

FACULTY COUNCIL

Sustainable Travel Policy for ESHCC

According to the latest numbers from 2018, 27,39% of Erasmus University's carbon footprint came from business travel by plane¹ which equals 3991 tons of CO₂ on an annual basis. Based on data from ESHCC from the past three years (2017-2019), ESHCC was responsible for 173,8 tons of CO₂ emissions in 2018 (and on average 195 tons annually for the period 2017-2019). This equals around 4.4 % of the total business travel emissions of the university.

By reducing our faculty's carbon footprint, we can show that we are a frontrunner in contributing to a more sustainable future which is aligned to EUR's strategy for 2020-2024.

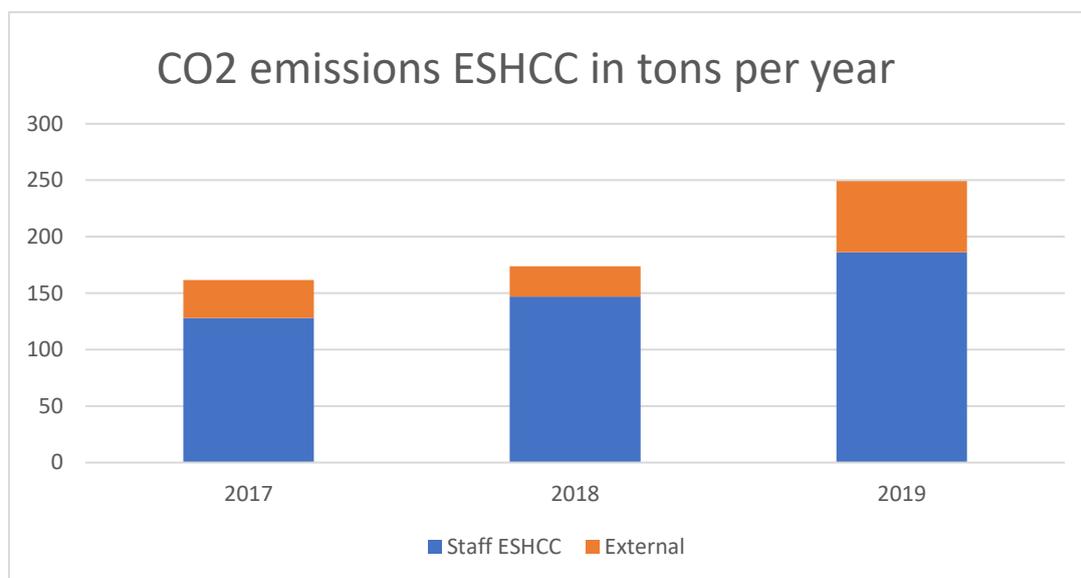


Figure 1: ESHCC business travel (flights) CO₂ emissions in tons per year

In Figure 1, Staff refers to trips (flights) made by ESHCC staff members. External refers to trips made by people outside of ESHCC who were invited and paid for by ESHCC.

What is going well already?

- Most flights are direct flights (each stopover adds an average 100 kg of CO₂ to the total emissions).

Where can we improve?

- Consider less polluting ground travel options (e.g. train, bus, ferry) for destinations that are a relatively close by (e.g. London, Paris).
- Compensate CO₂ emissions for remaining flights.
- Consider remote communication options, for example when planned meetings are shorter than 3 hours.

What can we do?

- Restriction of air travel within a 700 km radius or 8 hours travel time.
- Strong recommendation of train travel (or bus/ferry) within a 850 km radius (9 – 10 hours travel time).
- Encourage car travel is in case of carpooling (3-4 people per car).
- Air travel emission compensated in all cases (optional train travel emissions as well).
- Encourage virtual communication with better video conferencing facilities and inform staff about this.

¹ <https://www.eur.nl/en/about-eur/vision/sustainability/operations/co2-footprint>

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Expected result

Restricting air travel within a 700 km radius would on average reduce ESHCC's carbon footprint with at least 6333 kg CO₂ per year**. In addition, recommending train travel within a radius of 850km would diminish this number even further depending on how much air travel is replaced by ground travel.

** Additionally, CO₂ emissions of train travel could also be considered. As this varies highly per train type and country, calculations are complicated at this point.

Estimation of costs

Train Travel below 700km

Estimating difference in costs between air or ground travel is a bit more complicated as the difference in price highly depends on the moment of booking and the travel dates chosen. However, based on the travel data from the past three years, a rough estimation has been made. For all air trips that were made (below 700km), prices were looked up for both train and air travel for the same dates in December 2020. In some cases train travel is more expensive, in others it is actually cheaper. In total replacing air travel with train travel under 700km would mean additional costs of around 960 euros annually. This number is however highly dependent on actual prices at the moment of booking for both air and train travel.

Compensation

Based on the flight data of the past three years, if all flights above 700km would be compensated, it would equal compensating on average 188 ton of CO₂ per year. As the average price per ton CO₂ is 20 euros (according to carbonkiller.org) this would result in approximately 3770 euros for compensation projects annually.