

EQUINET TRAVEL POLICY

The European Commission (EC) has put in place new budgetary rules for claiming travel costs back for Equinet events. These rules are based on unit costs (maximum price that you can claim for a specific flight, hotel or subsistence expense and which is based on the country where the expense took place and derived from the cost of living there as perceived by the EC). These rules have been implemented in 2022 already and resulted in a substantial loss for Equinet on flight costs claimed back to the EC.

To preserve Equinet's financial stability, we are forced to put in place revised travel booking procedures for events that will take place in the second half of 2023 and in future years.

Rules regarding flight bookings

1. New flight booking procedure

Following new travel costs regulations by the EC, Equinet will need to cap its flight ticket reimbursements: **participants are requested to purchase their own flight**. Participants will claim back the costs after the event using the online expense claim form.

Equinet will reimburse the cost of the flight up to the unit cost for the distance as defined by the EC (see annex). **The participants or their organisations will need to take the rest at their charge.**

Indicatively, reimbursement timeframe spans between 2 to 4 months.

For those participants who cannot afford to cover those costs, Equinet will endeavour to make exceptions (through the admin dept). However, ceiling prices will be strictly enforced (as much as possible).

2. Revised two-step event registration procedure

In the first step, participants registering for an Equinet event should wait to receive confirmation of their preliminary registration from the Equinet Secretariat.

As a second step, once confirmation is received from Equinet, the participant will be requested to purchase their flight and send the information to Equinet. **Only when the flight is purchased and confirmation is sent to the Secretariat, the registration will be considered final** and Equinet will engage the other necessary costs for ensuring the participation of the person in the event.

3. Flights should be booked as soon as possible

The best way to ensure that prices remain below ceiling is to book them as soon as possible. In addition, Equinet needs flight confirmation to book accommodation. Therefore, please make sure to get your flights booked as soon as you receive the green light from the Secretariat to purchase your own flight following your registration.

4. Prioritise cabin luggage to cut on costs

Checked luggage should be avoided as much as possible, as they increase costs significantly and the length of our events does not generally justify them. Exceptions might be allowed but should be cleared with Equinet before booking.

5. Equinet may only reimburse flights with itineraries that cover the necessary length of stay to allow for a comfortable participation in the event in question.

The EC has determined that no early arrival or late return should be purchased (arrival earlier than the day prior to the event and departure later than the day after the event, unless there are no other available options, which would need to be documented and communicated to the Secretariat).

Longer stays (either earlier arrival or later departure) are only acceptable when linked to professional duties and they need to be authorized by the Secretariat before purchase

For instance, **if you decide for personal convenience to arrive 2 days before the event, the flight is not justifiable under EC rules.** Therefore, we would request that **you make two distinct ticket purchases and Equinet will only reimburse the second leg**, as long as it complies with the rule. There can be exceptions made for clear professional reasons (after consultation with the Equinet Secretariat and the possible provision of evidence).

6. In case you would need a longer stay for professional reasons, we would ask you to deal with your extended accommodation needs yourself (either with the hotel of the Equinet event or another hotel of your choice)

7. Your itinerary may return to a different city/airport, as long as it is connected to professional duties (no personal convenience).

8. For speakers and experts contributing to events

Equinet will purchase the tickets for external speakers and experts contributing to our events.

Rules regarding events, accommodation and general rules

9. Reimbursement claims should be introduced (online expense claim form) 1 month after the end of the event.

Cost claims will be made through the online expense claim form with submission of boarding passes and invoices/receipts, sent to you as soon as the event has finished.

Once you have filled in your expenses and added the scanned evidence, please submit the form by clicking on the 'Submit' button.

If you have original paper evidence such as boarding passes, tickets, receipts:

Version 1.4 - 24/04/2024

You are then requested to print a version of the submitted form and mail it to Equinet with the original paper evidence (tickets, receipts, boarding passes, invoices...) related to your declared expenses attached/stapled to it.

In case you only received electronic documents (e-tickets and e-boarding passes, pdf invoices or receipts...):

You do not need to print them and send them to us. Just make sure to upload them with the online form.

Any declared expense that is unsubstantiated by related original paper evidence will be disregarded by Equinet.

The evidence needs to be sent to: Equinet Secretariat - 40 Place Victor Horta, 1060 Brussels, Belgium.

10. As a general rule, due to budget constraints, each Member is entitled to one participant per event.

To ensure the widest possible participation (in terms of membership), accepting a second participant from the same organization will only be decided on a case-by-case basis depending on participation level and budget.

11. Participants covering their own costs (for instance an extra participant from the same organization who cannot be covered by the Equinet budget) are expected to directly organise and pay for their travel and accommodation costs.

Once the authorisation from the secretariat has been received to include an additional participant from the same organisation, the organisation itself will have to arrange the accommodation details directly with the hotel (the Secretariat cannot provide support for the participation of non-covered participants).

12. No Shows and late cancellations will have consequences

Equinet commits money based on your confirmed registration. Should a registered participant not be able to participate in the event in the end, there might be costs already engaged by Equinet that cannot be cancelled. In this case, unless there is force majeure (i.e. act of God/Nature) or illness (covered by a medical certificate), the amounts lost might be claimed back from the organization/participant. In case of repeated occurrences by the same participant, future participation in Equinet events might be jeopardized.

Annex: European Commission's eligible travel costs

See [full policy here](#): For calculation of maximum allowed reimbursement ,use table 2 (copied below)

For travel of 400 km or more (air or rail or combined air/rail)

Distance (in km)	Amount per return trip in EUR
400-600	245
601-800	261
801-1200	276
1201-1600	288
1601-2000	369
2001-2500	429
2501-3500	541
3501-4500	659
4501-6000	796
6001-7500	900
7501-10000	1 201
10001-max	1 376

See next page for land-based travel under 400 km

For travel of 50 -399km (land-based; between EU countries) - if not covered below: EUR 196

MS	AT	BE	BG	CZ	DE	DK	EE	EL	ES	FI	FR	HR	HU	IE	IT	LT	LU	LV	NL	PL	PT	RO	SE	SI	SK
AT				58	65						64	58	58		58					58		58		58	58
BE					82						82						50		82						
BG								37				36	26									17			
CZ	58				65						64	36	26							20		19		37	21
DE	65	82		65		76					82	65			65		82		65	65				65	
DK					76														76				76		
EE																22		22							
EL			37																						
ES											82										54				
FI																							55		
FR	64	82		64	82				82						82		82		82						
HR	58		36	36	65								36		50							36		37	
HU	58		26	26								36			50					26		26		37	26
IE																									
IT	58				65						82	50	50											50	
LT							22											19		20					
LU		50			82						82								82						
LV							22									19				20					
NL		82			65	76					82						82								
PL	58			20	65								26			20		20				20			21
PT								54																	
RO	58		17	19								36	26							20					21
SE						76				55															
SI	58			37	65							37	37		50										37
SK	58			21									26							21		21		37	