

Directive relating to the organization of responsible student travel

LEX 5.6.3

of 1st January 2023 (status as at 1st January 2025)

The Direction of the Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne, based on the Ordonnance du 13 novembre 2003 sur l'EPFZ et l'EPFL¹ hereby adopts the following:

Section 1 General Provisions

Article 1 Scope of Application

¹ The present directive applies to EPFL units organizing educational trips, all students enrolled in bachelor's, master's, and continuing education programs at EPFL, and student associations recognized by the school.

² For the purposes of the present directive, the following trips are considered student trips:

- Group educational trips, organized by an EPFL unit (section 2).
- Individual or group educational trips, organized and/or paid for by the student or a student association (section 3).

Article 2 General Principles

¹ The provisions of the present directive satisfy the following general principles:

- Promoting educational exchange programs, development, and personal well-being all while reducing the environmental impact of travel.
- Providing students with assistance during educational trips.
- Making responsible use of resources by integrating environmental and financial criteria into trip organization and planning.
- Respecting the duty to set an example and be transparent when using public funds, regardless of the source of the funding, particularly through the absence of:
 - Conflict of interest between student and private activities;
 - Personal enrichment or loss ("no gain, no loss")

Section 2 Educational Group Trips Organized by an EPFL Unit

Article 3 Principles

¹ Within the meaning of the present directive, educational group trips organized by an EPFL unit include travel made as part of:

- Class trips
- Trips for a course
- Project trips during academic curriculum
- Summer schools

² Educational group trips organized by an EPFL unit must be in pursuit of an educational objective. A member of the teaching staff must therefore always be present during the trip.

³ Trips organized by EPFL take place during class periods and may last up to one week. Only project trips during an academic curriculum and summer school may be organized over school vacation periods.

⁴ The unit responsible for organizing ensures that the principles specified above are observed.

¹ Ordonnance sur l'EPFZ et l'EPFL

⁵ To accommodate the climate strategy implemented at EPFL, trips must meet the criteria defined in this section.

Article 4 Funding of a Trip by an EPFL Unit

¹ The unit responsible for organizing defines the amount allocated to trips according to its annual budget and the number of students enrolled.

² It defines the travel budget based on actual travel expenses. Cost is not a determining factor in the selection of means of transport.

³ Inasmuch as is feasible, the unit advances the trip expenses and ensures that as few costs as possible are borne by the student.

⁴ Before the trip, the unit ensures that the student is able to participate, regardless of their personal financial situation.

⁵ The budget specifically allocated to educational trips may not be used for other purposes or carried over to the following year.

⁶ The unit responsible for organizing is likewise responsible for managing the budgets placed at their disposal and settling invoices.

Article 5 Procedure for a Trip Organized by EPFL

¹ Prior to the trip, the unit responsible for organizing the trip and/or the educational project must:

- Assess the cost-benefit ratio of the trip, including the educational, personal welfare, environmental and financial criteria.
- Assess the options for making the trip in Switzerland or in a European country.
- Gather information on the geopolitical and health situation of the destination as well as any regions crossed along the way². Travel to regions deemed high risk by EPFL is prohibited in accordance with section 5.
- Gather information on the international assistance services required for traveling abroad³ (section 5).
- Every student should ensure that they are informed of their health and accident coverage abroad. The costs of policy changes are at their expense.
- Prioritize means of transport with low environmental impact when planning the trip.
- If the trip requires a flight or at least one night in a hotel and is entirely organized and funded by the unit, generate a trip request and an expense claim using the expense report tool (see article 16, LEX 5.6.1).
- If the trip requires a trip request and such has been validated, book the trip using EPFL's official suppliers (Appendix II).
- For all international travel, ensure that every student has filled out their passenger profile⁴.
- Each student is responsible for checking the validity of their identification documents.
- Each student must obtain any visas, vaccinations, health tests or prophylaxes required by the country or countries visited. The costs of issue or vaccination are at their expense.

² During the trip, the accompanying individual is responsible for ensuring:

- The well-being of each student.
- Communication with the international assistance partner⁵ if necessary.

² [EPFL risk map](#)

³ [International assistance partner](#)

⁴ [Completing the passenger profile](#)

⁵ [International assistance partner](#)

- That the travel budget is not exceeded, inasmuch as is feasible.

³ Following the trip, the unit responsible for organizing must:

- Finalize the allocation of trip expenses for the expense claim and reimburse those who advanced expenses.

Section 3 Individual or Group Educational Trip, Organized and/or Funded by the Student or a Student Association

Article 6 Principles

¹ Within the meaning of the present directive, individual or group educational trips, organized and/or funded by the student or even a student association, include travel made as part of:

- Outgoing educational exchange programs and joint degrees
- Master projects
- Mandatory internships
- Study trips
- Study courses
- Interdisciplinary projects

Article 7 Funding of an Individual or Association Trip

¹ The student or student association is responsible for all travel and accommodation expenses as well as any insurance coverage.

² Study trips may benefit from a grant awarded by the Section depending on the number of participants and annual budget available. The grant may not be used for other purposes.

³ Students in a precarious socioeconomic situation, who are encouraged by the Section to participate in a study trip (with an educational objective), can request financial aid from the Student Affairs when they return. The flat-rate grant totals CHF 300, and is awarded once during the study curriculum.

Article 8 Recommended Procedure

¹ The student or student association is entirely responsible for planning the trip and selecting the means of transport. EPFL is not obligated to provide administrative support in the organization of the trip.

² Nevertheless, as part of its climate strategy, EPFL recommends choosing the most eco-friendly means of transport.

³ Prior to all international travel, EPFL advises each student or student association to:

- Assess the options for making the trip in Switzerland or in a European country.
- Gather information on the geopolitical and health situation of the destination as well as any regions crossed along the way⁶. Travel to regions deemed high risk by EPFL is prohibited in accordance with this section.
- Gather information on the international assistance services required for traveling abroad⁷ (section 5).
- Ensure that they are informed of their health and accident coverage abroad.

⁶ [EPFL risk map](#)

⁷ [International assistance partner](#)

- Fill out their passenger profile⁸ in order to benefit from EPFL's international assistance services.
- Prioritize means of transport with low environmental impact when planning the trip.
- Check the validity of their identification documents and obtain any visas or vaccinations required by the country or countries visited.

⁴ During the trip, the student or student association may:

- Communicate with the international assistance partner⁹ if necessary.

Section 4 Means of Transport

Article 9 Principles

¹ In accordance with the Confederation's climate goals, ratified by the CEPF, EPFL is committed to reducing the environmental impact of professional and student travel by at least 30% (ref. 2019) between now and 2030.

² To achieve this target, the Direction of EPFL encourages the use of means of transport with low environmental impact.

³ Public transport should be prioritized for all travel in Switzerland.

⁴ Participating in or organizing virtual conferences or meetings is preferable.

Article 10 (Inter)national Trains, Subways, Trolleys, Buses, and Boats

¹ Only 2nd class tickets are accepted for any public transport ticket covered by EPFL.

² It is imperative that every educational trip organized and/or funded by an EPFL unit be made by train if the total duration of the trip from an EPFL campus to the final destination is less than six hours. The predefined list of the international destinations to be reached by train is authoritative (Appendix I). For trips between six and seven hours, the train remains the preferred option (Appendix I).

³ The unit responsible for organizing may decide to set up financial incentives to promote the use of international train travel.

⁴ To simplify organizing educational travel and reduce trip expenses, EPFL recommends purchase of group tickets or Interrail passes¹⁰ through its official suppliers (Appendix II)

⁵ EPFL students participating in an exchange program for the 3rd year of their bachelor's degree or a double degree as part of the SEMP program benefit from a 60% grant for the purchase of international train tickets.¹¹

⁶ Students with an employment contract with an EPFL unit are reimbursed for the actual expenses of their trips through an expense report procedure. Trip expenses are borne by the unit responsible for employment.

⁷ Bachelor's and master's degree students participating in an educational exchange program on an EPFL partner campus are reimbursed for the actual expenses of their trips, pursuant to the applicable rules¹².

⁸ No grant is given to students for the purchase of private public transport passes used for educational trips.

⁸ [Completing the passenger profile](#)

⁹ [International assistance partner](#)

¹⁰ [Interrail passes](#)

¹¹ [Principles and procedure](#)

¹² [Principles and procedure](#)

Article 11 Flights

¹ To ensure that this directive is observed and guarantee the duty of care toward its students, use of the EPFL travel agency is mandatory for any flight reservation organized or funded by an EPFL unit.

² To achieve the goal of reducing greenhouse gases generated by air travel for educational purposes, the following rules apply for any air travel:

- For a given journey and equivalent level of service, the most environmentally efficient airlines are prioritized for reservations.
- With no significant difference in terms of price (50%), time, or comfort, direct flights are prioritized for reservations.
- Flights between Swiss town and cities are not authorized.
- Flights are not permitted to any international destination that can be reached in less than six hours by train (Appendix I). Every trip organized and/or funded by an EPFL unit must be made by train if the total duration of the trip from an EPFL campus to the final destination is less than six hours. The predefined list of the international destinations to be reached by train is authoritative (Appendix I). For trips between six and seven hours, the train remains the preferred option (Appendix I).
- Only “Economy” or “Economy+” class tickets are reserved, regardless of the duration of the flight.
- A vacation before or after the trip is permitted, but must be communicated when the quote is requested. The employee is responsible for any additional expenses generated by their private trips.

Article 12 Rental, Car Sharing, and Private Vehicles¹³

¹ Only students with a employment agreement with an EPFL unit can rent a vehicle using the transmissible card of the unit, which will cover the rental, parking and insurance costs.

² In the event of a breach of traffic regulations or a fine, only the driver is liable.

³ Student associations recognized by the École enjoy the rental conditions valid for EPFL units. Rental, parking, and insurance expenses are entirely the responsibility of the association.

⁴ Regarding travel for any other reason, vehicle rental is deemed a private trip.

⁵ Use of a private vehicle as part of an educational trip is deemed a private expense.

Section 5 International Assistance

Article 13 Coverage

¹ EPFL extends the international assistance services¹⁴ with regard to information, prevention, monitoring and intervention to the students and student associations recognized by EPFL.

² The international assistance program only applies to trips abroad made by students enrolled at EPFL and is considered to be a student trip within the meaning of the present directive.

³ The duty of care and protection is provided before, during, and after the trip.

⁴ For any educational trip abroad and regardless of the means of transport selected, the student must fill out their passenger profile prior to departure,¹⁵ entering their personal data and travel details.

⁵ Regarding any private extension of an educational trip, assistance services abroad are available to the traveler.

¹³ [For travel by car](#)

¹⁴ International assistance partner

¹⁵ Completing the passenger profile.

Article 14 Services

¹ EPFL's assistance provider is available to the student:

- Before the trip, to gather information on the risks associated with their destination.
- During the trip, for medical, safety, or assistance advice.
- In the event of an emergency, to assist at any time, whatever the nature of the need.

² Funding for international assistance services is borne by EPFL's Central Services. EPFL reserves the right to re-invoice the costs of the assistance program to the trips organized by student associations.

³ The international assistance program does not provide travel insurance coverage. A package offer may be requested from EPFL's official partners.

⁴ In the event of any risks during their stay, the student will be alerted directly by EPFL's international assistance partner.

Article 15 Classification of Countries¹⁶

¹ On the basis of information from the assistance partner, as well as travel recommendations by the Confederation and other state services, a classification for each country in the world is published and updated regularly by the Security, Safety and Facilities Operations Department (VPO-SE). This consists of a scale from 1 (low risk) to 5 (travel non-recommended advised).

² Based on this risk scale, EPFL can adopt certain measures according to each level of classification of the country.

³ Student travel in non-recommended or extreme risk areas (levels 5 and 4) is strictly prohibited, regardless of the trip organizer's status.

⁴ In the case of an expedition to a region with particular risks (e.g. high altitude, isolated regions of the world) or for activities involving particular risks (e.g. diving, mountaineering, speleology), the student must request prior approval from EPFL's *Commission voyages*¹⁷.

⁵ For expeditions, the *Commission voyages* decides after receiving notice from the DSE. If the trip is approved, the student must comply strictly with the measures imposed.

Section 6 Accommodation and Meals

Article 16 General Principles

¹ For educational trips organized and/or funded by an EPFL unit:

- The EPFL travel agency must be used first and foremost when reserving accommodation.
- The unit responsible for organizing defines the amount allocated to accommodation and meals according to its annual budget and the number of students enrolled.
- Rental of an apartment or accommodation with private individuals is an option, subject to validation by the unit responsible for organizing.
- Reimbursement of meal expenses applies to the actual expenses of up to three meals maximum per day.
- Any additional nights or meals before or after the educational project period are deemed a private expense.

² For educational trips organized by a student or student association:

¹⁶ EPFL Risk Map.

¹⁷ Commission voyages EPFL

- The student or student association is responsible for collecting the funds for accommodation and meals on their own.

Section 7 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Article 17 Climate Contribution¹⁸

¹ For educational trips funded by an EPFL unit¹⁹, from 1 January 2026 onwards an internal contribution equal to the greenhouse gas emissions generated by the flights is mandatory.

² The contribution goes to a fund dedicated to climate and sustainability action at EPFL.

³ The travel agency helps quantify CO₂ emissions.

Section 8 Data Protection

Article 18 Duty of Confidentiality

¹ The administrative staff of the EPFL units working to promote responsible educational travel (VPH, VPF, VPO) as well as members of EPFL's *Commission voyages* are required to observe the duty of confidentiality and official secrecy.

² Any breach of secrecy is punishable by criminal and disciplinary sanctions as provided for by law.

Article 19 Collection of Personal and Travel Data

¹ The EPFL units working to promote educational travel as well as EPFL's official suppliers all process data, including sensitive data.

² Only data necessary for providing travel services and for calculating CO₂ emissions is subject to processing:

- Travel reservation data
- Last name(s), first name(s)
- Gender
- Date of birth
- Nationality
- Passport or identity card number
- Private postal address
- Private phone number
- EPFL email address
- EPFL identification number (SCIPER)
- Travel request number according to EPFL's expense report tool
- Travel ticket number (PNR) and date of issue
- Reservation number
- Date and time of departure
- Date and time of return
- Main country of destination
- Main city of destination
- Complete details of the means of transport used (flights, public transport, car reservations (including layovers))
- Transport operator (airline/rail company, car rental agency)

¹⁸ CO₂ emissions generated by professional and student travel

¹⁹ The funders' rules apply with regard to the contribution.

- Travel class or rental category
- CO₂ emissions from travel
- Details of the accommodation booked (type, address, duration, etc.)

³ When performing services mentioned in the present directive, EPFL's official suppliers and their subcontractors must observe the Swiss legislation on data protection and, where applicable, the General Data Protection Regulation (EU).

Article 20 Passenger profile²⁰

¹ When booking a travel service, an electronic "passenger profile" containing the personal data for each EPFL passenger must be created:

- Personal data relating to the passenger profile
 - Last name(s), first name(s)
 - Department: school and section of which the student is a member
 - SCIPER: EPFL identification number
 - EPFL email address
 - Private phone number
- Data used for emergencies only (to be provided by the passenger)
 - Private email address
 - Private phone number
 - At least 1 emergency contact (last name, first name, family relationship, cell phone number, email address)

² This profile is kept in a computer database at EPFL and used as a reference document, consulted each time a reservation or international assistance service must be provided.

³ When a reservation is made, a passenger name record (PNR) containing the personal data necessary for responding to the travel request of each traveler (and information relating to the reservation) is generated.

Article 21 Data Retention

¹ Data are retained by EPFL's official suppliers for a duration of 3 years.

² The data are retained by EPFL's information systems for the duration of the student's period of enrollment.

³ The following data can be retained by the EPFL's information systems for statistical and research purposes for a period of 10 years:

- Year of departure
- Year of return
- Main country of destination
- Main city of destination
- Complete details of the means of transport used (flights, public transport, car reservations (including layovers))
- Transport operator (airline/rail company, car rental agency)
- Travel class or rental category
- CO₂ emissions from travel

Article 22 Data Security

¹ EPFL ensures the security of personal and travel data through enhanced data protection with added security measures.

²⁰ Completing the passenger profile

² It implements appropriate technical and organizational measures to maintain data security and confidentiality and, in particular, to prevent any accidental or intentional manipulation, loss, destruction, or communication, as well as any unauthorized access.

³ EPFL may employ Swiss or international subcontractors to the extent necessary for completing the tasks entrusted to them. They guarantee compliance with data protection legislation.

⁴ If the subcontractor is international, EPFL ensures that the legal framework for application is respected prior to the communication of data abroad.

Article 23 Data Communication

¹ EPFL and its official suppliers can communicate personal data to third parties:

- If it is necessary to communicate data for the organization of the trip (article 2) or to alert or protect the traveler (article 3).
- AND**
- If the traveler has agreed to the communication of their personal data.

Article 24 Duties of EPFL

¹ EPFL is responsible for observing the relevant provisions of the legislation on data protection for processed data, as well as for ensuring the security of its website and information systems.

² The EPFL units with information system access rights may only consult or communicate data to the extent that completing their legal tasks so requires.

³ Those persons responsible for the maintenance, management, and programming of the information system may only process data if such is necessary for completing their tasks and if data security is guaranteed. This must not result in any data modification.

Article 25 Duties of the traveler

¹ Each traveler is responsible for using and managing their access to the reservation tools. In particular, each user takes care not to break the law and not to infringe upon the rights of third parties or EPFL's interests.

² Users strictly comply with the general conditions of use concerning the reservation tools of EPFL's official suppliers.

³ The traveler ensures that the personal data recorded is complete, accurate, and up to date.

⁴ Within the legally permitted limits, EPFL fully and completely declines all responsibility for any possible loss or damage relating to:

- The user's misuse of travel reservation platforms
- Personal data that is incorrect or not up to date

Article 26 Rights of the Individual Concerned

¹ The rights of the individual concerned, particularly the right of access, the right of objection, the right of rectification, and the right of destruction of data are governed by data protection legislation.

² The rights of the individual concerned are exercised in writing and by proving their identity with the EPFL Data Protection Officer. Written form includes electronic form.

³ It is the responsibility of the Data Protection Officer to rule on the exercise of a right by the individual concerned. As such, the Data Protection Officer informs the individual concerned of the decision made regarding their request.

⁴ It is possible that some data will continue to be processed even if the individual concerned objects because of tasks incumbent upon EPFL.

⁵ Rectification or destruction of data must be communicated to those departments with access to this data.

Section 9 Controls

Article 27 Implementation

¹ The VPA and VPH ensure that the present directive is correctly applied and generate lawful financial and environmental reports for educational travel.

² Oversight may be undertaken by the VPA and the VPH as well as by the EPF Board internal auditing team.

³ Evidence of non-compliance with this directive or of fraud are denounced and punished in accordance with the regulations in force.

⁴ Deviations from the principles enacted are addressed directly with the persons involved in the travel reservation process.

Section 10 Final Provisions

Article 28 Entry into Force

¹ This directive, which came into force on 01.01.2023 (version 1.0), was revised on 01.01.2024 (version 1.1) and on 01.01.2025 (version 1.2).

² Article 17 shall enter into force on 01.01.2026.

On behalf of the Administration of EPFL:

The President:

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Françoise Chardonens

Appendix I - List of major international destinations that must be reached by train instead of a direct flight

Status as at 9 September 2024; the list will be updated annually in accordance with new international rail connections.

Destination	Train journey (one-way, duration in hours) ²¹ <i>Source: CFF, 2024</i>	Minimum number of train changes for each destination	Emissions CO₂ by train (one-way, in kg) <i>Source: CFF, 2024</i>	Flight (duration in hours) ²² <i>Source: Kuoni BT, 2024</i>	Emissions CO₂ by plane (one-way, in kg) <i>Source: Kuoni BT, 2024</i>
Bologna/IT	4 hours 46	1	21.1	6 hours 30 (via Zürich)	133
Darmstadt/DE	5 hours 06	2	8.4	5 hours 30	142
Florence/IT	5 hours 46	1	26.4	4 hours 45	145
Frankfurt/DE	5 hours 43	2	9.4	4 hours 45	142
Genoa/IT	5 hours 26	1	17.8	7 hours 30 (no direct flights via Switzerland)	302
Heidelberg/DE	5 hours 57	2	8.2	5 hours 45	142
Innsbruck/AT	5 hours 51	1	4.4	7 hours 00 (no direct flights via Switzerland)	319
Karlsruhe/DE	4 hours 05	1	5.6	5 hours 30	142
Lyon/FR	2 hours 39	1	2.4	7 hours 50 (no direct flights via Switzerland)	265
Mannheim/DE	4 hours 38	1	7.8	5 hours 10	142
Marseille/FR	5 hours 03	2	6	6 hours 30 (via Zürich)	150
Milan/IT	3 hours 25	0	9.2	6 hours (via Zürich)	108
Munich/DE	5 hours 44	1	9.5	5 hours 30	146
Paris/FR	3 hours 40	0	5.9	5 hours 30	135
Strasbourg/FR	3 hours 49	2	3.1	-	-
Stuttgart/DE	5 hours 01	2	7.8	6 hours (via Zürich)	100
Turin/IT	4 hours 47	1	17.1	7 hours 00 (no direct flights via Switzerland)	284

²¹ The duration of the train journey is calculated from the Lausanne railway station to the main railway station in the city of destination, including any connection time.

²² The duration of a flight is calculated from Lausanne railway station to Geneva Airport. It includes check-in time, security checks, flight, and transfer to the city center at the destination.

List of other international destinations for which the train is recommended (between 6 and 7 hours)

Destination	Train journey (one-way, duration in hours)²³	Minimum number of train changes for each destination	Emissions CO₂ by train (one-way, in kg)	Flight (duration in hours)²⁴	Emissions CO₂ by plane (one-way, in kg)
Bonn/DE	6 hours 59	2	13.3	6 hours 20 (via Zürich)	133
Brussels/BE	5 hours 54	1	11.9	5 hours	152
Cologne/DE	5 hours 51	2	14	5 hours 30	156
Rome/IT	6 hours 52	1	44.6	5 hours 30	173
Venice/IT	6 hours 24	0	25.1	5 hours	146

List of other international destinations for which an overnight train exists

Destination	Train journey (one-way, duration in hours)²⁶	Minimum number of train changes for each destination	Emissions CO₂ by train (one-way, in kg)	Flight (duration in hours)²⁷	Emissions CO₂ by plane (one-way, in kg)
Berlin/DE	11 hours 46	4	24.6	6 hours	196
Budapest/HU	14 hours 59	1	22.1	6 hours 30	215
Dresden/DE	12 hours 15	2	24.8	7 hours (via Zurich)	155
Graz/AT	12 hours 38	1	15.6	7 hours (via Zurich)	151
Hamburg/DE	12 hours 09	2	23.5	6 hours	196
Hanover/DE	9 hours 45	2	19.3	7 hours (via Zurich)	156
Leipzig-Halle/DE	10 hours 04	2	20.5	7 hours (no direct flights via Switzerland)	258
Linz/AT	10 hours 38	1	16	7 hours 30	190
Vienna/AT	13 hours 12	2	16	5 hours 30	190

²³ The duration of the train journey is calculated from the Lausanne railway station to the main railway station in the city of destination, including any connection time.

²⁴ The duration of a flight is calculated from Lausanne railway station to Geneva Airport. It includes check-in time, security checks, flight, and transfer to the city center at the destination.

Appendix II - Channels for purchasing travel services, if paid for and/or organised by EPFL

<u>Service</u>	<u>Channel to be used for purchasing</u>
	Mandatory or recommended channel to be used for purchasing
Air ticket	<u>Travel agency or online reservation tool</u>
Public transport in Switzerland	SBB/CFF Webshop or SBB/CFF app
Public transport outside Switzerland	EPFL tl counter or SBB Webshop or Trainline
Hotel	Travel agency or online reservation tool
Hired car in Switzerland	Europcar or travel agency or online reservation tool
Hired car outside Switzerland	Travel agency or online reservation tool
Car sharing in Switzerland	Mobility car-sharing
Travel documents (visas)	CIBTvisas
Travel insurance	Travel agency