

## Q&A on aviation and private jets

### Why do you focus on aviation if it is only responsible for approx. 2 % of global greenhouse gases?

- **Flying is the fastest way to fry the planet:** Taking one flight generates more emissions than many people around the world emit in an entire year.
- **Aviation emissions are sky-rocketing:** Despite the climate crisis, the industry plans hundreds of new airports and expansions, and predicts [doubling](#) of the number of passengers until 2038.
- **The emissions figures often quoted for aviation are not correct:** they tend to only include the CO2 emissions of flights but total aviation-caused climate heating is approx. [3 times](#) that caused by CO2 alone. In 2018, aviation accounted for approx. 6% of all human-induced climate heating; CO2 emissions alone were [2.9%](#).)
- **Also, aviation is the pinnacle of climate injustice.** Only [1%](#) of the world's population cause 50% of aviation emissions, while more than 80% have never set foot on an aeroplane. The [aviation sector](#) is responsible for contributing more to global heating than the entire [African](#) continent! It's mostly a transport mode for the richer part of the world.

### Aren't private flights only a tiny part of the problem of CO2 emissions?

- We don't have numbers for all countries, but consider that [one in ten planes departing UK airports is now a private aircraft](#).
- **Private jets are the most climate-wrecking form of transport:** They produce as much as [20 to 30 times more CO2](#) per passenger than economy class airline flights (due to low load factors).  
And private flights are at least 200 times more polluting than a train ride (*considering also the non-CO2-emissions from flights*).
- **Private jets are the pinnacle of climate injustice:** A private jet can emit two tonnes of CO2 in just one hour, that is double the YEARLY average CO2 emissions of [one person living in Africa](#).
- **Private jet use has [dramatically increased over the last few years](#).** Last year in Europe, private jet flights [increased by a staggering 64%](#) compared to the previous year: from 350,078 flights in 2021 to 572,806 in 2022. This is a reflection of an increase in the extreme concentration of wealth, inequality, and an economic system that privileges a few at the expense of most people and the Planet.

- **The majority of private jet flights are for short distances:** in 2022, more than [half](#) of the private jet flights in Europe were short and very short flights, which could easily be done by train.
- **Private jet flights are bullshit flights - flights that are unnecessary, frivolous and unfair:** when it comes to the climate crisis it's important to understand what are real needs vs unnecessary excesses. Private jets belong clearly to the latter and therefore should be banned immediately.

## How would a ban on private jets be implemented?

- The idea of a ban on private jets is gaining traction across Europe: now is a vital moment to implement this. And we're already seeing that this can be done - this year **Amsterdam's Schiphol airport** announced a ban on private jets.
- **Private jets and luxury emissions are not currently regulated as such in the EU:** They are excluded [from key EU legislation](#) to tackle greenhouse gas emissions. Despite being the most climate-wrecking mode of transportation on the planet per passenger, private jets are largely out of the scope of key legislations such as the Emissions Trading System, Energy Taxation Directive, and the Air Services Regulation.
- **There are mechanisms in place that EU member states can use to implement a ban:** EU Air Services Regulation allows Member States to limit air traffic rights when there are serious environmental problems. It is important to be aware that there are some limitations here that would influence what the terms of a ban could be and which private jets could be included, but a revision of the ASR is currently ongoing so now is a good time to ensure private jets are covered by the updated version.
- **This legislation is not the only mechanism for securing a ban:** many aviation-related issues are decided at EU level. Provided that the Community framework legislation is not violated nation states can regulate to put a stop to the climate damage of the private jet industry. This is exactly what we demand from responsible politicians: a ban on private jets.

## What about medical flights, do you want to ban them too?

### What about military flights?

- **We are calling for a ban on private flights, with a few exceptions,** like medical flights and emergency flights. Maybe even for some sensitive, very urgent diplomacy flights. Military flights are complicated for many other reasons...
- **However, the share of government/military flights as well as medical flights among private jet flights in Europe is relatively low:** Last year, only 4.4% of all private jet flights in Europe were military/government flights. And only 9.2% were medical flights.

- **The reality is that the majority of private jet use is for leisure:** The myth that private flights are largely urgent and unavoidable business trips has been refuted. For example, [Nice](#) in southern France is the airport with the most private jets in Europe - a destination known as a vacation paradise for the rich and beautiful.
- **(Specifically on government flights:** It must be clear that political leaders and public figures cannot be absolved of their responsibilities either. The climate crisis affects us all. Whenever possible, they should also make use of climate-friendly alternatives. They shall not use private jets, unless they act in a mode of crisis and if no reasonable alternative is available. Only those who lead by example can demand change from the people who follow or admire them<sup>1</sup>.)

## Aren't there technological solutions to solve the aviation problem?

- **The only green plane is one that stays grounded:** Technologies like the ones touted by airline executives are far from enough to solve the problem. Most of it is greenwashing. Grounded alternatives like trains will always be more efficient and sustainable.
- **Research and development of new technologies is important but it cannot serve as an excuse to delay the emissions reduction that is needed now to prevent climate breakdown.**
- **Many of the false solutions put more pressure on the poorest and allow business as usual:** Greenwash projects like offsets and agrofuels often have negative consequences for local communities, especially for indigenous peoples. Similarly offsets often don't work and lead to new injustices, particularly in the Global South.
- For further arguments on this question refer to the Greenwashing section of the [Key Messages document](#).

## There are climate measures in place for aviation - isn't that enough?

- **The current regulations in place for aviation are hugely ineffective:**
  - On the international level, the only regulation is **CORSIA**, which is a wreck beyond repair. It covers a tiny fraction of aviation's predicted emissions and allows them to continue business as usual rather than scaling down the industry. It's main measure is offsetting!

---

<sup>1</sup> You can check the exact percentage of those flights per country here on the EBAA website: [https://yearbook.ebaa.org/country-list?iso\\_code=EC](https://yearbook.ebaa.org/country-list?iso_code=EC) – on the left side you can select your country and then **scroll down to a pie chart called "Activity Type"**. Note: The overall numbers of private jet flights that the EBAA uses differs from the Greenpeace report. But the percentage of different types of flights is the same.]

- **ETS** emissions trading in the EU now also covers aviation's CO2 emissions, but doesn't include non-CO2 emissions and therefore leaves out two-thirds of its climate impact. It is also a market-based trade tool - and far away from effective caps and limits.
- **Ticket taxes** that exist in some countries are very low and don't lead to demand reduction. In the UK, the Air Passenger Duty just recently even got halved!!
- **Kerosene** still remains untaxed! This is a huge tax inequality compared to other modes of transport.
- **The industry has a long track of missed climate targets.**  
In the last decades, the aviation industry has missed all but [one](#) of the climate and emissions targets it has set itself. They are really good at creating myths and greenwashing.
- **Despite the climate crisis, aviation emissions are skyrocketing:** the fact that the industry currently has plans for hundreds of new airports and expansions, and predicts [doubling](#) of the number of passengers until 2038 shows that existing regulation is completely failing everyone but the super-rich.
- **Implementing a ban on private jets would be a relatively easy and effective** piece of regulation that would stop the ultra-rich burning up our planet and leading us to climate collapse. Of course, this has to go along with general limits on excessive flying, such as a Frequent Flyer Levy.

## **We already have Emissions Trading Systems in place, are they not enough?**

- The ETS still offers free allowances to airlines, which greatly reduces the effective carbon price.
- The scheme is also tied to other emissions e.g. the power sector – so if the carbon price was increased sufficiently to curtail air traffic demand, it would have a significant impact on the ability of others to pay their electricity bills.
- Furthermore, the UK ETS only applies to flights within Europe, and not the rest of the world where the even weaker [CORSA scheme](#) is in place. This has no cap on emissions and features an incredibly low carbon price. In the scenario where the UK ETS carbon price was ratcheted-up, there is nothing in place to stop more airlines simply flying outside of Europe (and causing increased emissions per flight as they do so).
- Therefore, the only mechanism government/councils can currently use to control aviation emissions is to limit airport / air traffic capacity.

## What about the people who work in the aviation industry - won't this leave people out of work?

- **Change will happen by design or by disaster - let's choose design:** The climate emergency means the aviation industry will have to change, in fact, changes are already happening. The longer the industry fails to plan for this coming change the more it exposes aviation workers to risk and unemployment.
- **The aviation industry needs to take care of their employees:** we bailed out the aviation industry, now they need to take responsibility for their employees by laying the foundations for a just transition and financing re-training programmes.
- **Banning private jets is the first step in a managed degrowth of aviation:** we need to see a planned transition to a mobility system that puts people above profit, banning private jets would be an important first step and send a message that our transport system needs to become equitable.

## Will this be the end of cheap holidays?

- If we continue jet-setting the world, we might need to take holidays in Norway soon, because everything else is too hot - and Norway-holidays probably won't be cheap.
- Until the end of this century, the living regions of [one third](#) of the world population are threatened by extreme heat, and basically uninhabitable. It's kind of an optimistic scenario, because tipping points that can rapidly lead to much higher temperatures aren't calculated in. (*That's in 60-80 years, and my child will most likely still experience that horror.*)

So: There's no other way than changing some of the politics and habits that we in Europe got used to in the last few decades, like cheap flights.

Because if everything remains as it is, *nothing* will remain as it is.

## What do you think about cutting short-haul flights

- Due to the high kerosene use for the take-off, short-haul flights are especially harmful. **They are and always will be much more polluting than grounded modes of transport.**
- They are also more harmful in terms of noise and ultra-fine particles, affecting the health of residents close to airports.
- **And these flights can be easily avoided!**  
All short-haul flights should be banned that can be done by a 6-8 hour train ride, or a night train ride.

## What do you think about France's recent ban on short-haul flights?

- **This law is a symbolic baby-step, but one in the right direction.** It's only about 3 tiny-haul flights. And it's a measure emptied of its substance through very successful lobbying by the airlines and airports - but it's still better than nothing.
- **3 reasons why France's ban is problematic:**
  - 1) This demand was the result of a democratic citizen assembly, and it was to cut flights for trips that have a 4 hour train connection, and Macron had promised to fulfill these climate measures "without filter". But it was completely undermined by the government & reduced to 2h30
  - 2) It was then still tailored on purpose to save certain routes (for instance Lyon-Marseille, 1h30 by train).
  - 3) In the end, there are only 3 routes that are "banned", out of about 100 domestic flights, and those three were already stopped by Air France in 2020.
- **2 reasons why it's still a right direction:**
  - 1) It came after a democratic citizen's assembly on climate measures (300 citizens were chosen randomly and representative of the french population)
  - 2) We now know that banning short haul flights is legal under EU law under certain conditions - this paves the way for more bans on short haul flights, and other bullshit flights, like private jet flights.
- However, one thing to not forget is that a ban on short-haul flights needs to go along with general caps on flights at the airport level, as attempted at Schiphol airport. We need to avoid that the freed slots are then allocated to long-haul flights! We need to reduce the overall amount of flights!

The Stay Grounded Network is hosted by the Austrian NGO Periskop:

**Periskop**  
c/o GLOBAL 2000  
Neustiftgasse 36  
1070 Vienna, Austria  
[kollektiv-periskop.org](http://kollektiv-periskop.org)