



# **HANDBOOK** **for sustainable** **internationalisation**

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# Introduction

Internationalisation of higher education has been described as “the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education” (Knight, 2004, p. 11). There are several elements associated with it, but one of the most relevant is international student mobility. This is defined as the cross-border movement of people to pursue their studies abroad, either for a full degree or for part of it. For the purpose of this handbook, we will consider specifically the international student mobility for credits, such as the one organised under the Erasmus+ programme. In the last three decades, this programme has been growing both in the number of students and in the importance it has for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) across Europe. Moreover, its priorities have also shifted throughout the years, along with the requirements to implement it.

Any change in the implementation requirements of the Erasmus+ programme directly affects International Relations Offices (IROs), since they are predominantly responsible for implementing and managing student mobility. They are thus often overwhelmed with the typical bureaucracy of international mobility and understaffed due to the growing number of requirements they face. Climate change has however become an issue that needs to be prioritised, given its all-encompassing impact on society. The ambitious goals that were set in recent years, such as the European Green Deal, have made a change towards environmental sustainability more important than ever before. As a result, many HEIs across Europe have worked to change their practices to become more environmentally sustainable in all their fields, and internationalisation is no exception.

Undoubtedly, internationalisation of Higher Education should include environmental sustainability principles, but how can this be done? How can we change current practices without increasing the workload of IROs?

The Green Erasmus project tackles these questions in this Handbook. We surveyed HEIs staff from across Europe on their current actions and practices on environmental sustainability, and on their views regarding the role of universities in fighting climate change. A collection of good practices that are already being implemented by other institutions also took place. Finally, the creation of a complete workshop manual on introduction to sustainability as part of mobility preparation. This workshop aims to inspire students and staff to be agents of change and bring environmental sustainability to the forefront of priorities in the Higher Education area.



Through this handbook, Higher Education practitioners involved in sustainability will be able to:

## UNDERSTAND...

...what challenges and opportunities HEIs across Europe are facing and how they are approaching sustainability in their practices.

## LEARN...

...about good practices already being implemented in European HEIs for a more sustainable internationalisation, to serve as inspiration for changes in your own institution.

## LEAD...

...students to have a more sustainable mobility experience and to better understand what environmental sustainability is and how they can do their part, through the Workshop manual on sustainable internationalisation for students.

## EXPLORE...

...different resources that can be of help when you are implementing more sustainable practices in your International Office.



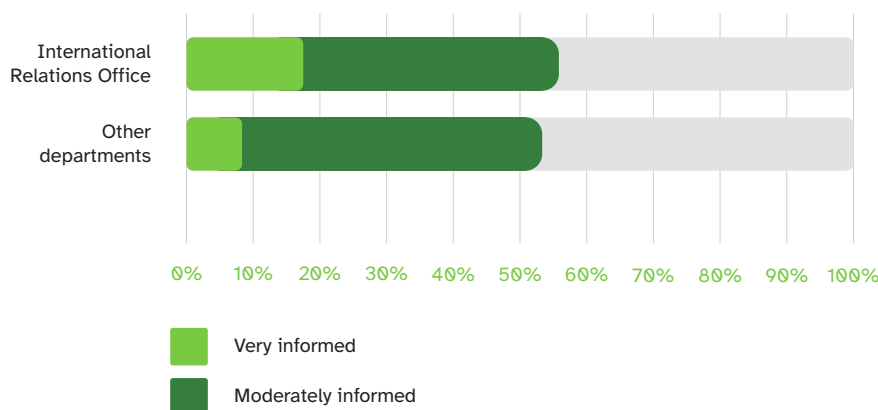
# 1. UNDERSTAND

## **Conclusions of the Green Erasmus survey on sustainable internationalisation**

To best support IROs to make internationalisation more sustainable, it is important to understand what are the barriers, opportunities and good practices that are already in place. Through the Green Erasmus research focusing on HEIs, we aimed to shed light on these topics and draw conclusions that can be used to shape future initiatives. This research gathered 166 responses from 16 different European countries, with a strong representation of Germany. Most respondents were International Relations Officers, representing over 60% of the total group.

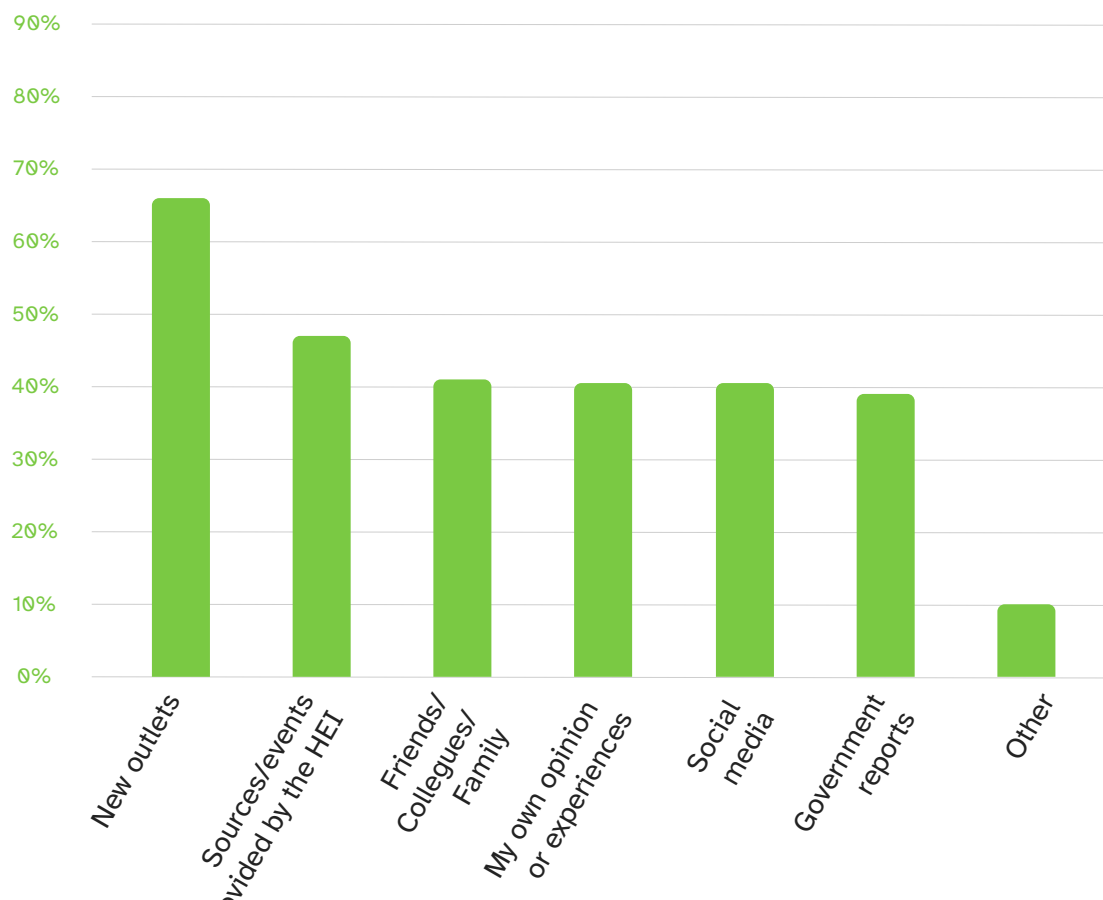
## Level of information & sources

When inquiring how informed they consider their International Relations Office to be on environmental issues, **more than half** of the respondents answered they were **very or moderately informed** (17.50%/ 38.33% respectively). Comparatively, almost the same percentage of respondents considered their colleagues from other departments to be very or moderately informed (8.33%/ 45% respectively). This steered the way in which this handbook was developed, so that even people only moderately informed about environmental issues would be able to understand and take part in the shift that is underway in Higher Education.



**Figure 1 - Level of information on environmental issues**

When diving into the main sources of information on environmental issues, news outlets are ranked in the first place, collecting 66% of the answers. **Only almost half of respondents** consider **sources and events provided by their Higher Education Institution to be a main source of information**, which highlights an opportunity for HEIs to increase their educational role around these issues. Both “Friends/colleagues/family”, “My own opinion or experiences” and “Social media” were equally scored, with 41%. Government reports gathered 39% of answers, and finally other sources scored 10%.

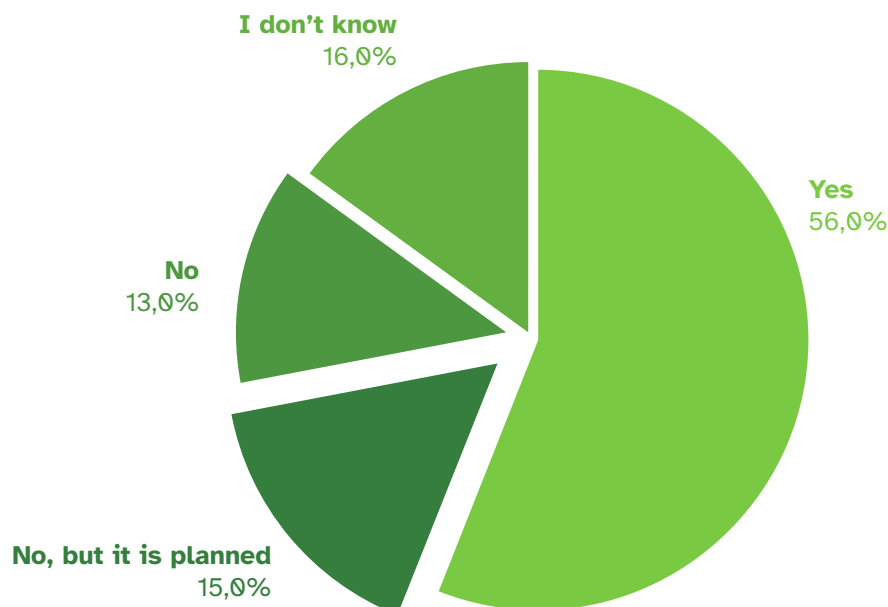


**Figure 2 - Sources of information on environmental issues**

Moving to staff views on environmental sustainability and the role of HEIs, respondents were asked about their agreement with multiple statements. 76.27% of staff strongly agreed that environmental sustainability is something that universities should actively incorporate and promote, which is in line with the findings of the Green Erasmus research focusing on students (Diekmann, Karaiskos, 2022). In this research, which gathered more than 10,000 responses, a similar percentage of students strongly agree with the active promotion of environmental sustainability in their HEI (70.9%) and are interested in seeing more actions from HEIs, such as waste composting taking place on campus (57.4%), installation of donation points for food and clothes (56.5%), more sustainable food options in campus canteens (54.1%) and an overall ban of plastic products (54.3%). Staff also agree, even though less strongly, that environmental sustainability is something that all university courses should actively incorporate and promote (45.76% strongly agree/ 31.36% agree), and that teachers should be required to incorporate it within their teaching practices (40.68% strongly agree/35.59% agree). Lastly, close to 90% of the respondents either agree or strongly agree that environmental sustainability is something they would like to learn more about.

## HEIs' strategy & environmental sustainability

The inclusion of sustainability in an institutional strategy translates the commitment from top management to steer to a greener path and sends signals that resonate throughout the institution. Through this survey, we aimed to understand if that was already a standard practice or not. Respondents were asked if their institution has a sustainability strategy or if sustainability is mentioned in the institution's overall strategy, to which **slightly over half answered positively (56%)**. It is a positive sign that HEIs' top management has understood the importance of striving for a more sustainable institution and thus has integrated it into its strategy. However, this also means that, for different reasons, almost half of respondents have yet to include sustainability in their strategy. For 15% of them, this inclusion is already planned and some actions are already being established. On the other hand, 13% answered No, and 16% didn't know if sustainability was already included in their HEIs' strategy.



**Figure 3 - Existence of a sustainability strategy or mention of sustainability in the institution's overall strategy**

Those who mentioned that sustainability was already included in their institutional strategy were inquired whether it was implemented successfully or not. 27.87% answered yes and 11.48% answered no, but a majority of 60.66% mentioned they didn't know. We could conclude that there is a need to improve communication about the results of strategy implementation. Improved communication might result in a more engaged and committed academic community, which in turn could possibly support the improvement of results.

The commitments made in the strategy were quite diverse. Below is a summarised list to serve as an inspiration for any institution that is considering integrating sustainability in their strategy:

- Raising awareness among students and staff
- Sustainable renovation of university facilities
- Adding the sustainability aspect to all internationalisation aspects & creating a network within the university to do so
- Promoting transport by train instead of plane, if possible
- Giving international students' ideas on how to act more sustainably & informing them about the sustainable habits in the host country
- Reaching climate neutrality by 2030, including hiring external counselling to propose a detailed catalogue of measures to be implemented step-by-step
- Launching a Green Mobility Week
- Providing financial support to sustainable mobile students
- Reduction of CO2 emissions, energy consumption
- Sustainable procurement
- Creating a UN Sustainable Development Goals Hub;
- Supporting and conducting civically-engaged research, thereby increasing the number of research outputs connected to UN SDGs;
- Reducing the usage of electricity.

# Implementing a sustainability strategy at the Higher Education Institution

To understand how we can improve the implementation of sustainability in HEIs, we need to understand what are the main barriers of this implementation.

Responses were varied, and a summary is presented below:



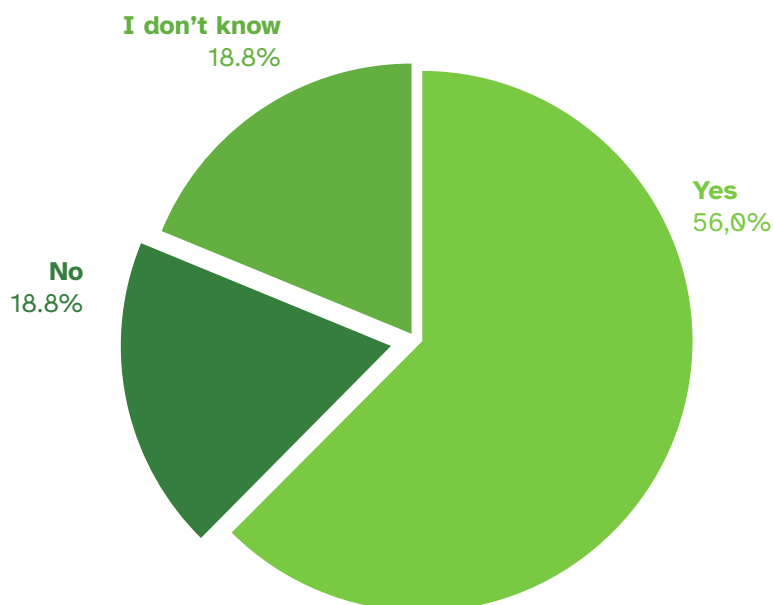
- Funding
- Lack of efficient communication and coordination
- Lack of resources
- Not understanding that faculties need to work together
- Lack of time
- Old habits
- It is not on the priority list
- Bureaucracy
- Convincing people to change
- Motivation of leaders
- Lack of leadership support
- Old buildings
- Staff resistance to change (in terms of flights, waste management, etc.)

On the other hand, we also wanted to perceive what were the key factors to implement the strategy successfully:



- Rectorate support & commitment
- Establishment of a Green University Committee – a consulting committee on sustainability
- Financial support
- More and more awareness among university staff
- Commitment of people
- Having as many supporters, participants and multipliers as possible
- Finding out about and referring to the needs and ideas of the target groups
- Sustainability as THE leading topic within the institutional strategy
- Public opinion
- Economic benefits
- Interest and participation of students and staff in projects, actions, announcements concerning the environment, climate change, sea pollution, etc;
- Communication and active engagement of the community
- Targeting all groups (academic staff, non-teaching staff, students, partners), contests (i.e. ride a bike to work), communication about different actions, actions like “month of mobility” announced in a weekly newsletter
- Fun giveaways

The existence of a working group, a department or a person that is responsible for the environmental sustainability of an institution might be a positive sign of both the commitment of the institution and of the continuous assessment of the progress. When respondents were asked whether their institution had such a working group/department/person, 62.32% answered yes, while 18.84% answered no. 18.84% responded “I don’t know”.



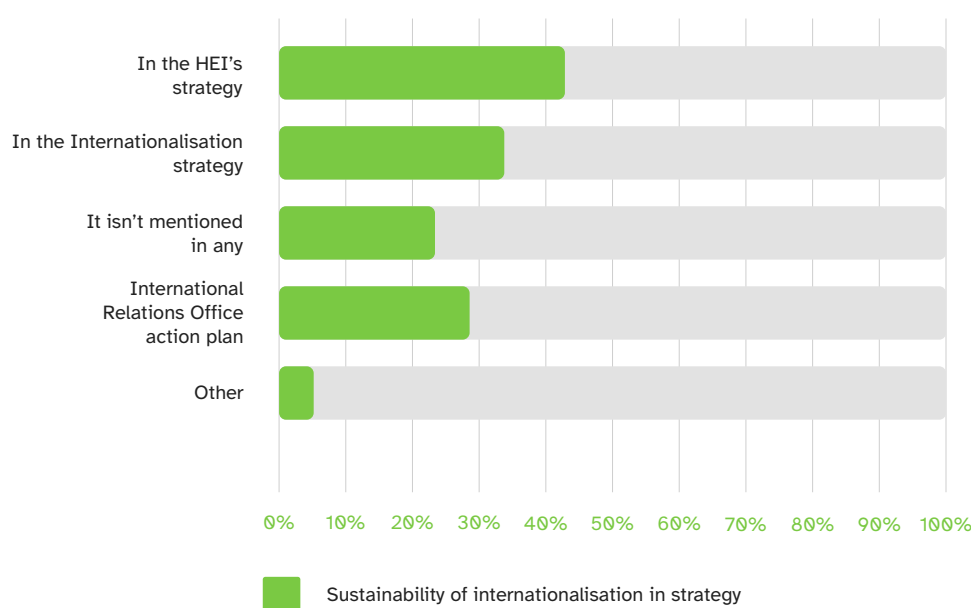
**Figure 4 - Existence of a working group, department or person responsible for the institution's environmental sustainability**

Moreover, those who answered positively were asked if that working group/department/person collaborates with the International Relations Office towards a more sustainable internationalisation. In this case, over one third of respondents answered negatively (36.23%), which might represent an opportunity to better connect and integrate the overall sustainability goals of the institution in the internationalisation processes. Only almost one-third of respondents answered positively (31.88%), with the exact same percentage answering “I don’t know”.



## Implementing a sustainability strategy at the Higher Education Institution

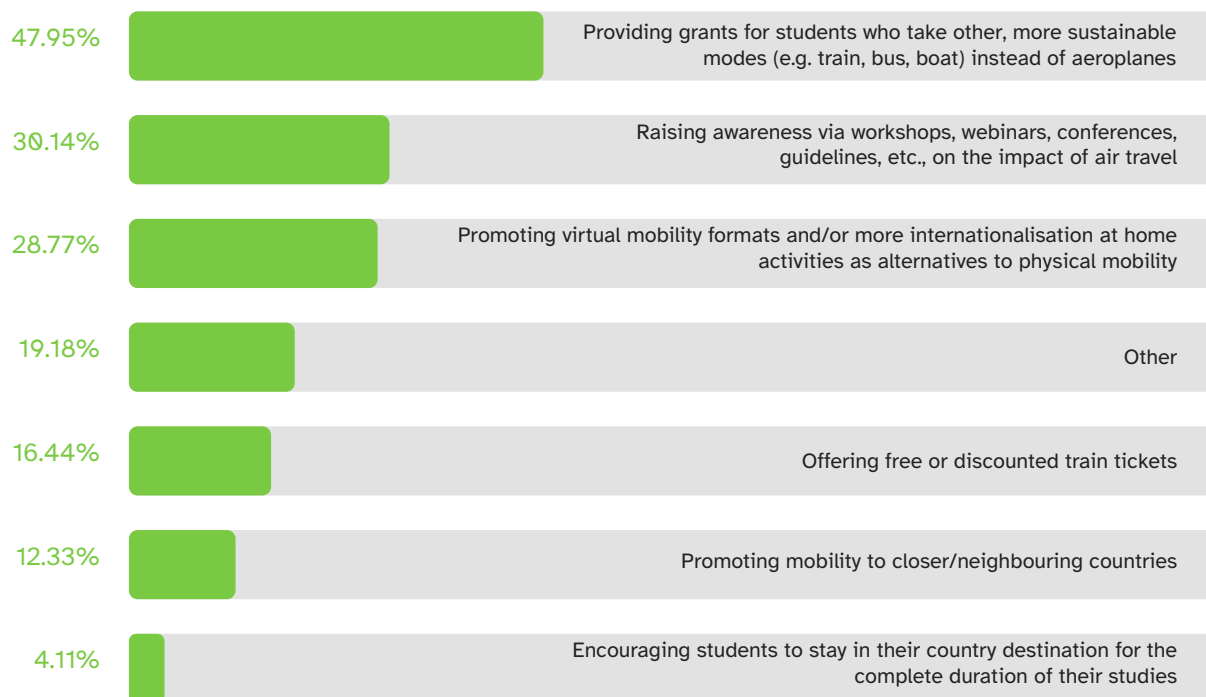
Continuing the topic of internationalisation and sustainability, the research aimed to understand which strategy embeds/mentions the sustainability of internationalisation. In 42.86% of the cases, this is referred to in the HEI's strategy, followed by 33.77% in the internationalisation strategy and finally 23.38% in the International Relations Office action plan. On the other hand, 28.57% of the people surveyed answered that sustainability of internationalisation isn't mentioned in none of them, and 5.19% answered "Other".



**Figure 5 - Strategy in which sustainability of internationalisation is mentioned and embedded**

When we take a closer look at the initiatives implemented by the respondent HEIs to reduce transport-related emissions from student mobility, it is quite interesting to notice that the most selected option is "Providing grants for students who take other more sustainable modes (e.g., train, bus, boat) instead of aeroplanes". This demonstrates that HEIs are aware that one of the most important factors for students when selecting their mode of transport to go on mobility is indeed its price, therefore the biggest impact would be felt through the award of grants. This is also in line with the Green Erasmus research on Erasmus students' habits while on mobility (Diekmann, Karaikos, 2022), which showed that price plays an even bigger role for students on mobility, as the most important criterion behind consumer choices.

“Raising awareness via workshops, webinars, conferences, guidelines, etc. on the impact of air travel” ranked second with 30.14%. Even though this might not translate into the fastest results – according to the Green Erasmus research on students (Diekmann, Karaiskos, 2022), students have a knowledge-behaviour gap where their awareness on climate change and the need for sustainability doesn’t actually translate into action – it could have a bigger impact in the future.



From the Green Erasmus research on students’ habits (Diekmann, Karaiskos, 2022), we know that around 70% of students agree that their HEIs should actively incorporate and promote environmental sustainability. To understand the actions already offered to students, we examined which communication and behaviour change initiatives, if any, were carried out by HEIs. Respondents could choose as many different answers as they wanted to.

The most selected option, 55% of answers, was “Projects with active student participation”. This can be quite positive, as the involvement of students is proven to yield more long-term results. The second most popular action, “Communication and awareness raising campaigns”, gathered 51% of answers, closely followed by “student clubs/groups addressing environmental issues” with 49% of answers.

15% of respondents said they have not implemented any initiative/action at their institution yet, but they plan to do it in short/mid-term, while 12% selected “We have not implemented any initiative/actions at our institution yet and we do not plan to implement them yet”.

To better understand how connected the environmental sustainability strategy and the internationalisation of the institution are, we surveyed our respondents on what **specific environmental sustainability-focused engagement activities/actions** they are implementing **specifically for international students**. The most selected option was “We are not implementing any specific engagement initiatives/actions for international students”, with 49.35% of responses. One might consider that HEIs aim to incorporate international students in the sustainability initiatives and actions that are organised

for the overall academic community. However, **given the transformative power international mobility has on students and the fact that students are moving into a different city, the organisation of specific activities for international students might have a bigger influence and better answer the specific needs of this target group.**

“Sending general information about the University’s and/or Faculty’s active engagement initiatives/actions for students” ranked second, with 31.17%, and the third most voted one is “Providing students with green guides and handbooks with useful information about the campus and the city”.

12.99% of respondents answered “Other”, and a summary of responses is described below:

- *“At the moment we are struggling hard to accommodate international students due to Covid-19 regulations, so unfortunately, no specific engagement activities yet.*
- *“Having representatives of our green students’ groups meet incoming students during their welcome week and inform them about green initiatives, and sustainable living on campus and in the city.”*
- *“Many of these things are not done by us specifically but by other members of the HEI.”*
- *“Posters and Social Media posts on relevant content in English language.”*

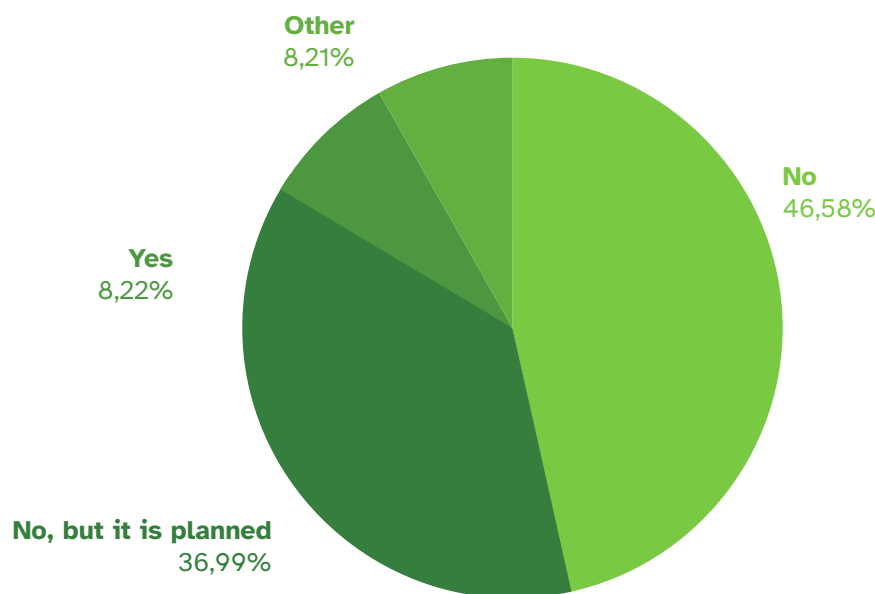
The least selected answer was “Sending a welcome bulletin with information about the environmental strategy, policies and sustainable events and opportunities for students” with only 11.69%.

When asked to share any ideas or actions that respondents already implement for sustainable internationalisation, they mentioned the following:

- *Joining groups that take action to protect and preserve the environment*
- *Not providing funding of flights within the country*
- *Using blended teaching concepts*
- *Encouraging overland travel to destination*
- *Scheduling some TPMs in KA2 actions online rather than face-to-face, ditto in Horizon2020 projects; keeping contact with certain partners via zoom, rather than planning a trip to visit them*
- *Asking people to reflect on the need to travel at all, and urge students and staff to use green travel when possible*
- *Organising in-person international meetings in a sustainable way (e.g. using reusable cutlery and cups)*

## Internationalisation and carbon offsetting

Due to its nature, Higher Education internationalisation will most likely continue to have an impact on the environment. The transport-related CO<sub>2</sub> footprint of incoming and outgoing students and staff can be considerably reduced, but even with our best efforts, it will probably still be present. We are then left with a question: how to lessen the impact of that CO<sub>2</sub> footprint on the environment? One of the possible answers is by **offsetting it**. Respondents were asked if their institution has implemented carbon offsetting measures to reduce the impact of the transport-related carbon footprint of their outgoing and incoming students, to which only 8.22% of answers were positive. However, 36.99% of respondents answered no, but it was already planned. Still, the biggest percentage of respondents (46.58%) answered that their institution didn't offset the CO<sub>2</sub> footprint of student mobility. In some cases, this offset is only organised for staff mobility.



**Figure 6 - Implementation of carbon offsetting measures by HEIs to reduce the impact caused by transport-related carbon dioxide of its outgoing and incoming students**



## 2. LEARN

### Good practices on sustainable internationalisation

The Green Erasmus consortium carried out a desk research on good practices to showcase examples of **sustainable internationalisation already implemented by HEIs**. This list doesn't intend to be exhaustive, but to provide staff with several different approaches that, by themselves or combined, can help them raise awareness and improve the carbon footprint of their internationalisation processes.

## Travel related

### **Create a travel report**

Measuring the actual impact of one's actions on the environment is the first step to mitigate it, and this is also true when it comes to the CO2 footprint of an institution. Developing a travel report for staff and students, thus having a system in place to assess the extent of the impact on the environment, is an important step towards reducing it.

### **Understand traveller behaviours**

Measuring the actual impact of one's actions on the environment is the first step to mitigate it, and this is also true when it comes to the CO2 footprint of an institution. Developing a travel report for staff and students, thus having a system in place to assess the extent of the impact on the environment, is an important step towards reducing it.

### **Provide free personal travel advice**

Measuring the actual impact of one's actions on the environment is the first step to mitigate it, and this is also true when it comes to the CO2 footprint of an institution. Developing a travel report for staff and students, thus having a system in place to assess the extent of the impact on the environment, is an important step towards reducing it.

### **Walk the talk – academics taking less flight**

Measuring the actual impact of one's actions on the environment is the first step to mitigate it, and this is also true when it comes to the CO2 footprint of an institution. Developing a travel report for staff and students, thus having a system in place to assess the extent of the impact on the environment, is an important step towards reducing it.

### **Appoint a working group/person responsible for international sustainability**

Measuring the actual impact of one's actions on the environment is the first step to mitigate it, and this is also true when it comes to the CO2 footprint of an institution. Developing a travel report for staff and students, thus having a system in place to assess the extent of the impact on the environment, is an important step towards reducing it.

### **Focus on longer mobility instead of short-term**

Measuring the actual impact of one's actions on the environment is the first step to mitigate it, and this is also true when it comes to the CO2 footprint of an institution. Developing a travel report for staff and students, thus having a system in place to assess the extent of the impact on the environment, is an important step towards reducing it.



# Sustainability strategies of the university

## **Promote, raise awareness and give incentives**

As previously stated, 70.9% of students strongly agree with the active promotion of environmental sustainability in their HEI (Diekmann, Karaiskos, 2022). Raising awareness on climate change, promoting the more sustainable use of resources and providing the academic community with concrete knowledge on what they can do and why every change matters might be very impactful in the long term. The Green Erasmus Portal is an open-access tool that can support HEIs in doing so, by providing specific examples on how to be more sustainable before, during and after a mobility period.

## **Stimulate healthy food habits**

Offering more sustainable food options at reasonable prices is a good encouragement for students and staff to have better and healthier food habits. Moreover, reducing the consumption of meat, and even promoting meat-free days, could lead to a reduction in the CO2 footprint of food served at universities.

## **Collect furniture and other household items from former students**

By providing a platform and a place for students to leave items they can't take home at the end of their mobility, and then making them available for incoming students in the following semester, one can create a reuse cycle that can reduce the negative impact on the environment and on the incoming students themselves.

### **Provide international students with green guides and handbooks**

It might be hard at first for mobility students to know the ins and outs of sustainability practices at their host city. International Officers can promote a more sustainable way of living by informing them of, for example, recycling practices, bulk stores, bicycle renting available, etc.

### **Host events organised by climate protection bodies**

Organising events together with groups that focus on climate change and environmental sustainability can be an excellent way to pass information on to students and, at the same time, foster synergies in this area.

### **Collaborate with other universities and networks towards a greener future**

Higher Education Institutions across Europe are starting to work on their environmental sustainability and creating strategies to improve their CO2 footprint. The collaboration between these institutions can not only lead to improved results, but also potentiate the cooperation in other areas. There are networks, such as the Climate Action Network for International Educators - CANIE, that already promote this type of collaboration between practitioners and that could be an important support for this.

### **Carbon offsetting**

Once all CO2 reduction and elimination possibilities are exhausted, there still might be some emissions from internationalisation that cannot be eliminated. In this case, carbon offsetting could be an option that could be explored. When examining this option, HEIs should take a particularly close look at the ethical aspects of the carbon offsetting schemes being considered. Research on this topic should be detailed to ensure possible greenwashing is not involved.





## 3. LEAD

**Workshop on sustainable internationalisation for students**

## What is it?

### **“Mobility and sustainability: How sustainable will your Erasmus experience be?”**

is a workshop directed at students preparing to go on mobility, during which they will explore the impact their actions have on the environment and how to engage in more sustainable behaviour when abroad. It comprises a **workshop manual** with concrete instructions, tips for facilitators and the **full presentation**, which are completely open resources for any International Office staff of sending institutions, or student association members active at university level, to use.

## Why is it necessary?

International mobility is widely regarded as a significant moment of change. In most cases, it involves a substantial change of country, city, language, living arrangements, etc., that requires a mindset shift. Therefore, it can also be the ideal time to encourage a change in habits to make them more environmentally sustainable.

Around 70% of students strongly agree with the active promotion of environmental sustainability by their HEIs and are interested in seeing more actions from them.

Upskilling students in sustainability through training prior to mobility is one of the ways a HEI can help address this request, and at the same time ensure that the impact of international mobility on the environment is reduced.

## How does this support International Officers?

With this open source resource, we aim to make it easier for International Officers to include environmental sustainability in their current practices. The workshop manual includes detailed instructions for facilitation, that anyone, not just international officers, can pick up and deliver, or even collaborate with a student organisation if they feel they don't have the time/ability to do it.

Its format and the time it takes to implement it (between 1 to 2 hours depending on whether optional exercises are delivered) also makes it perfect to include in a pre-departure event.

## What are the learning objectives?

This session is designed to support students to:

- Understand the environmental impact of their lifestyle
- Gain a good level of understanding of actions that they can take to be more environmentally sustainable
- Feel confident in communicating sustainability actions and behaviours to their friends and peers
- Be able to have a positive impact on their community through increased sustainability literacy

## How much time would it take to organise it? And what materials would be needed?

The session usually takes between 1.5 to 2 hours, depending on the number of optional activities you decide to include and the length of the group work. In terms of materials needed, you will need only the means to share the presentation. If you want to make the session more interactive, you can access Slido (<https://www.sli.do/>), Mentimeter (<https://www.mentimeter.com/>) or a similar programme.

## What do students and facilitators think about it?

To ensure that the workshop answered the needs of its target audience and was ready for implementation, it was firstly tested by a mix of Higher Education Institutions and student organisations. The feedback from this pilot phase is summarised below:

### **Student**

78% of attendees rated the Green Erasmus workshop as either above average or excellent

According to them, the best parts of the workshop were the group discussions and the sharing of practical tips.

### **Facilitator**

75% of facilitators rated the workshop as either above average or excellent

Most of them consider the workshop helped students to:

- understand the environmental impact of their lifestyle in general
- be able to have a positive impact on their community, at home and on mobility/exchange, through increasing their understanding of sustainability

Below you will find the presentation slides to use, together with the facilitator notes. You can also download the presentation [HERE](#).

Session outline/information can be found in the **Instructions for the workshops**.





## 4. EXPLORE

### **Other resources available**

In addition to all the materials found in this Handbook, there are many other resources that International Officers can use to promote sustainable internationalisation in their institutions.

Some examples are highlighted below:

## Green Erasmus portal

### Why is it useful?

Students will be able to check advice on how to make their mobility period more sustainable both before, during and after mobility. It also has a quiz to provide students with information on sustainability and on how climate change is connected to an Erasmus experience.

### How can IROs use it?

Disseminating it to their students preparing to leave on mobility to provide them with more resources on environmental sustainability.

## Statistics for the European Green Deal

### Why is it useful?

It contains important statistics on matters related to the European Green Deal, and it allows comparison between different countries and/or between the European Union average and a particular country.

### How can IROs use it?

To learn more about the evolution of statistics across time.  
To have more data to present to students when organising awareness-raising activities.

## Sulitest

### Why is it useful?

The sustainability literacy test (SULITEST) is an online multiple choice question assessment, designed to test and improve sustainable development (SD) awareness and knowledge of both students and staff.

### How can IROs use it?

IROs can use this resource by logging in or registering, if their university doesn't have an account yet. It can also be shared with students and staff to quiz their knowledge.

## Trainline

### Why is it useful?

An example of one of the search engines available to compare prices and options for train and bus tickets.

### How can IROs use it?

This might be a useful resource if IROs want to promote more sustainable travel. If recommended to students, it can support them in making more sustainable decisions without having to consult several different websites.

## Erasmus Goes Green CO2 footprint calculator

### Why is it useful?

The sustainability literacy test (SULITEST) is an online multiple choice question assessment, designed to test and improve sustainable development (SD) awareness and knowledge of both students and staff.

### How can IROs use it?

IROs can use this resource by logging in or registering, if their university doesn't have an account yet. It can also be shared with students and staff to quiz their knowledge.

## United Nations Environment Programme's Sustainable University Framework

### Why is it useful?

It is an important framework that aims to define what it means to be a sustainable university.

### How can IROs use it?

Even though it isn't directly related with sustainable internationalisation, IROs can take advantage of the tips on quick wins and on how to get started in the journey towards environmental sustainability.

## United Nations Environment Programme's The Little Book of Green Nudges

### Why is it useful?

The sustainability literacy test (SULITEST) is an online multiple choice question assessment, designed to test and improve sustainable development (SD) awareness and knowledge of both students and staff.

### How can IROs use it?

IROs can use this resource by logging in or registering, if their university doesn't have an account yet. It can also be shared with students and staff to quiz their knowledge.

## Erasmus Goes Green Higher Education Students' Handbook to travel green

### Why is it useful?

This handbook provides students with key information on transport-related CO2 emissions, why it is important to reduce them, and how they can plan their trip to the mobility destination in a sustainable way. It also details how the CO2 footprint calculator can be useful in this process.

### How can IROs use it?

IROs can include this document in the process of preparing students for mobility, to incentivise them to travel sustainably.

# Final Thoughts

Across Europe, it is positive to see that several institutions are already integrating sustainability principles in their internationalisation process. However, like internationalisation itself, environmental sustainability might be incorporated at different speeds due to the differences in time and resources available.

With this handbook, we hope to have supported international offices, by providing them with different ideas and resources that can be used right away, without taking too much of their time. However, Rome wasn't built in a day, and neither will sustainable internationalisation. It will take the efforts and good will from numerous stakeholders to make sure this really does happen, and that, in the future, European Higher Education can not only be seen as highly connected internationally, but also with connections that are environmentally sustainable.



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- **UN Environment Programme**, 2020, *The Little Book of Green Nudges*, 09/01/23, [https://www.unep.org/resources/publication/little-book-green-nudges?\\_ga=2.176264736.449910651.1673283512-1071007138.1673283512](https://www.unep.org/resources/publication/little-book-green-nudges?_ga=2.176264736.449910651.1673283512-1071007138.1673283512)



# Instructions for the workshops

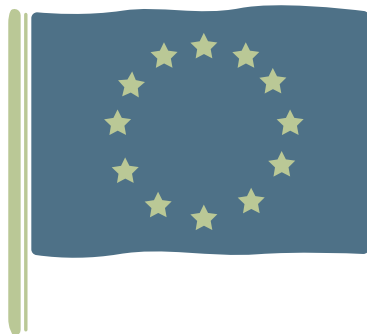
LEAD: Workshop on sustainable internationalisation  
for students

## Session outline/information

### Slide n° 1-4

#### Activity & Notes:

time: 3 min



1. Introduce the session by going through the objectives of the workshop and the agenda.
2. Mention that the session is an introduction to sustainability and aims to give some food for thought in relation to what students should consider when they are on mobility, rather than it being an exhaustive list of actions.
3. Mention that Green Erasmus is an Erasmus+ funded project that strives to improve the environmental sustainability of the Erasmus+ Programme and raise awareness across the European Higher Education sector about the importance of sustainable internationalisation. The project is coordinated by the Erasmus Student Network (ESN).
4. Mention why sustainability is important to your institution.

### Slide n° 5

#### Activity & Notes

time: 3 min



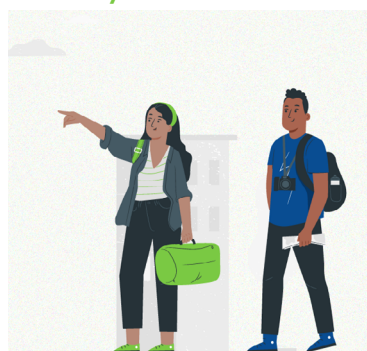
#### ACTIVITY:

1. As an *optional* ice-breaker exercise, and to get students to talk, ease in by asking where they are travelling for Erasmus and what mode of transport they plan to use (you can do this as a verbal exercise or by using Slido).
2. As a follow up question, ask your students how they plan to travel/how they travelled to their mobility destination.

### Slide n° 6

#### Activity & Notes:

time: 1 min



#### READ THE SLIDE.

Mention that even though the Erasmus programme has been very successful, it does have a significant environmental impact due to the carbon footprint associated with air travel – over  $\frac{3}{4}$  of students travel to their destination by plane according to research by Green Erasmus with 10,000 students carried out in 2021.

## Slide n° 7

### Activity & Notes:

time: 3 min



#### ACTIVITY:

1. Ask students what is the first thing that comes to mind when they think about sustainability.
2. You can either do this as a verbal exercise where students share feedback or use an online tool such as Slido to form a word cloud (we recommend the latter).
3. Talk through the most frequently mentioned words/associations.

## Slide n° 8

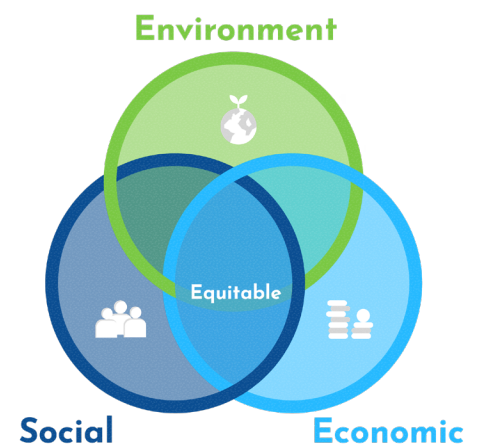
### Activity & Notes:

time: 1 min

Describe what we mean by sustainability and sustainable development. You can focus on what your understanding of sustainable development is (there is no clear definition) linking back to the responses that students gave in the previous slide.

#### Example response:

1. You will probably have heard the word sustainability or perhaps terminology such as sustainable energy, and this has evolved from the concept of sustainable development that was originally defined in a United Nations report.
2. This is just one definition used to speak about sustainability that we can engage with critically and expand upon as sustainability is increasingly being understood to include social justice too.
3. We need to look at social, economic and social issues for something to be sustainable, but depending on the situation, there may be a need to emphasise certain issues more than others to ensure equity.
4. The term sustainable development helps us to think about using resources mindfully.
5. Within and outside of that it helps us to think about economic, social and environmental causes and impacts.
6. It may not be perfect but this is a global definition for sustainable development agreed by UN member states, with definitions shifting and changing due to context and time.



## Activity & Notes

time: 3 min

Mention that throughout Europe students are involved in sustainability campaigns because they want to take action on the climate crisis.

ACTIVITY:

Verbal exercise - Ask students what does climate crisis mean to them?

Guide questions if needed:

1. What impacts have you seen/experienced?
2. How does reading about the climate crisis make you feel?
3. Are there particular aspects about climate change that you want to learn more about?
4. Ask them to share one key aspect from their discussion afterwards to the wider group.



**Slide n° 10**

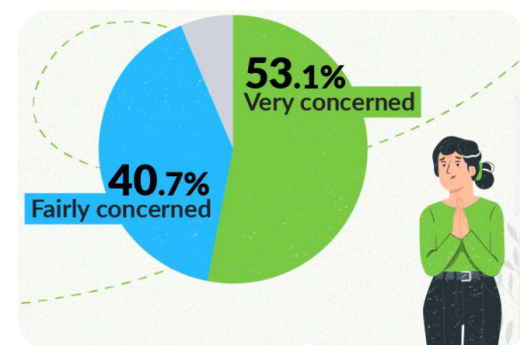
### Activity & Notes:

READ THE SLIDE.

Mention that this data is from a survey conducted with 10,000 valid responses from Erasmus students in 2021. 7,776 answers were used in the analysis after data clearance.

Source: Green Erasmus Report

time: 1 min



**Slide n° 11**

### Activity & Notes:

time: 3 min

ACTIVITY:

1. Ask the question “why should universities and education institutions be more sustainable?” and encourage students to respond.
2. AFTERWARDS you can say: “Our world is changing; the climate crisis and its social, environmental and political consequences are propelling this change. Students will now graduate into a world that looks a lot different from the world older generations graduated into.
3. \*READ SLIDE\*



## Slide n° 12

### Activity & Notes:

time: 3 min



*OPTIONAL: Use this slide to say why it is important for your university to be taking action on climate change if you have concrete examples.*

## Slide n° 13

### Activity & Notes:

time: 1 min

READ THE SLIDE.

1. Joan Baez is an American artist and activist.
2. Offer your own commentary on the quote or ask students what they think.



## Slide n° 14-15

### Activity & Notes:

time: 3 min

Explain personal actions and system change (systems change being about action taken by institutions and governments). Feel free to watch the video from slide 15 prior to running the session if you are not sure how to articulate this ([link to video](#))

#### ACTIVITY:

1. Ask students to discuss briefly the benefits of each (either in small groups or together as a class).
2. There is a link between both: e.g. as an individual you can support campaigns for system change, and you also have power as a consumer to, for example, choose more ethical banks or support environmentally friendly businesses.
3. Explain who Greta Thunberg is (Swedish youth activist who started the Fridays for the Future movement).





## Slide n° 16

### Activity & Notes:

time: 7 min



#### ACTIVITY:

Play the video on the slide that talks about system change vs personal action.

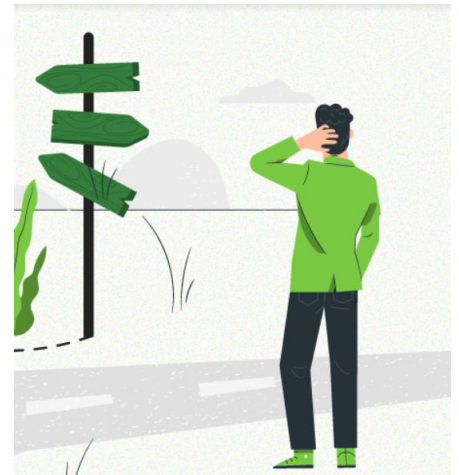
Ask students for their reflections on systemic vs personal change.

## Slide n° 17

### Activity & Notes:

time: 1 min

Mention that even though in the previous section we talked about systems change vs personal action, the rest of the session is going to focus on individual action that can be taken to be more sustainable. This doesn't mean that systems change is less important – it is!



## Slide n° 18

### Activity & Notes:

time: 2 min



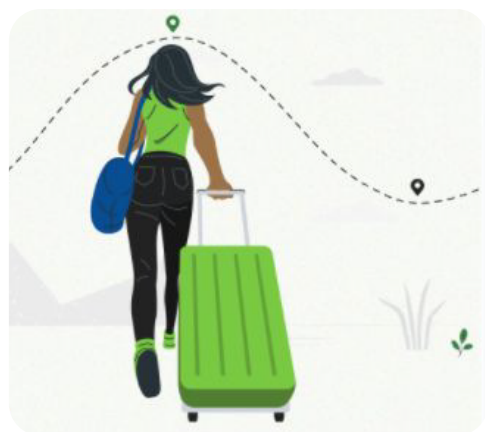
- Explain that there are many actions that students can take while on mobility (and everyday life!) to be more sustainable.
- There are many different areas of their life that they can change, and for the purposes of this session we will be focusing on mobility choices, buying choices, energy usage, recycling and waste management.
- This doesn't mean that there aren't other areas of their lives that they can also change.



### Slide n° 19-20

#### Activity & Notes:

time: 2 min



- Mention that the first area that we will be focusing on is travel choices, as this was one of the main areas that was noted as part of the Green Erasmus survey in terms of mobility behaviour.
- Describe the image on slide 22– mention that, in general, flights have some of the highest carbon emissions per passenger per km travelled. Mention that there is some nuance to be considered – for example, travelling by car, just by yourself, can emit more carbon per kilometre (and there is also variation in terms of types of energy the car is using, etc.).

### Slide n° 21

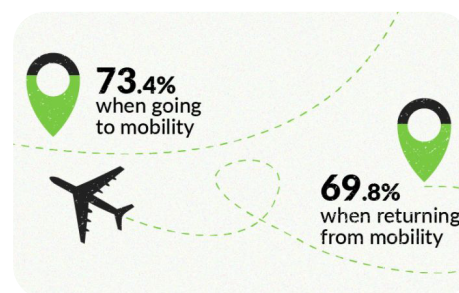
#### Activity & Notes:

time: 5 min

Mention that according to the survey carried out with 10,000 Erasmus students in 2021 by Green Erasmus,  $\frac{3}{4}$  of students travel to and from their mobility by plane.

#### ACTIVITY:

*As an optional activity, you can ask students if they are surprised by this statistic and why they think the statistic is so high. Ask the students why they mostly travel by plane.*



### Slide n° 22

#### Activity & Notes:

time: 5 min



#### ACTIVITY:

Ask students to divide into groups and discuss the following questions.

Ask students to provide feedback to the group about what they discussed.

### Slide n° 23

#### Activity & Notes:

time: 5 min

#### READ THE SLIDE

Further explanation/ notes you may want to use:

1. Sometimes we can't avoid a flight!
  - Minimise layovers:
  - Short-haul flights are particularly carbon intensive per unit of distance travelled
  - Travel economy class, why?
2. If you are trying to mitigate the impact of climate change, you could donate to community-building or disaster relief efforts rather than an initiative as murky as carbon offsetting. If we are to spend money on carbon offsetting, we should invest in these schemes in addition to reducing air travel, rather than as a way to continue travelling as we please.
3. Challenge the idea that air travel represents success and global outlooks.



### Slide n° 24-25

#### Activity & Notes:

time: 5 min

Mention that flying is one of the biggest contributors to our personal carbon footprint.

#### ACTIVITY:

Ask students to work out the carbon footprint of their journey to their Erasmus destination and ask them if they have any thoughts.



### Slide n° 26

#### Activity & Notes:

time: 5 min

Either READ THE SLIDE or consider running an activity where you ask students in what way they could travel better when going on mobility or when they get there.



## Slide n° 27-28

### Activity & Notes:

time: 2 min



Mention that for the next section we will be talking about our purchasing choices and challenging the idea of whether we in fact need to buy new things in the first place.

READ SLIDE 29

## Slide n° 29

### Activity & Notes:

time: 5 min

#### ACTIVITY

- Ask students “what categories of consumer items they use on a regular basis – and can they give an example?”. This can be done in small groups or as a large group.



## Slide n° 30

### Activity & Notes:

time: 7 min



#### ACTIVITY

Ask the questions:

- “When thinking about what to buy for/when at your mobility, what should you consider from the sustainability perspective”?
- Do you need to get it in the first place? If the answer is yes, consider:
- Can you buy it second hand or borrow it?
- Are there locally produced alternatives?
- What are its sustainability credentials?

The exercise can be done in small groups.

## Slide n° 31

### Activity & Notes:

time: 5 min

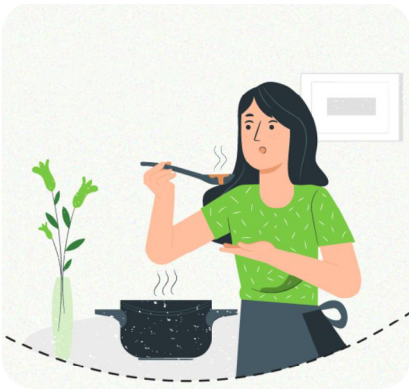
BREAK - Suggested time – 5 mins



### Slide n° 32-33

#### Activity & Notes:

time: 3 min



Mention that the next section will focus on energy usage within the household.

Mention that according to [Eurostat](#) research, about a quarter of all energy used is used by households.

#### ACTIVITY:

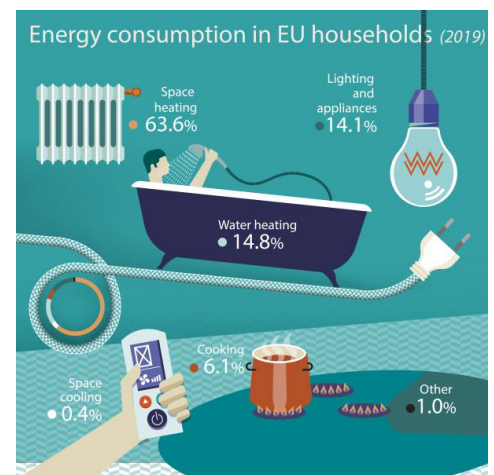
Ask students to think about how energy is used in the house. You can do this as a verbal exercise or through slido

### Slide n° 34

#### Activity & Notes:

time: 2 min

- Describe the image, mentioning that the biggest consumption of energy within households is heating (nearly 2/3), followed by water heating & appliance use (about 15%).
- Mention that if we want to reduce our energy use, we should focus on these areas.
- Mention that when looking for accommodation they should consider that a poor energy performance (A being best) on an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) in a cheaper house can sometimes be a false economy as they may end up paying more for energy bills. In most EU countries landlords have a legal obligation to give you the EPC before you sign your lease, so make sure to ask.



### Slide n° 35

#### Activity & Notes:

time: 2 min



Describe the slide showing the ways in which students can save energy in their households – you can read out some specific statistics from the slide.

time: 5 min



READ THE SLIDE

Feel free to add any further energy saving measures from your experience.

**ACTIVITY:**

At the end of the slide, there is an *optional* activity for students to discuss (either as a group or in small groups) other ways that they can avoid energy wastage

**Slide n° 37**

### Activity & Notes:

time: 1 min

Mention that in the next section we will focus on waste and recycling



**Slide n° 38**

### Activity & Notes:

time: 2 min



READ THE SLIDE

1. Describe the waste hierarchy ([source](#)), mentioning that the best thing that we can do is to avoid waste in the first place (e.g. by buying less or getting products with less packaging).
2. Even though recycling is great and should be done, it is quite far down the waste hierarchy, and avoidance, reduction, and reuse should all come first.

## Slide n° 39

### Activity & Notes:

time: 5 min



#### ACTIVITY:

Ask students:

What do you currently do, or could be doing to avoid and reduce waste creation when on mobility? Why is this important?

The exercise can be done as a group or with students divided into small groups.

Prompts can include:

Buying items with less packaging

Having a reusable cup, bottle or bag, so that you don't need a single use one every time you buy coffee, for example

Buying only the food that you need to avoid food waste

Buying less items online (always comes with lots of packaging due to the parcel)

Borrowing items rather than buying them (especially if you plan to use them only once)

Instead of throwing items away consider mending them or donating to charity shops (if appropriate)

*Optional* further points to consider or discuss - What is better? Buying online or going shopping in person?

Notes: Good overall resource: [imperial.ac.uk](https://imperial.ac.uk)

## Slide n° 40

### Activity & Notes:

time: 2 min



READ THE SLIDE



## Slide n° 41

### Activity & Notes:

time: 3 min



Mention that hopefully the workshop has given them some inspiration on what they could be doing to live more sustainably, saying this is not an exhaustive list.

#### ACTIVITY:

Ask students to write down a couple of things that they pledge to do when on mobility (suggestion to use Slido).

## Slide n° 42

### Activity & Notes:

time: 2 min

Mention that students can visit the Green Erasmus portal to find out more about how they can make their mobility more sustainable (before, after and during). The portal includes tips and tricks to act sustainably in many aspects related to mobility, and useful resources for more information and to get involved. For example, it features the On my way and Small Steps games and Green Erasmus Quiz to test students' sustainability knowledge.

Mention that they are invited to sign the Green Erasmus petition to increase the support for more sustainable travel through Erasmus+. Specifically, the petition asks EU institutions for:

1. up to €250 for green travel, proportionate to distance covered
2. up to 7 days of additional individual support





