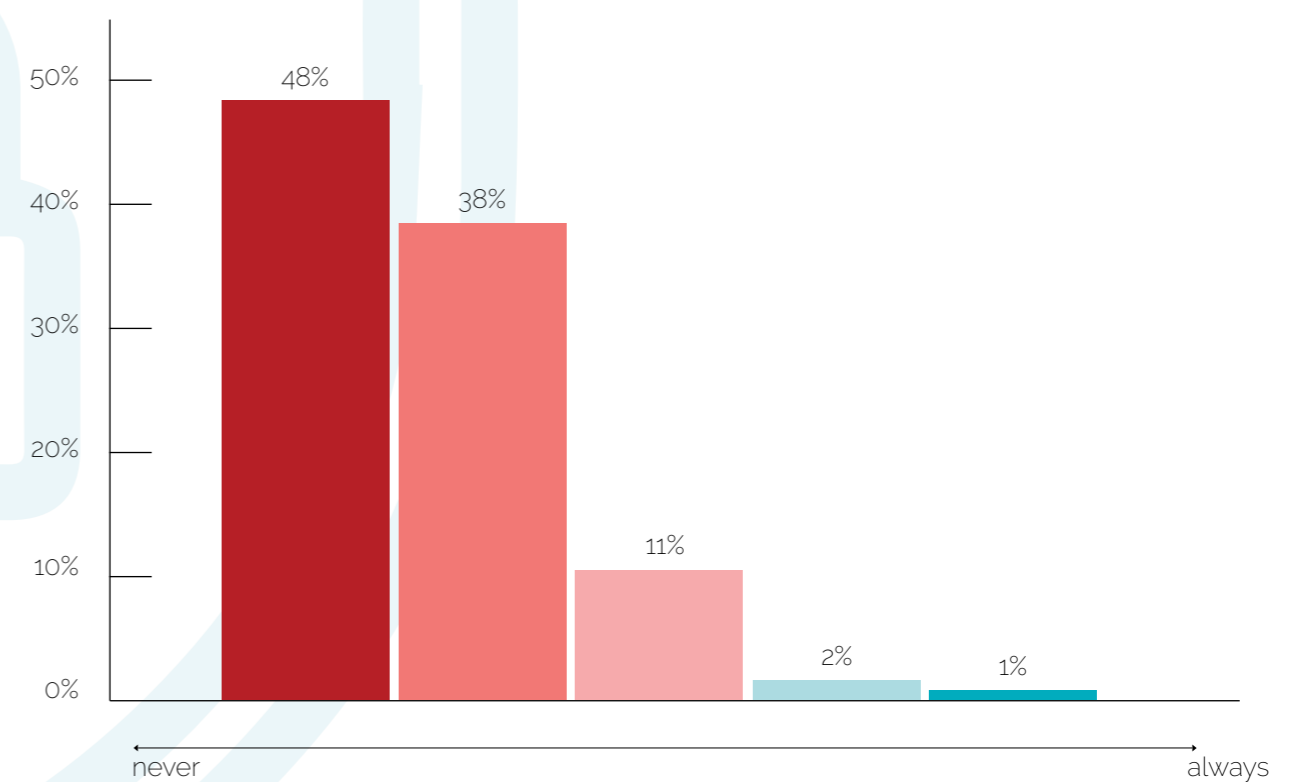
And even a secure parking area, where you can sleep in peace without fear of something being stolen, is a long way off. More than 80% report that car parks are rarely properly secured.



**The parking area is well lit**



**The parking area is secure**



**Still inadequate sanitary amenities and showers.**

Being able to go to the toilet and take a proper shower before or after the working day: this is the most normal thing for just about anyone. But drivers have to rely on the facilities available at the parking areas where they stop for this.

The survey results clearly show that much work still remains to be done to meet this basic need. 60% of drivers report that there are often or always too few toilets. For showers, this rises to almost 80% of drivers.

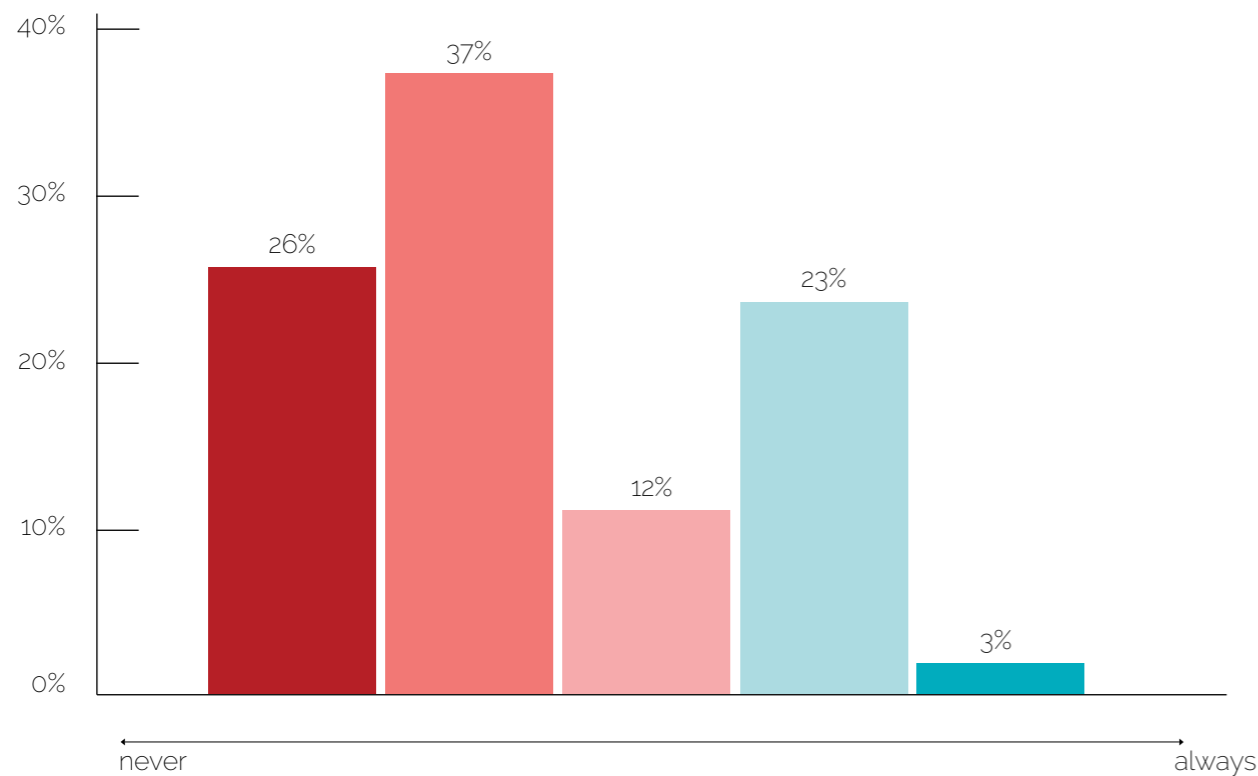
**Our drivers still cannot count on clean sanitary facilities.**

Not only does the number of toilets and showers need to be higher, but hygiene and maintenance are also substandard. In more than half the cases, toilets and showers are not clean.

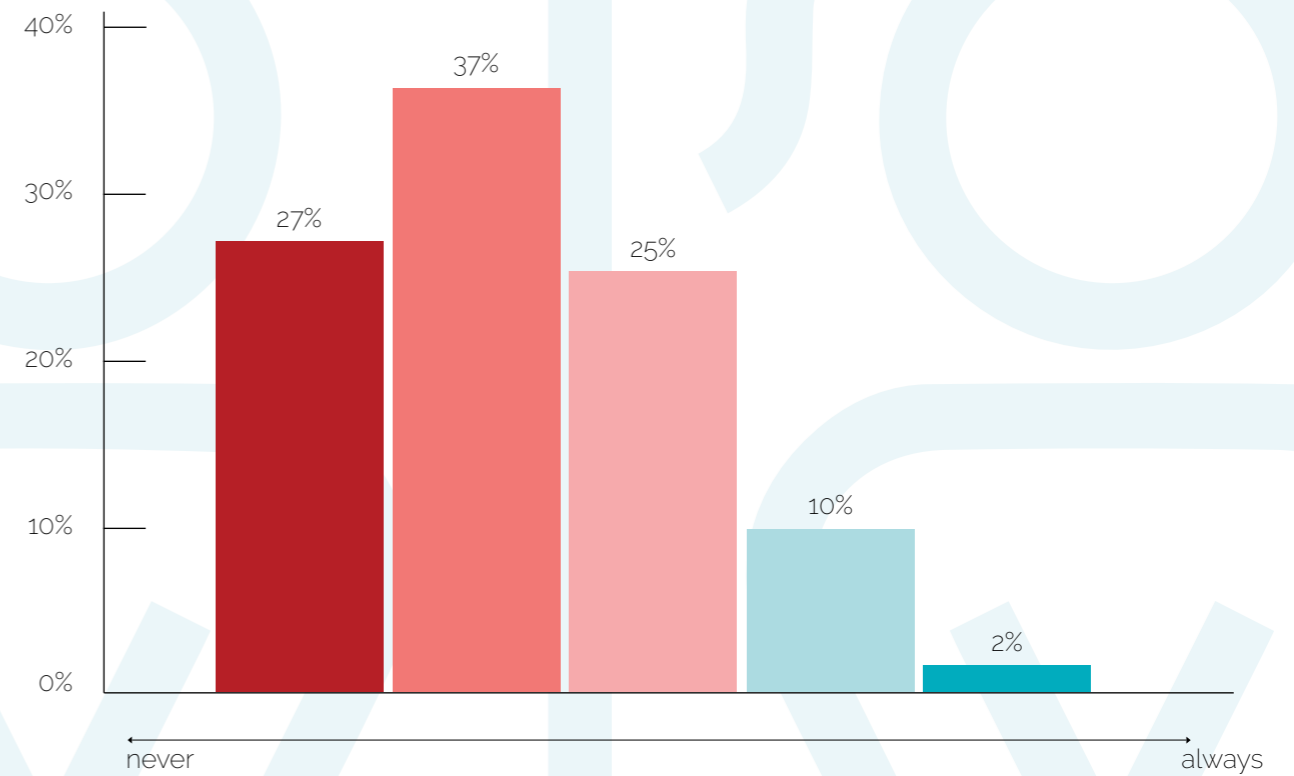
Given the lack of performance on the numbers and cleanliness of amenities, it is not surprising that drivers also find the fees charged to use them disproportionately high. The least that can be expected when making a charge to use amenities is that the spaces provided are of good quality and are properly maintained and clean.



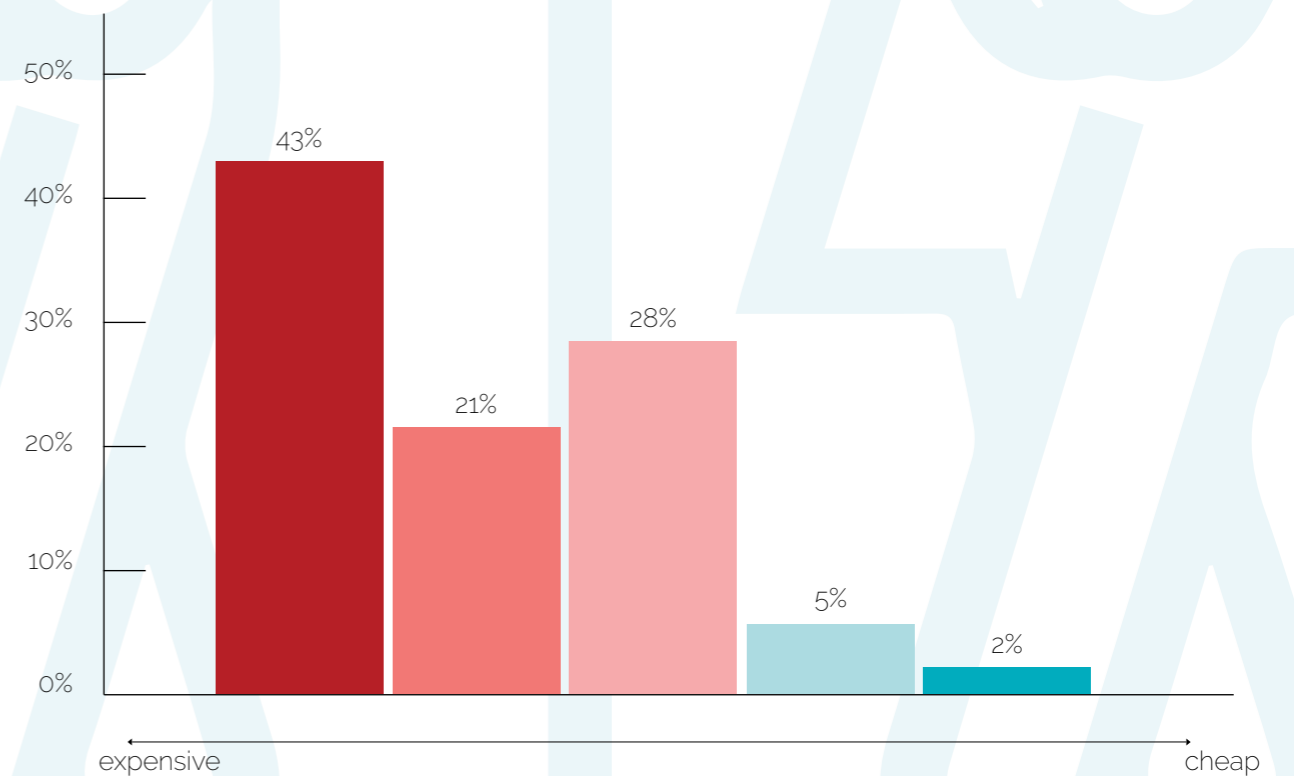
**There are sufficient numbers of toilets**



**The toilets are clean**

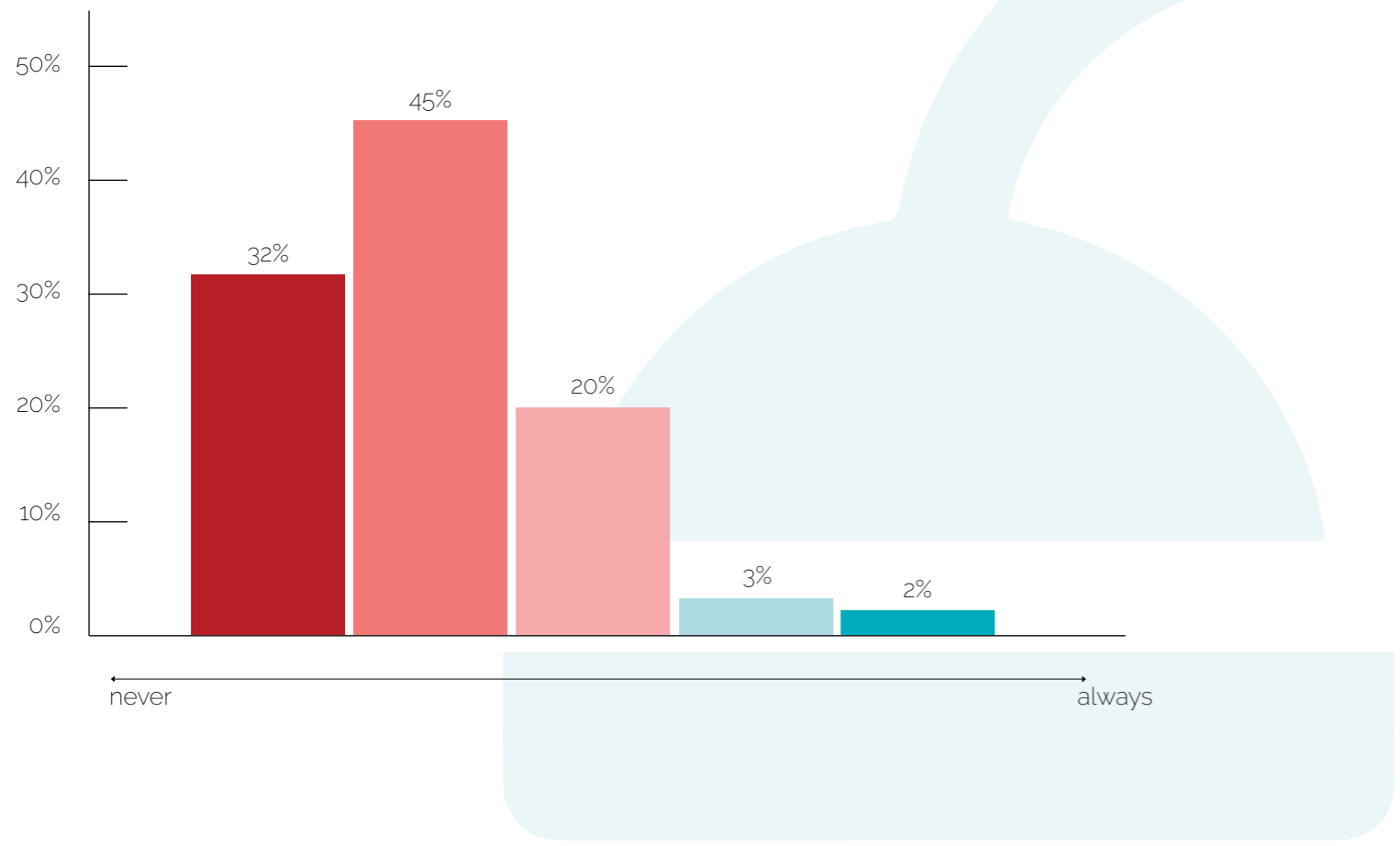


**Using the toilet is**

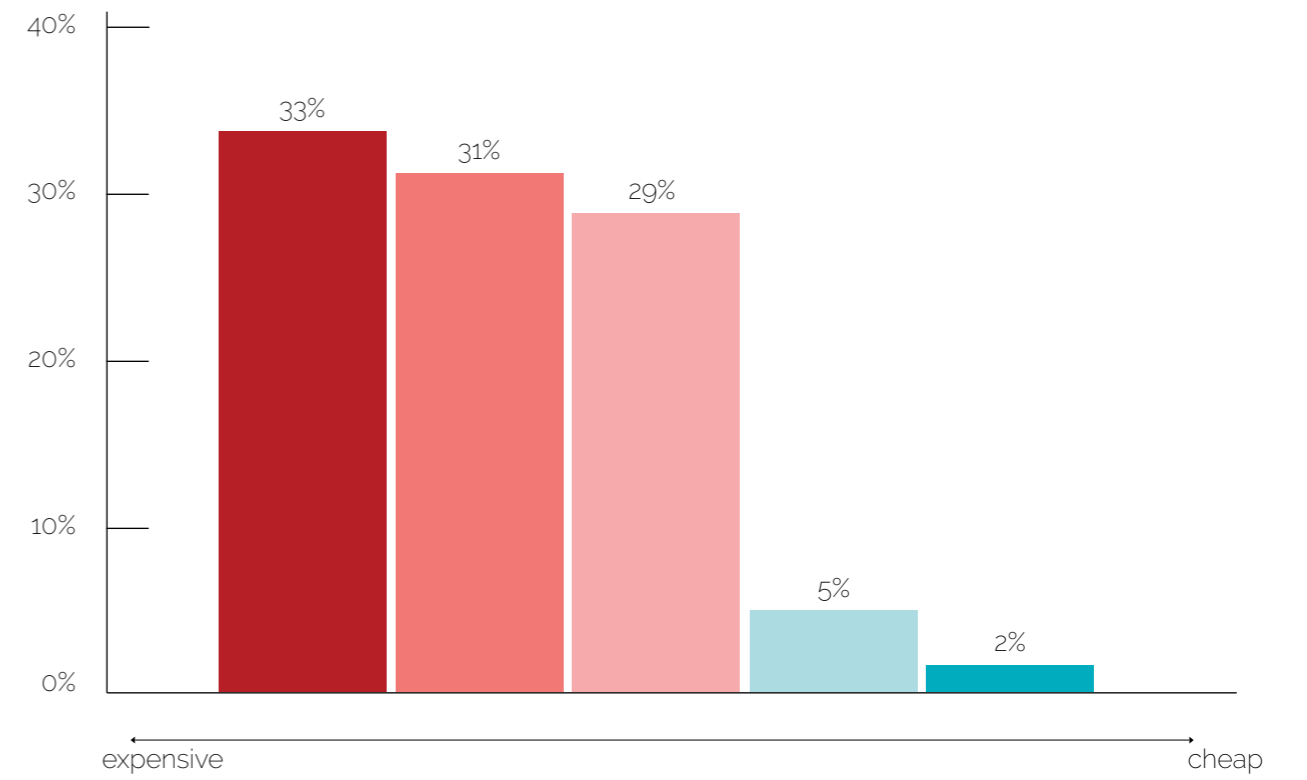




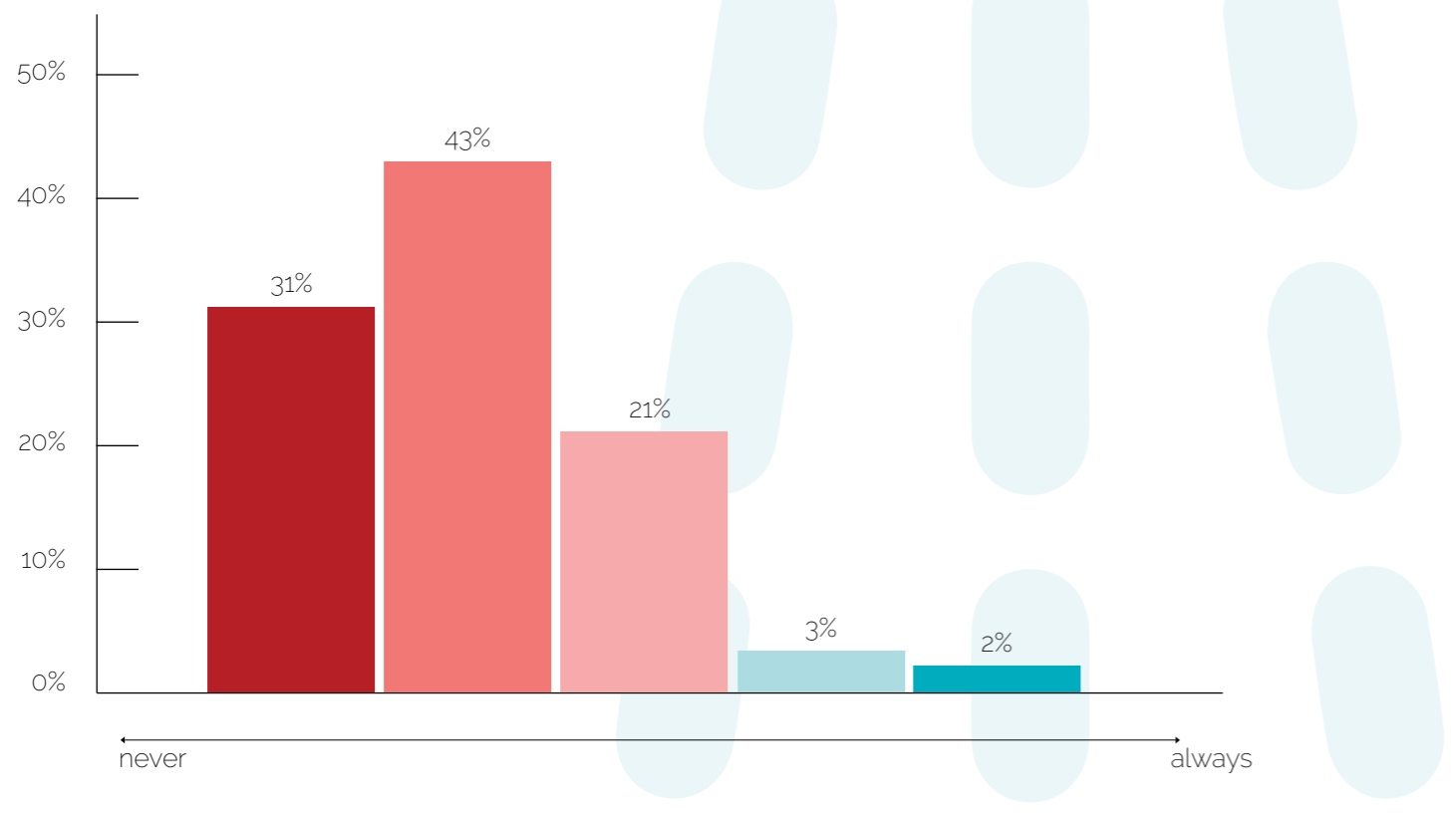
There are sufficient numbers of showers



Using the shower is



The showers are clean



## Our drivers are left with a feeling of insecurity.

Earlier we saw that the parking areas are not considered safe by drivers.

1 in 5 respondents to the survey say they have been victims of crime in a motorway parking area in the past year. 25% of drivers always or often feel unsafe in car parks. Only 17% never feel unsafe.

### Crime.

We also asked what types of crime our respondents had encountered in Belgian motorway parking areas.

Almost 1 in 4 noted damage to their vehicle, 12% had to deal with cargo theft. 14% experienced verbal abuse towards their own person and 32 (8%) drivers had had personal items stolen.

9 drivers were confronted with physical violence. Thankfully, this is less common now, but every case of physical violence is one case too many.

### Safe parking: at what cost?

What about the secure parking areas that are available (in some places)?

1 in 3 drivers have never used secure parking areas, 1 in 4 say they use them sometimes and just over 40% of respondents use them occasionally.

73% do so on their own initiative, 17% because their boss tells them to. A few because of the increased sense of security/safety or the type of product they are carrying. Remarkably, 7% use these secure parking areas just because they have nowhere else to park.

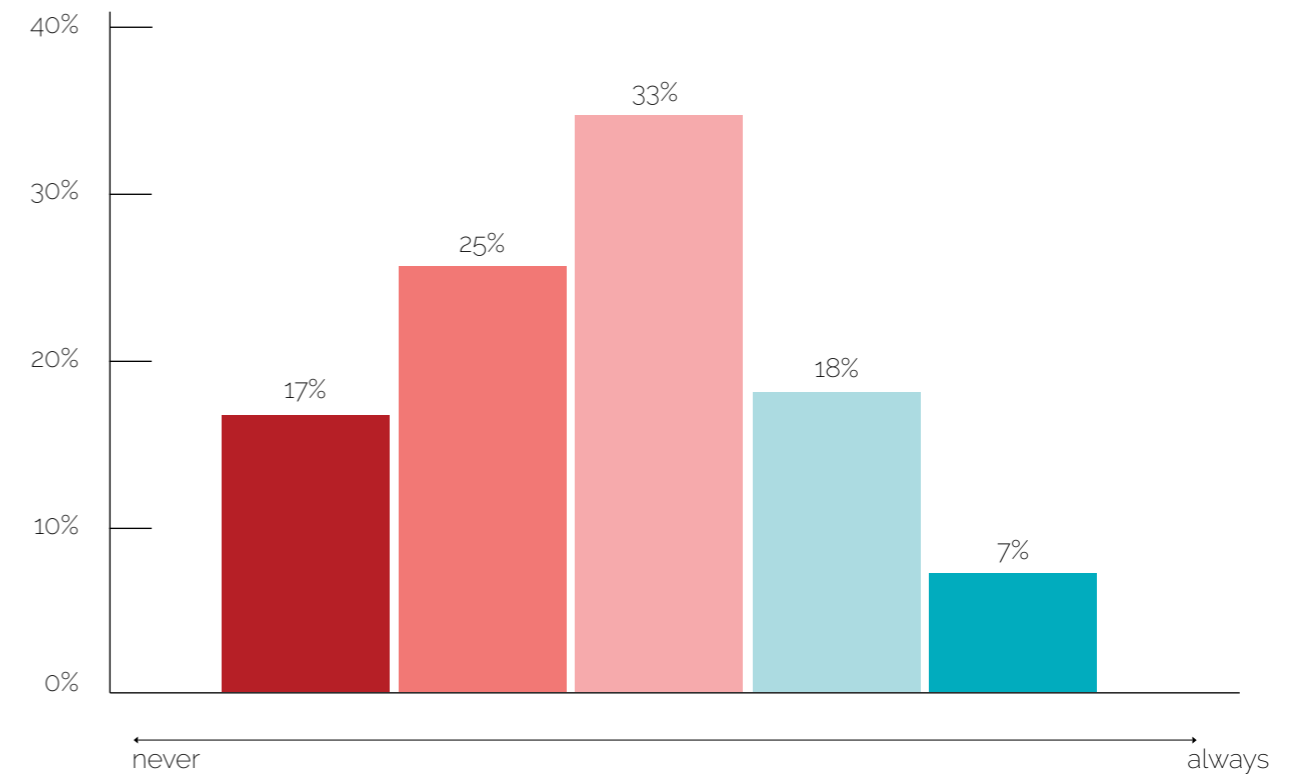
Half of drivers are not reimbursed for the cost of using these secure parking areas, while 47% are reimbursed. The others sometimes do and sometimes don't use them, depending on the goods they are carrying. A few do not even know if they are reimbursed.

### Own cost.

Even more striking, is that among those drivers who are required by their employer to use secure parking areas, 24% say that they have to pay for these costs themselves. This is absolutely outrageous.

Fortunately, there are other types of employer, too: of the drivers who use secure parking areas on their own initiative, nearly 45% have the costs reimbursed by their employer. And rightly so, because secure parking reduces damage to vehicles, cuts down on cargo thefts and, hopefully, leaves drivers better equipped to do their job.

## I have felt unsafe in a Belgian motorway car park



## Special attention: Coach drivers

A degree of special attention needs to be paid to our coach drivers, because their situation still differs slightly from that of truck drivers.

### **Parking spaces in motorway car parks are often occupied by other (non-coach) users.**

A common frustration of coach drivers is finding a safe parking spot in motorway parking areas where they can also disembark and embark their passengers under the right, safe conditions.

On the one hand, these spaces are not always available, while on the other, they are often already occupied.

Usually, these parking spaces are occupied by vehicles other than coaches: cars taking the first free space they can find, larger motorhomes and cars with caravans, but also very often, trucks.

There may be various reasons why a truck driver would take a parking space reserved for coaches: In some instances it will be because these coach spaces are more conveniently located, but much more often it will be because there are simply no other spaces free at the time of parking. Providing sufficient spaces for trucks and having safe drop-off and pick-up points for coaches with passengers would therefore avoid this problem.

### **Cities.**

However, coach drivers have an additional problem. To get their passengers to the right location, even for them it is often a case of searching for what they know and what is allowed.

Many (tourist) towns and cities try to keep heavy traffic out of the city centre, making it unclear even to coach drivers where it is best to drop off and pick up their passengers, but also where they can go and wait in the meantime.

A clear policy and designated locations with correct information would save them a lot of searching.



# Best and worst parking areas

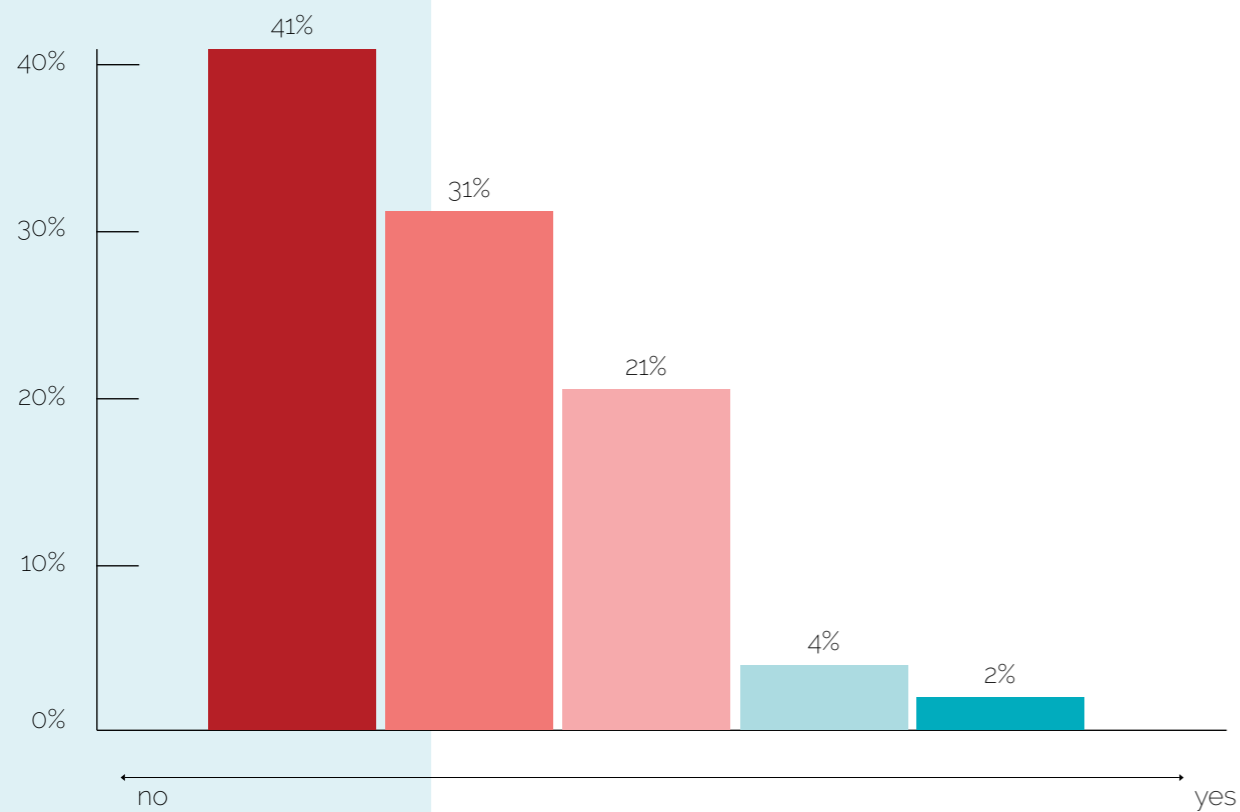
Before we move on to the best and worst motorway parking areas in Belgium, we need to make a general comparison:

What do our drivers think of Belgian motorway parking areas compared with those in other countries? Because while we now know that there is still (a lot of) work to be done in Belgium, the parking facilities abroad are not always top notch either.

But our drivers are clear on that point, too: Belgian motorway parking areas lag behind their foreign counterparts – and by some distance. 7 in 10 drivers think foreign car parks are better!



Belgian motorway parking areas are better than those in other countries



## Best parking

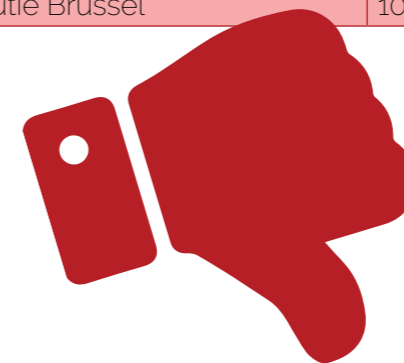
The big winner for best parking? With 47 votes: none.

It says a lot about the way professional drivers assess parking areas in Belgium that so many respondents deliberately answered that no parking area deserved this title.

Ranking	Parking	Votes
1	None	47
2	E17 Kalken Gent	16
3	E411 Wanlin Luxemburg	12



Ranking	Parking	Votes
1	E19 Peutie Antwerpen	11
	E40 Groot-Bijgaarden Gent	11
2	E313 Ranst Antwerpen	10
	E40 Groot-Bijgaarden Brussel	10
	E19 Peutie Brussel	10



## Worst parking

Here again there's a divided picture and many vote simply nominated 'all parking areas', but ended up with shared a 1st place: on the E19, the parking area at Peutie heading towards Antwerp and Groot-Bijgaarden on the E40 in the direction of Ghent.

Since the survey was conducted, the parking area at Groot-Bijgaarden has been redone, but we will leave it to the next survey to pass judgment.

# Where do opportunities remain?

The fact that there are too few parking spaces for trucks and coaches is something that our drivers know better than anyone else.

It is also understandable that finding and constructing brand-new parking areas cannot be done overnight. But how do we address the shortage in the short term?

We need to go looking for quick wins – places where there are opportunities to quickly establish additional quality parking spaces.

## Expanding existing parking areas with facilities

To create more parking spaces quickly and have parking locations that offer the necessary facilities, we have no choice but to look at the options for expanding the existing sites that already have facilities.

This would mean that as soon as additional spaces were in place, there would be immediate access to the existing facilities.

## Upgrading border crossings

In the dim and distant past, there were border posts between countries and Belgium, as a small country in the middle of Europe, had quite a few of them. But after border controls were abolished within the European Union, these posts fell into disrepair and became unused.

Except as parking areas. Unfortunately, that is what most of these (former) border posts are like: large car parks with at most a few mobile toilets and (if you are entering Belgium) a few dispensing machines for OBUs.

These sites are ideal for quickly adding capacity that meets the highest standards:

- The land is owned by the (various) governments.
- The entrances and exits are already in place.
- Most of these sites have a surface area not less than most motorway refuelling locations.
- The possibility of building (new) facilities exists. After all, there used to be customs buildings located in these areas.

However, a tour of these sites reveals little initiative from the various competent authorities. Because where the issue of the shortage of good-quality parking areas on and around the motorways has been hammered on about for years, these sites have been neglected for just as many years.

Reports appear regularly in the media about new truck parking areas. Are these actual projects or red herrings that will never happen?

What is already striking is the long timeframe involved: there's always a long time between the first announcement of a new parking area and it coming into service. Bearing in mind that there is already a shortage of parking spaces and future projections predicting an increase in freight traffic, we can be sure that the problem will not improve in the coming years – quite the reverse in fact.

Some sort of split is required.

## Local initiatives

There are local, small initiatives by regions and/or local authorities that include some truck parking spaces when projects are being expanded or rebuilt.

Municipalities are often full of searches and solutions to parking problems, but this rarely provides a quick solution and is almost always aimed at local HGV drivers who spend the night at home anyway.

With these parking areas, we almost never see new facilities being built and they actively seek methods of keeping non-local trucks out: permits, badges, etc.

## Larger projects

In the Waasland port around **Antwerpen**, the problem clearly cannot be denied any longer, with kilometres of trucks parked up on the side of the road.

In early 2022, a new parking facility was announced in that area, with a reasonable completion deadline set for the end of 2022. That deadline may not have been met totally, but truck park did open at the end of March 2023: the 280 new spaces at the Ketenis parking area were much needed.

There has long been a problem with parking for trucks in **Zeebrugge**, too. At the end of 2021, the first announcements appeared about a new truck park in Zeebrugge near the A11 motorway. This facility, combined with a new petrol station and (paying) sanitary amenities, is for about 135 to 145 trucks. The current timing talks about opening in 2024.

In 2020, it was announced that the **Jabbeke** site would be redeveloped and expanded. Drivers seeking parking on their journeys in West Flanders will breathe a sigh of relief when spaces are finally available again. The works were still in full swing in 2022 and the renovated parking area has since opened.

There were also several more announcements in 2020 talking about the redesign and sometimes only limited expansion of various motorway parking and/or service areas. The timing in these instances is somewhere towards 2025.

Meanwhile, the parking areas that are available often remain overcrowded, resulting in dangerous situations on a daily basis.

## So, what is actually happening?

### Wallonia

A number of service zones are being redeveloped in Wallonia. Some of the larger ones there can certainly serve as examples in terms of space and layout.

For the smaller parking areas (where there are no facilities or amenities being operated), we are seeing a double picture:

On the one hand, these parking areas are indeed currently being redeveloped and this was necessary. But on the other hand, too little consideration is being given to the actual needs of drivers, although there are now sufficient dustbins, but there is still no sign of any sanitary facilities.

### Flanders

Investments are also being made in Flanders. The issue of parking areas is being addressed but, again, the starting point is not what facilities truck drivers need in them. Parking areas are still being (re)constructed, albeit without the necessary sanitary and other facilities. Temporary solutions with one or sometimes two portable toilets simply aren't enough.

The issue of parking is not a new one. There is a backlog dating back for years in addressing the problem and a solution can only come from an integrated plan of action that addresses all of the pinch points.

Facilities, quality and quantity. Because despite the many points lacking, this remains a very pressing problem: there are too few spaces for drivers to park safely (especially in the evening).

Committing to a logistics region is nice idea, but it has its consequences. Logistics needs transport facilities and, at the moment, the bulk of transport is done with trucks. And trucks are operated by drivers who all need to be able to park, eat, relax and sleep in safety and security.

## Brief conclusion

As the BTB, we have conducted a number of surveys of parking areas – all with the same conclusion: little changes.

There are still too few parking areas.

There are still too few safe and secure parking spaces.

There are still too little comfort and convenience.

There is still too little quality.

There is still no vision from the various governments and major economic clusters to address this issue.

In Belgium, being a truck driver has been a bottleneck occupation for years; in Europe there is a driver shortage of around half a million.

But there is no economic activity without transport. There is no transport without drivers. It is time to link the lack of quality working and living conditions on the job with the ever-increasing shortage of drivers and then take action.

In Europe, in Belgium: there is a need to upgrade the profession of driver:

- Better and fair pay for the long work they do (in all European countries)
- More respect for their job by providing good-quality, safe and sufficient parking spaces through the whole of Europe.
- Better facilities at the customers who use transport.



## How do things stand with the local authorities?

In the many Belgian local authority areas, there are parking lanes. These are mostly on regional roads within the territory.

This means that they are parking lanes without facilities, sanitation, connectivity, etc. intended mainly for local drivers who sleep at home to park their vehicles. When reference is made to parking areas (with or without facilities), these are private initiatives (such as truck stops) or the parking areas on motorways. For parking areas (with facilities) the supervising government is looked to in each case (i.e. the Flemish, Walloon and Brussels governments).

### Anti-measures.

If any municipalities are taking measures about truck parking, they are mostly anti-measures. This involves removing parking lanes, installing prohibition signs for trucks to stop them driving through the area and/or parking for vehicles in excess 3.5 tons. Making parking lanes inaccessible due to some form of perceived nuisance (mainly from rubbish and human excrement).

While the lack of understanding surrounding nuisance and addressing road safety at the local, micro level is sometimes absolutely defensible, what is particularly striking is the lack of alternatives being put forward. As is the will to seek and find alternatives.

When there is talk about future plans, it is mainly to say that no truck parking with facilities is planned to avoid a knock-on effect.

### Shifting problems, but no solutions.

The nuisance of truck parking merely shifts when various measures are taken. This is for the simple reason that drivers then have no choice and/or alternative.

Drivers don't spend the night in a parking lane along a regional road for fun. They do so because there is no valid alternative.

The regions are (rightly) committed to attracting investment from companies, ranging from manufacturing and food to international logistics firms. This automatically brings truck traffic, and truck traffic brings drivers.

Drivers are indispensable for driving, but they are not deemed important enough that they can count on good-quality and safe places to live and sleep when they're not driving.

### Comprehensive master plan

It is therefore high time for a comprehensive master plan in Belgium – one that not only clearly identifies the needs of drivers (i.e. how many parking spaces are needed at night during the busiest periods and where), but one that also improves the quality of the parking areas. It needs to be a plan for the coming years that caters, on the one hand, for the necessary expansion in capacity and, on the other, that guarantee quality. A European quality standard for truck parking should therefore be the guiding principle here.

Transport is an international business, particularly in Europe. It is therefore high time a European quality standard was recognised and monitored by an independent organisation right across Europe. Parking areas need to be of high quality for drivers. Whether they are in Belgium, Poland or Spain should make no difference.

## A quick look abroad

### Best parking Europa

We also went to see our neighbours and where better to look than the facility that had just been voted Parking of the Year in Europe (2022).

The winner of this title: a truck parking facility in Béziers in the south of France. But what makes it the best parking area?



On the way to this parking area, of course, we passed several others on the motorway, so we'll look at those, too.

The most striking observation: the number of spaces. Both the parking areas with a refuelling station and those without have plenty of parking spaces for both trucks and coaches. So there's no need to double-park or risk your own life on the slip roads.

Second observation: even the 'small' parking areas that do not have a refuelling station are equipped with sanitary blocks. This is truly necessary. After all, as a truck driver, you are bound by the parking spaces you can find, as well as your driving times and rest periods. Essential facilities such as toilets should therefore be available everywhere.

The facilities are mostly free of charge, but located within the Toll zone, where the payment made to use them obviously helps fund the amenities. In Belgium, there are no Toll zones but, of course, there is the kilometre charge for trucks, so providing quality facilities for drivers is therefore perfectly possible and the costs can easily be funded by the kilometre charges.

### **We drive on to Béziers.**

The Béziers parking area is a truck parking located alongside the motorway. The road to it is well laid out for freight vehicles and has clear signage.

A refuelling station with a mass of (professional) payment options and a small shop is the first thing we see on a spacious and large site that is well maintained and clean.

The parking area is fully enclosed and secure, which means you have to pay for it. Fortunately, there are a number of advantages to doing so. For example, all of the facilities are included in the cost of parking. So drivers can go to the toilet, but also have unlimited use of the shower facilities, a relaxation area with TV, a small fitness area, small sports fields, etc. Of course, washing machines are also provided, so that drivers can wash their clothes.

### **Bikes and fresh meals.**

The parking itself is not too far from the French coast and drivers can use bicycles to get around the local area. This means they are not stuck inside the truck park but can, if they want, explore the surrounding attractions.

There is also a restaurant attached to the parking area, where prices for food and drinks are very reasonable. And drivers who have (paid and) parked there receive an additional discount.

The menu is small, but varied, and they also work with daily menus. When our food arrives, we immediately notice that fresh products have been used. We also soon notice that the quality is more than OK, because many locals also come in for a bite to eat.





The parking area itself does not look exceptional until you start noticing the details.

There is plenty of room to park and all of the spaces are covered to create shade (not unimportant in the south of France in summer), so the truck cab remains pleasant for the driver.

**Sense of peace and quiet.**

Because the parking area is located a short distance from the motorway, you also immediately notice that the noise level is much lower and you really get a sense of peace and quiet. This is enhanced by the fact that a separate area has been created for refrigerated trucks, where the necessary power connections are also provided. This means that diesel generators are not constantly firing up, making it a lot more pleasant to stay overnight.

If we have to look for a downside, then we come to 2 issues:

- Use of the parking area requires payment: if the drivers have to bear these costs themselves, this is obviously not a sustainable solution.
- With the arrival of the new Mobility Package, a ban on taking weekend rest breaks in the truck's cab has also been introduced. Linking the secure parking with a hotel room that meets the minimum requirements and is provided at an integrated price is still lacking.



## European parking standard

Transport, both of passengers and goods is a vital part of Europe and its economy.

It is high time that essential provisions for the people working in these sectors are also addressed.

After all, it is no coincidence that truck driving has been a bottleneck profession for years, not only in Belgium, but now all over Europe. And even coach drivers are becoming rarer to find with each passing year.

Part of these essential facilities are good parking facilities.

What facilities do these parking areas have to provide?

- Plenty of parking spaces.
- Secure and safe parking spaces.
- Sufficient, clean sanitary facilities.
- A good-quality range of eating and drinking options .
- Quality relaxation spaces (indoor and outdoor).
- High-quality wi-fi connections.

## Solving basic problems with modern technology: Parking apps

One of the biggest challenges for a driver remains finding a good parking space, especially for the longer rest breaks.

As a driver, however, it is not always possible to predict exactly where you will need to find a spot to stop. After all, there are many factors over which you yourself have no control, but which make a difference in how far you get: accidents, traffic jams, waiting to load and unload, etc.

Modern technology can only come in handy for drivers if it is user-friendly and comprehensive. After all, having 70 separate apps depending on location or operator makes no sense.

In a previous parking book, we covered parking apps. In 2020, we talked about 4 apps: where do we stand today?





[www.truck-parking.com](http://www.truck-parking.com)

A German portal with parking areas in Germany only. No overview, but does have a (paid) connection. Still uses its own qualification system with 2 options. Users can book a space via an online portal.



<https://database.tapa-global.org/psr-location/>

Once again, the parking areas themselves need to become members to be included in the app's overview and receive certification. It is possible to find an overview as a non-member.

Tapa is a global organisation and so shows parking areas all over Europe. An overview with all parking sites does not exist here either.



# ESPORG

<https://map.esporg.eu>

Here, too, it doesn't cover all parking areas and only connected truck parks are shown in the overview. There are parking areas connected in several European countries, but if we zoom out to the maximum without making a selection, we arrive at 63 options, including 6 in Belgium.

Also, navigating the website on a mobile phone doesn't work very well. We haven't found an app in the store.



# TRUCK PARKING EUROPE

<https://app.truckparkingeurope.com>

With Truck Parking, you see all (or at least pretty much all) possible locations. It is also available as an app for mobile phones, making it immediately convenient to use for drivers.

Drivers can filter results by facilities and the like. Users can add parking spaces, which also makes it possible to find many parking lanes. The sheer volume of parking areas means you need to know what you are looking for, but the app does have a number of search functions.

You don't need to have an account, but there are many more options you can use if you create one.



<https://www.weareotra.com/for-drivers/solutions-for-truck-drivers>

Our aim is not to do a full analysis and test of all of the available apps. We do want to suggest 1 new one. Otra is one of the apps currently taking off, trying to create a user-friendly experience for drivers while also developing capabilities for firms.

#### Benefits?

- Drivers can use it free of charge
- Drivers can indicate what facilities they are looking for at the parking area
- -Available in various languages (10 languages already)
- Drivers can book a spot via the app

#### If the driver's company also uses the app:

- It can book places for the drivers
- It can pay for any expenses involved

#### Temporary disadvantage?

As with most apps, Otra only includes those parking areas that partner with the app. So, for the time being, it is not sufficient for finding parking anywhere in Europe and at any time.

## Otra has its say

Why should truck drivers reserve their parking spaces through OTRA?

Being a professional driver is not an easy job. Road transport is the backbone of our economy, as most goods are transported by trucks. Despite their crucial role in our society, truck drivers almost never get recognition for their dedication.

At OTRA, these highway heroes are appreciated every day. It is our mission to improve the lives of all truck drivers. We are committed to connecting trucks with parking areas quickly and effectively, guaranteeing safe and secure parking spaces.

*Drivers reserve their parking spaces with OTRA Park™.*

With OTRA Park™, they can find and book parking spaces based on accurate information such as location and amenities, as well as view photos of the parking spaces.

The app streamlines all payments and administration, eliminating the need for cash or expense reports. This means you can easily reserve your parking space and enjoy a well-earned rest.

Booking a secure parking space with the app is very simple:

- Download the OTRA Park™ app (available from the Google Play and Apple Store)
- Create an account
- Check all of the available spaces and press the "Book now" button. You can then park under our guarantee.

*Planners can use Fleet Manager™ with OTRA.*

Because we are directly connected to the car parks in real-time, the planners know the arrival and departure times at the car park and all payments are processed automatically. They'll never have to manage paper tickets and expenses for paid parking spaces again.

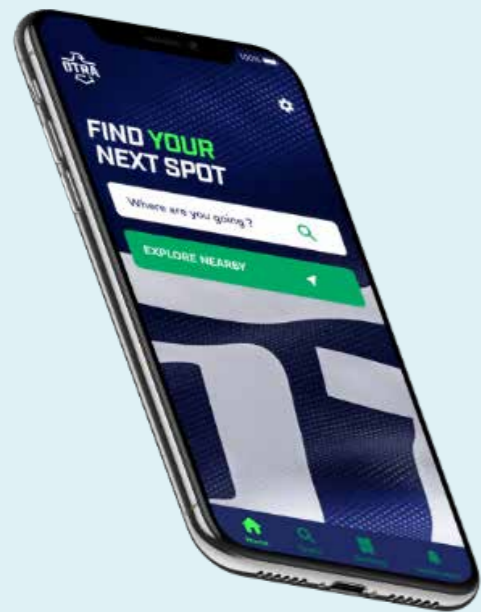
*Technology is our strongest ally for guaranteeing your spaces.*

Our users can see all available parking spaces in real-time thanks to OTRA's technology and integration expertise, allowing the digital tracking of all check-ins and check-outs and making every booking transparent.

*An extensive network of parking areas catering for all needs.*

There are more than 130 parking areas operating in 14 countries catering to different needs of drivers and freight. Thanks to our fast-growing network covering 9 European corridors, OTRA is the one-stop solution for every transport professional.

Anyone interested can contact OTRA via [hello@weareotra.com](mailto:hello@weareotra.com).



## Conclusion

We would like to close with some clear requirements.

1. By 2029 (which is the end of the next political legislature), an expansion of existing parking spaces (with facilities) that meet drivers' needs and can cater for them at peak times.
2. The establishment and use of a single European standard for parking facilities across Europe, linked to an application that provides information to professional drivers.
3. Bringing Belgian truck parking facilities up to the highest European standard.
4. A clear Master Plan across the various government levels that starts from the needs of drivers. Drivers do not care who is in charge and who isn't – all they want and need are plenty of safe and well-equipped rest and parking spaces.
5. The European Mobility Package speaks clearly about investment in parking areas in Europe. This part of the mobility package needs to be implemented as well.

**Essential workers deserve essential amenities!**



## Read our other reports

### Previous parking books

This parking book is the second available in English. Interested in the previous edition? You can find it via the following link:

Parking book 2020 : <http://tinyurl.com/BTB-parkingbook-2020>



### Social dumping

In addition to the study on parking areas, the BTB has also published reports on social dumping.

Black book 2012 : <https://tinyurl.com/2012-Blackbook-Socialdumping>

Black book 2017 : <https://tinyurl.com/2017-Blackbook-Socialdumping>

Black book 2019 : <https://tinyurl.com/2019-Blackbook-Socialdumping>

Black book 2021 : <https://tinyurl.com/2021-Blackbook-Socialdumping>

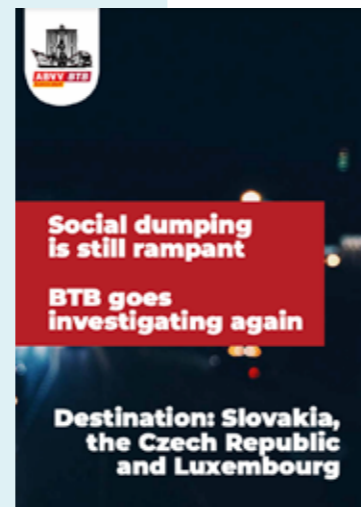
White book: 25 measures against social dumping :

<http://tinyurl.com/btb-ubt-socialdumping>

If you would like to keep track of the campaigns already conducted

by the BTB against social dumping in recent years,

please visit [www.stopsocialdumping.com](http://www.stopsocialdumping.com)



## Follow BTB online



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