

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-004593/25
to the Commission
Jonas Sjöstedt (The Left)
(18 November 2025)**

Subject: Rail travel as an option for EU staff on official business

As part of its efforts to reduce CO₂ emissions and promote sustainable transport options, the EU has committed to making rail a first choice for travel. The Commission's own guidelines on staff travel recommend that 'overnight trains should be considered as greener alternatives to short-haul flights' and that 'greener alternatives should be favoured when the time spent on the train is reasonable for the purpose of the mission'. Nevertheless, it seems that in other EU institutions rail travel is often not accepted as an alternative for longer journeys, even when the journey time is reasonable and the stay is longer than a few days. It is crucial for the EU's credibility when it comes to climate policy that all EU institutions apply the same sustainable travel policy, as set out in the Commission's guidelines, to reduce emissions caused by travel on official business.

1. Why are trains not considered to be an official option for longer official business journeys in Commission agencies, such as the European Environment Agency (EEA), even though it would be possible to travel smoothly by rail, for example between Copenhagen and Brussels?
2. What does the Commission think about the fact that the EEA does not offer rail as an official alternative for missions, even though many members of staff prefer to travel by train?

Submitted: 18.11.2025

**Answer given by Mr Serafin on behalf of the European Commission
(11 February 2026)**

The Commission committed to reach climate neutrality, as an organisation, by 2030 ⁽¹⁾. Cutting emissions from professional travel is an important part of the Commission's greening action plan.

The new Guide to missions and authorised travel ⁽²⁾ promotes rail travel as a sustainable choice, particularly for journeys under 550 km or longer when rail is feasible and efficient. Overnight trains may be considered as a greener alternative to flights, where such alternative exists.

Pursuant to Article 110(2) of the Staff Regulations, the implementing rules adopted by the Commission apply by analogy to the agencies, including the European Environment Agency (EEA).

The Commission informed the agencies of the adoption of its Decision setting out the Guide to missions and authorised travel on 14 May 2025, with these rules becoming applicable at the latest as of 15 February 2026 ⁽³⁾ unless a derogation is requested.

The EEA has not yet sought such a derogation, meaning it will adhere to the same sustainable travel principles as the Commission. Consequently, the EEA would incorporate rail as an official travel option.

According to the Guide to missions and authorised travel, it is the duty of the mission performer's line manager and authorising officer to ensure that the proposed travel is in line with these principles, thereby promoting harmonised and sustainable business travel practices within the agency.

⁽¹⁾ Communication on Greening the Commission. C(2022) 2230 final.

⁽²⁾ Commission Decision C(2025) 2495 final of 13 May 2025 the general provisions for implementing Articles 11, 12 and 13 of Annex VII to the Staff Regulations of Officials and on authorised travel.

⁽³⁾ In accordance with Article 110 (2) second subparagraph of the Staff Regulations.