

SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL POLICY

Introduction

One of the major goals of the European University ENLIGHT is the continuous reduction of CO₂ emissions in all areas of the partner universities, which has been emphasised by the signing of the ENLIGHT Sustainability Engagement Agreement in 2021 ([Link](#)).

Since national and international mobilities at higher education institutions cause high amounts of carbon emissions, it is important to encourage employees and students to travel in a more sustainable way. Therefore, ENLIGHT has set up this Mobility Guideline to foster sustainable travel between the ENLIGHT partner universities.

ENLIGHT business travel

University staff of all status groups have to attend many external events. Consequently, it is important to make decisions on more sustainable modes of travel. Using a decision tree to simplify these choices, is an easy way to make environmentally friendly travel decisions ([Link](#), an ENLIGHT travel decision tree in ENLIGHT cooperate design could be developed).

Here are a few questions that every ENLIGHT staff member have to consider when planning their business trip in ENLIGHT:

1. Is it **necessary** to attend **in person**?
 - If **no**, consider taking part in the meeting virtually, this option, (if available) should be explicitly made available for as many meetings as possible at the earliest stage
 - If **yes**, you should anticipate the following questions
2. How many colleagues from your institution need to attend the meeting? Can this be limited to one representative from your university?
3. Can this meeting be linked with any other planned event?
4. For mainland Europe, can the destination be reached in **less than 8 hours by train or bus**?
 - If **yes**, it is **highly recommended to take the train**
 - A trip using public transportation is the most sustainable and preferred option. In addition to trains, other mobility options such as bus travels or car sharing could be considered.

Even though a plane trip seems very short in many cases, it is important to consider that the journey to the airport, including check-in, baggage claims, etc. take a considerable amount of time.

ENLIGHT employees could also voluntarily make their sustainable commitment visible, e.g. #nounder1000project which entails not to take a plane if the destination is closer than 1,000 km.

5. For outside mainland Europe flying may be the only reasonable option but to ensure this is kept to a minimum please refer to point 1.

Traveling at destination

ENLIGHT staff should consider avoiding unnecessary local travel and choose sustainable travel options during their stay at the ENLIGHT partner. Therefore, the organising partner should support them to find suitable accommodation close to the venue and provide information about:

- Public transport, such as busses, subways, and trams
- Micro mobility, e.g. bikes or E-Scooter
- Footpaths

External participants

External participants of ENLIGHT events should be encouraged to follow the above-mentioned travel decision tree and informed about the local sustainable travel and accommodation options.

ENLIGHT student exchanges

ENLIGHT students should consider the following options when they are planning their trips in ENLIGHT:

- I. Replacing flights completely with busses and/or trains to reach the chosen destination
- II. Switching partially to sustainable modes (One flight to a major airport in the country and then using sustainable modes of travel internally)
- III. Combining journeys (Trips that are going to be made anyway could ideally be combined)

It is important to mention, that it is not possible for all students to travel in a sustainable way, for example students residing outside mainland Europe. Reasons may be physical, mental, and financial or other constraints. Therefore, it is essential to support students in their journey to travel sustainably.

Similar to the section “Traveling at destination”, it is also advisable for visiting students to use sustainable modes of travel during their stay. However, due to the longer duration of studying abroad, it is arguably even more important in this case. This includes not only commuting to and from the university, but also traveling to other national and international destinations during their stay and/or holidays.

In addition, visiting family and friends should be encouraged to use sustainable travel modes and follow the above-mentioned options.

Funding

Some options for financing sustainable travelling already exist. For students, an Interrail Pass is a viable option. It combines a train ticket with the option to travel within Europe.

Another option for students is the Green Travel Erasmus Top up. This grant is available to students who participate in a mobility period in another country and use sustainable transportation for the major part of the journey to reach their final destination.

In addition, specific university and national funds are available for students and staff. Travellers should therefore contact the international office of their ENLIGHT University.

Flight emissions - impact and compensation

If the decision was made to take a plane, there are still a few things to consider.

The chosen type of a plane and the class has an impact on the amount of CO₂ emissions. Travelling first class or business class should be ruled out.

Furthermore, high quality offset projects exist to compensate the CO₂ emissions generated by flying.

ENLIGHT Sustainable Travel and Living Platform

Information on the above-mentioned chapters as well as further references (e.g. CO₂ calculators) are published on the ENLIGHT Sustainable Travel Platform, see <https://enlight>.

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