



SUSCOM POLICY BRIEF 2

ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT

What is it?

The second SUSCOM Policy Brief focuses on the environmental footprint of the AUCSA. It talks about emissions, mainly CO₂, and use of other natural resources. The brief covers three main topics related to the Association; transport, food and merchandise. First, we present the findings from the committee survey, and then we provide you with some general information and recommendations on how to reduce the environmental footprint of the AUCSA.



Three main goals for environmental footprint

- 1** Pushing for sustainable transport
- 2** Introducing vegan options at every event during which food is served
- 3** Creating alternatives to standard, often unsustainable merchandise

COMMITTEE SURVEY FINDINGS

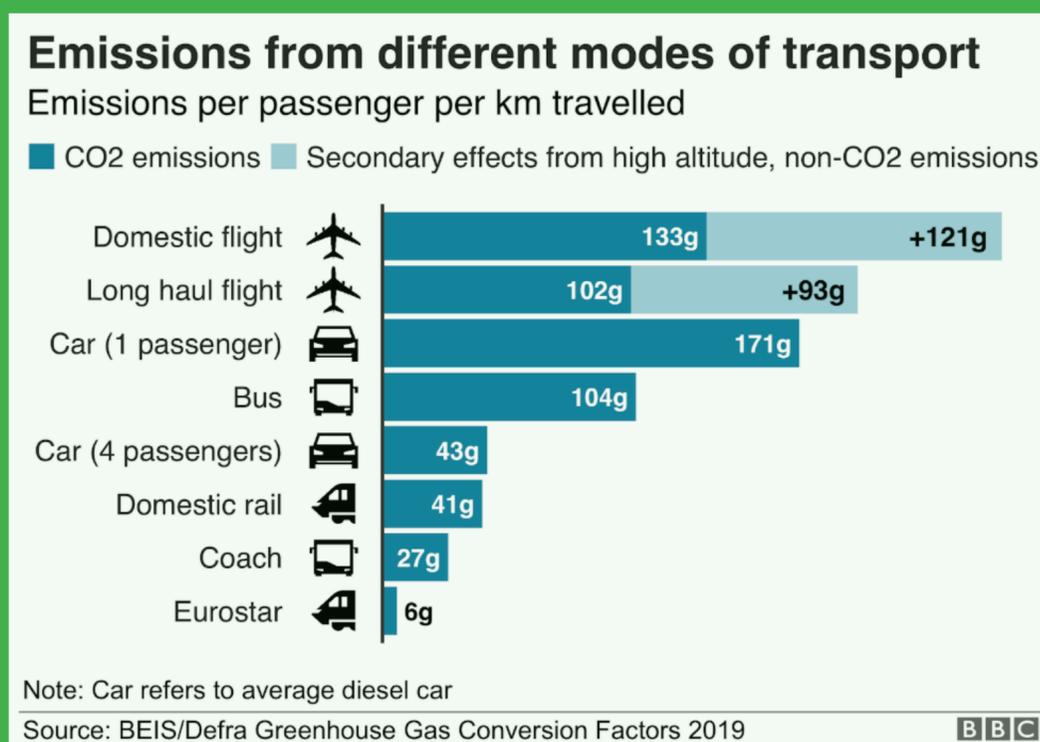
The results are based on the responses of 12 participants, which make up around 43% of the AUCSA committees

- 58% of participants think about the environmental footprint of their committee 'sometimes', 17% does so 'often' and 25% 'very little'
- Over 16% of respondents order some materials from outside of the Netherlands
- Around 70% of events require travel of participants/guests
- 50% of participants serve food at their events, 90% of which have at least one vegan option
- Majority of participants purchase food products from nearby markets (Albert Heijn/ Lidl)
- 66% of participants have ordered board hoodies via AUCSA, and 33% ordered stickers
- Around 25% of participants have already made or are interested in making their own merch



TRANSPORT

Transportation generates the biggest share of greenhouse gas emissions worldwide. Improvements in efficiency cannot outweigh the increase in the volume of travel. So, before reliable solutions are developed, we can all contribute to reducing the environmental impact of the travel sector on an individual level.



Two rules of thumb:

1. Public transport is more efficient than private vehicles
2. Plane flights should be avoided whenever possible, substituted with train travel.

In the diagram above you can see different modes of transport and estimations on how much emissions they generate per one passenger. Aviation is clearly the worst option, followed by private cars with just one passenger. Ridesharing is a better alternative when driving with private vehicles and also more sustainable than taking a bus. Trains, however, are the most sustainable transport choice, especially electric trains.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. When purchasing any type of resources, keep their country of origin in mind (aim for as local as possible)
2. If your events require travel by either participants from AUC or external guests, encourage them to use sustainable modes of transport (walk/ bike/ train)
3. Whenever possible, try ridesharing



FOOD

The food sector makes up a quarter of all the greenhouse-gas emissions, with the largest part being caused by the meat and dairy industry.

Two rules of thumb:



1. Choose locally produced foods
2. Avoid animal-based products

COMPARISON OF DIETS

To illustrate the difference in emissions between a vegan diet vs an omnivore diet, the University of Michigan compared a normal beef burger with a vegan burger (the Beyond Burger). They found that the Beyond Burger has the following impact on the environment compared to a U.S. beef burger:

- **90% less greenhouse gas emissions**
- **46% less non-renewable energy use**
- **99% less water use**
- **93% less land use**

FOOD

FOOD MILES & WATER FOOTPRINT

Two important concepts to keep in mind when purchasing food products:

- 1) **Carbon footprint**
- 2) **Water footprint**

The total carbon footprint is divided into transportation (food miles) as well as production footprint (use of water and other resources). In omnivore diets, the production footprint outweighs the transportation one, so buying locally, despite its many benefits to the community, is not as effective as limiting animal products. With vegan diets, the food miles are more influential than the production process.

Water footprint is used to indicate the amount of freshwater that any given process or activity uses. One's diet makes up the largest part of one's personal water footprint, with animal products and processed foods having a higher water footprint than other foods.

Calculate your own water footprint:

<https://www.watercalculator.org/wfc2/q/household/>



FOOD

COMPARISON OF SUPERMARKETS

ALBERT HEIJN

Albert Heijn gets 50% of all their produce from the Netherlands and 30% from other countries in Europe. They recycle 100% of their food waste, of which a large part is donated. Next to that, they pledge to have 25% less plastic in 2025, all of which should be recyclable. Lastly, from 2008 to 2019, they have reduced their own CO2 emission by 48%.

More information about AH:

https://static.ahold.com/media/002326700/000/002326738_001_AHNo120828490_AH_Duurzaamheidsverslag_2019_v11_200dpi.pdf

LIDL

Lidl tries to get at least their fruits and vegetables from farmers in the Netherlands, and through direct deals with farmers. However, they also still get a considerable amount of products from outside the Netherlands.

Lidl products grown/produced in the Netherlands include:

- Elstar apples
- Organic cheese
- Spinach
- Tomatoes
- Eggs
- Tricolore salad

More information about Lidl:

<https://corporate.lidl.nl/duurzaamheid/klimaat>



FOOD

Here are a few plant-based snack ideas, all perfect for AUCSA events. Hopefully you'll love them as much as we do!

Vegan snack ideas

- Popcorn (spice it up with some cayenne pepper, caramel or just plain salty)
- Hummus with veggies
- Dried fruits
- Vegan Chocolate cookies (check out the recipe from "chocolate covered katie")
- Vegan Carrot or Banana bread (check out BBC good food for good recipes)

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Make sure you offer at least one vegan option when serving food
- Choose locally produced and plant-based products, avoid processed foods
- Eat seasonally
- Avoid foodwaste (check out <https://foodprint.org/blog/15-easy-ways-to-reduce-food-waste/>)
- Choose Albert Heijn over Lidl!
- If you are in for a short bike ride, go to Ekoplaza (there is one in Oost), as this is one of the most sustainable supermarket chains in the Netherlands.



MERCH

According to the survey, the majority of committee members cherishes the possibility of owning board hoodies. As understandable as this is, in this policy brief we would like to touch upon the growing environmental impact of fast fashion and propose alternatives which might be appealing to future boards.

FAST FASHION FACTS

- Depending on the source, the fashion industry is the 2nd or 3rd largest polluter
- Worldwide, only 2% of clothes are recycled
- Large retail chain clothing stores introduce up to 45 mini and maxi collections a year (almost one per week)
- It takes 2700 liters to produce a t-shirt, which equals the water demand for 1 person for more than 2 years

Details on the AUCSA hoodies

The AUCSA is responsible for the production of around 450 hoodies every year. This consists of around 250 year hoodies, 150 committee hoodies, and 50 limited edition hoodies. The AUCSA orders most of their merchandise with Vector textieldruk. The sweaters are made of 50% non-organic cotton and 50% polyester. Polyester is a synthetic resource that requires a carbon-intensive production process and is non-biodegradable. It is believed to be the biggest source of microplastic pollution, because up to 1900 synthetic fibers are washed off one piece of clothing every time it is washed (on that note, think about washing your clothes only when it is necessary).



MERCH

Details on the AUCSA hoodies

The production of cotton is water and energy intensive, as well as polluting due to the pesticides that are used. Organic cotton is a sustainable and biodegradable fiber that is a good option for eco-friendly merchandise. Vector Textieldruk offers sweaters made of organic cotton, however, the options are quite limited and pricy, which is why the AUCSA currently does not make use of this.

HOW TO CREATE YOUR OWN MERCH?

Since we all love our board hoodies, we do not want to discourage you from having one. But instead of ordering it with AUCSA, you can also think about making your own! Here are the steps on how to do this:

- 1** Get a second-hand hoodie. You can choose an old one that you already own, or go thrift shopping.
- 2** Think about a design that you want on your hoodie (logo, names, year, personal drawings, etc.).
- 3** Choose a way to get the design on your hoodie. Ideas are: transfer paper, potato stamps, paint.
- 4** Get together and make a fun board bonding out of making your hoodies!

This is a fun and sustainable way to get board hoodies. Also (if you do this before the October GA) you can ask the AUCSA to sponsor the hoodies with the same amount of money that they would sponsor your other board hoodies.



MERCH

RECOMMENDATIONS

- AUCSA could switch to one standard AUC hoodie design to avoid waste, and look for a more sustainable producer
- Consider making your own (sustainable!) merch as a board, instead of ordering with the AUCSA
- Do not treat having a board hoodie as something obligatory - give individual members a chance to choose
- Consider reusing old board hoodies instead of ordering new personalized hoodies each year
- On an individual level, implement slow fashion principles - buy second hand, fix, exchange, and go for quality not quantity

INSPIRATION & EDUCATION

Movies: The True Cost (2015); Cowspiracy (2014); No Impact Man (2009)

Apps: Good On You; Too Good To Go

Books: "Overdressed: The Shockingly High Cost of Cheap Fashion" Elizabeth L. Cline; "This changes everything: Capitalism vs. The Climate" Naomi Klein

Accounts: @climatediva @ecoage @group_de_femmes
@grownandgathered @plantbasednews

Contact SUSCOM

Do you have questions about the Policy Brief or sustainability in general? Always feel free to send us a message!

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