Bulletin on ecologically sustainable travel planning for GRC Travel Grant applications

15 September 2020

Survey of travel planning

The UZH Sustainability Team is registering all business trips of UZH members and the CO$_2$ emissions they cause. To this purpose, as of the Fall 2020 funding period, travels supported by a GRC Travel Grant will also be surveyed. You are thus asked to specify the planned means of travel when submitting your application. Together with the final report, you will then submit the details of the trip undertaken.

Rationale for the travel planning

With the aim of raising awareness for aspects of ecologically sustainable travel, we are also asking you to take the subject into consideration. This question does not only refer to the choice of travel means, but also to the arrangement of the travel program and the efficient use of your time at the destination.

Choosing the means of travel

While for some travel destinations flying is the only alternative method of travel, many destinations within Europe can be well reached by train or bus. The Swiss Federal Administration, for example, requires its employees to travel by train to all destinations that can be reached in less than six hours. Also in many other cases, train and bus are reasonable alternatives.

If, however, the longer travel times imply unacceptable situations, for example with regard to the combination of work and family life or due to individual limitations that make long journeys by public transport difficult, this and thus the recourse to flying can also be reasoned in the form.

Travel organization

Not only but particularly for destinations that can only be reached by plan in a reasonable time, the question of efficient travelling is therefore becoming increasingly important. If, for example, it is reasonably possible to combine two or more stays or destinations into one trip (or round trip), this increases their efficiency and improves the sustainability of a long journey. In principle, for long journeys such as intercontinental trips, an extended and sensibly used stay can justify the longer journey. Furthermore, direct flights cause less CO$_2$ emissions than flights with stopovers and transfers.
Travel program
Longer stays can also be used to combine several purposes. For example, a participation at a summer school can be combined with a guest stay at a close institute or department, or archive research can be supplemented by contacting local research networks and exchanging with fellow researchers in the area. In this way, well planned programs increase the efficiency of the trip.

Factsheets of the Sustainability Team
We are also happy to refer to the factsheets of the Sustainability Team. For example the two factsheets on «Business Travel» and «Sustainability during Your Exchange».

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