

# Travel Policy Greenpeace Belgium

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## Introduction

Staff, volunteers, board members, and everyone who travels for Greenpeace Belgium (GPB) are expected to consider the environmental, financial and social impact of any travel they undertake. This means that their journeys should always be essential and arranged as economically as possible while maintaining a positive public image of the organisation.

Meetings through video-conferencing and other communication tools should always be preferred as an alternative for travel.

Therefore, any travel on behalf of GPB must be selected, booked and charged in accordance with the procedures detailed in this travel policy document.

## Travel authorization

Any travel (abroad) reservation requires prior approval from the budget holder/line manager/task giver (according to relevance) to whose budget the expense will be charged.

Approval of the business trip

- Is your business trip really necessary? Can you replace it with a telephone or video conference?
- If you have to go on a business trip, explain the reasons for the trip and have your line-manager approve. You can do this by email.
- In addition, all business trips by plane must be briefly explained in writing by e-mail and approved in advance by an SMT member (Compliance in cc).
- SMT air travel needs to be approved by the ED, and ED air travel by the Board Chair.

## Means of transportation

As a general rule, staff should always select the least environmentally damaging way of travelling. Time efficiency and cost price, however important, are to be considered criteria of lower importance. In other words, the three criteria (environment, time and cost) have to be considered with common sense, taking into account that it is important for Greenpeace staff to be agents of change. If Greenpeace staff can't change their behaviour, how can we expect this from others? We are all expected to "walk our talk".

For **national travels**,

walking, cycling and public transportation are the rule and taxis/private cars are the exception.

Taxis and private cars should in general only be used where there is no reasonable alternative (for example: when carrying excessive amounts of luggage that would be cumbersome to take on public transport, when there is no public transport available, when it is not safe to take public transport in this area or time of day/night,...).

If you have to rent a vehicle, you have to argue the necessity of the rental and have it approved in advance by your manager. It should be an electric vehicle, or if absolutely not possible at least a hybrid and fuel efficient (smallest possible, size fit to purpose) vehicle, and definitely not diesel fuelled.

### For international travels,

train is the preferred option, flying is the exception.

As mentioned above, all flights (regardless of location) have to be authorized by your Line Manager and an SMT member. Travels have to be logged in [the travel register](#) already used for the travel insurance. SMT air travel needs to be approved by the ED, and ED travel by the Board Chair.

No flight is allowed if the destination can be reached within 24 hours with another less environmentally damaging mode of transport. You should ensure your ability to function normally upon arrival. Therefore you should, for example, make a stop with an overnight stay.

If you are travelling by car, you should make sure that you respect necessary resting times. This means making sure that you take at least 12h of resting time between every driving day when you are travelling by car. It is also recommended to take a stop of at least 15m every 2 hours whilst driving.

We encourage staff to consider and use train travel during working hours as working time instead of 'wasted time', e.g. for specific aspects of the job like reading, writing, etc...

We recognise that no guidance can cover all cases. To decide whether flying is a valid option, a good test would be to think how you would publicly justify flying to your destination to a Greenpeace supporter.

Greenpeace is opposing offsets schemes of flights. It's impossible to ensure 'good' off-sets, and in general we don't support the idea of offsetting fossil fuel activities. The need for measures that encourage reforestation, forest protection or other schemes such as funding projects of renewable energy and/or energy efficiency comes on top of the need to phase out fossil fuel use, and offsetting flights is simply not fit for purpose and puts us as an organisation in an impossible position. Let's be clear on this, internally and externally. It's much better to put everything in place to avoid flying as much as possible, rather than install the possibility or habit of offsetting flights that do happen.

As a general rule, second (train) or economy (flights) class only is allowed, unless the price of a first class ticket turns out to be lower.

### **Accommodations**

Staff may charge overnight accommodation expenses based upon the least expensive acceptable accommodation available. In practice, this means Bed and Breakfast or moderately priced hotels, but not luxury accommodation (except when this is booked by GPI or another NRO and you have no choice). Where possible *[and there's no pandemic crisis]* staff is encouraged to share rooms with colleagues, and or contact local NRO for assistance with booking low budget accommodations.

Except for multi-day trips meals are not refunded except for restaurant costs incurred due to joint restaurant visits with allies or targets.

### **Refund principles**

Greenpeace Belgium refunds expenses made during travel for vegan or vegetarian food, non-alcoholic drinks, transport, visa-related costs ... The organisation prefers to refund these expenses on the basis of claims based on invoices and bills. However in some situations or countries, this might not be practical. In these situations a per diem is intended to simplify administration of travel costs by eliminating the requirement to retain all receipts for food, drinks and other small out-of-pocket expenses.

If a private car is used for necessary work travel, costs will be reimbursed at an allowance per km (according to legislation) and only if another more sustainable transport mode is not an option.

Work related travels by public transport are fully reimbursed (via expense notes). When it comes to shared mobility solutions like e-steps, e-scooters, ...: these can be considered as a work travel mode of transport (and reimbursed by Greenpeace) only when the most sustainable modes (walking, private bike, shared bike, public transport) are not an option (remote areas, no other alternatives available).

If there would be a growing demand for shared-bike systems, Greenpeace as an organisation will look into what is most cost-effective: reimbursing case-by-case staff use of these systems (for work travel), or providing shared-bike system subscriptions for staff to use.

### ***Per diems***

Per diems should not be seen as a compensation for additional work pressure, while working outside the office. Moreover, it should be avoided to charge per diems as much as possible in favour of proven expenses. Per diems can only be used for travels longer than 3 days. The use of per diems does not exclude the use of bills wherever possible.

Greenpeace International provides an overview of per diems for all possible countries that GPB staff, activists, volunteers, Board and AV members should use

<https://greennet.greenpeace.org/content/8195#>

- *click on "Refresh this frame" to see the table of per diem*
- *please note that GPB is not following the GPI travel policy, only their per diem rates are applicable*

The per diem consists of breakfast (20%), lunch (30%) and evening meal (50%). Where meals are provided either by Greenpeace or a third party at no cost to the individual the per diem must be reduced according to these percentages.

People who are not Greenpeace employees cannot claim Per Diems. They must submit actual expenses, accompanied by receipts.

### **Validity and responsibility**

This Travel policy applies to all staff. Each colleague is responsible for compliance with this policy. The principles in this policy (e.g. ban on flights when alternative <24h) also apply if Greenpeace Belgium covers the travel costs of external people, freelancers, ... In case of uncertainties please contact the Org Support Director.

The Org Support Director is responsible for implementing the policy and informing employees about this policy. If this policy has not been followed, travel expenses will not be reimbursed.

Only the SMT can decide on exceptions, and when the exception is asked for a SMT member, the ED should be involved in this decision. When the ED is concerned, the Board chair needs to be involved. The travel register will be transparent for all Greenpeace staff and Board members.