

# SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL POLICY

## Introduction

One of the major goals of the European University ENLIGHT is the continuous reduction of greenhouse gas emissions across all areas of the partner universities. This commitment has been underscored 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 greenhouse gas emissions, it is important to encourage employees and students to travel in more sustainable ways. Therefore, ENLIGHT has set up this *Sustainable Travel Policy* to foster sustainable travel between the ENLIGHT partner universities.

## ENLIGHT business travel and student mobility

University staff members across all status groups are often expected to attend external events, while students participate in various short and long-term mobility programmes as part of their studies. Consequently, it is imperative to make decisions regarding more sustainable modes of travel. Using a decision tree to simplify these choices is an easy way to make environmentally friendly travel decisions.

Here are a few questions that every ENLIGHT staff member and ENLIGHT student needs to consider when planning their trip within ENLIGHT:

1. Is it **necessary** to attend **in person**?
  - If **no**, consider taking part in the meeting virtually - this option 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 and/or activity?
4. For mainland Europe, can the destination be reached in **less than 10 hours by train and/or bus** (departure train / bus station to the train / bus station of the destination including any transfer times)?
  - If **yes**, it is **highly recommended to take the train or bus**
  - A trip using public transportation is the most sustainable and preferred option. In addition to trains and busses, other mobility options such as car sharing and/or ferries should be considered.

Even though a flight seems quicker in many cases, it is important to consider that the journey to the airport, check-in, baggage claims, etc. take a considerable amount of time as well.

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

ENLIGHT employees could also voluntarily make their commitment to sustainability visible, for example, through initiatives like #notunder1000project, which entails refraining from taking a plane if the destination is closer than 1,000 km ([Link](#)).

## Traveling at destination

ENLIGHT staff and students 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 in finding suitable accommodation close to the venue and provide information about:

- Public transport, such as busses, subways, trams, and ferries
- 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 be 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 within ENLIGHT:

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

It is important to note that not all students can travel in a sustainable way, especially those residing outside mainland Europe. Factors such as physical, mental, and financial limitations, or other constraints may contribute to this. 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 exchange / visiting students to use sustainable modes of travel during their stay. Due to the longer duration of studying abroad, this becomes arguably even more crucial and includes not only commuting to and from the university, but also travelling to other national and international destinations for a short stay or holidays.

Furthermore, it is encouraged that family and friends visiting students abroad also utilise sustainable travel modes and adhere to the above-mentioned options.

### Funding

Students and staff traveling with an Erasmus+ scholarship will receive a higher travel grant if they use sustainable means of transportation for (the major part of) their outbound and return journey.

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

Financially attractive options for sustainable travel for students exist, for instance an Interrail Pass or Flixbus. Traveling together to attend the onsite part of a Blended Intensive Programme (BIP) makes car-pooling an attractive alternative.

### Flight emissions – impact and compensation

If the decision to travel by plane has been made, there are still several factors to consider.

The type of aircraft chosen and the class of travel both have an impact on the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Travelling first class or business class should be ruled out.

Furthermore, high quality offset projects exist to compensate the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions generated by flying. However, the internal policy of the respective ENLIGHT University must be taken into account.

### ENLIGHT Sustainability Platform

Information regarding the above-mentioned chapters as well as additional references such as travel maps and CO<sub>2</sub> calculators, can be found on the ENLIGHT Sustainability Platform. Please visit <https://enlight-eu.org/sustainability> for further details.