

TRAVEL AND REIMBURSEMENT POLICY

(extract from the EHC Financial Guidelines)

Last Update: April 2025

5. REIMBURSEMENTS OF TRAVEL AND MEETING COSTS

This chapter outlines the procedures linked to the reimbursements of travel and meeting costs in Brussels or abroad for Staff, Steering Committee, Committee members, delegates, participants and any other consultant, attending EHC meetings and events or representing the EHC at third parties' meetings or events.

Any exception to the below rules needs a prior written approval by the CEO to be eligible.

5.1. General rules

5.1.1. When the reimbursement applies

The EHC reimburses travel costs when a participant has been invited to present or attend a meeting or event on behalf of the EHC, and after presentation of the appropriate justification of all expenses. The travel should occur within the day directly before or after the meeting. However, for financial or sustainability reasons, an exception can be made if:

- the costs of an earlier or later travel would be lower than on the day before or after the meeting.
- the traveller has other meetings or events not related to EHC in the same geographical area in a short period of time.

In both cases, a prior written approval by the CEO is needed and supporting documents (e.g. comparison of prices, confirmation of meetings taking place by email invitations and agendas) must be provided with the reimbursement form and the extra accommodation nights will not be covered by EHC, unless approved prior to the travel and upon explanation of the rationale of an extra night.

When an EHC Steering Committee member or EHC staff or EHC-committee member in function as EHC committee member is invited by an NMO, the NMO shall cover the travel costs and lodging with the same rules as written in the EHC financial guidelines. However, if the NMO puts in a request of helping to cover the travelling costs, the EHC Leadership, namely the President, the Vice-President and the Treasurer, will take in consideration this request.

5.1.2. How the reimbursement is paid

For participants and delegates representing an NMO, the reimbursement will be made preferably to the bank account of the NMO. Exceptions to this rule should be approved by the CEO/Treasurer. NMOs are responsible for informing the EHC of any changes in their contact and/or bank details. Reimbursements are made according to the exchange rate published on the day of the purchase. The deadline for submitting the expense form of the specific event should be delivered to the EHC office 30 days after coming back from the event.

For other organisations and individuals, the EHC will reimburse to the bank account provided in attachment to the form. This may be the case for trainers, guests, external speakers, staff, EHC committee members and SC members. Here also, the deadline for submitting the expense form of the specific event should be delivered to the EHC office 30 days after coming back from the event.

5.1.3. Payment with EHC credit cards

All rules and supporting documents required for reimbursements are also applicable to travel costs paid with EHC credit cards.

5.2. Costs covered

5.2.1. Travel costs

Travellers are reimbursed according to the following criteria:

- Normally persons travel with economic or 2nd class transport (flight or train) or they can opt for the most cost-effective option.
- Above €500 they need to get the approval of the CEO/Treasurer.

If the person needs to travel by car, he/she should receive a mile-allowance as foreseen by the Belgian norm.

Additional travel costs:

- €20 of food expenses during travel (see 5.2.6 subsistence costs details)
- extra legroom and extra luggage only when duly justified by the traveller
- 1st class upgrade may be booked at the cost of the traveller with a screenshot showing the same ticket with 2nd class price
- Normal cancellation insurance on flight or train is advised. Extra insurances are on the cost of the traveller.

Flight costs are reimbursed only upon presentation of the original invoice or booking confirmation that includes the price, date of purchase and flight information (dates, destinations, passenger's name).

When the travel costs exceed the above listed amounts, written prior approval of the CEO is required.

Public transportation between home-airport/train station and airport/train station-venue are reimbursed only upon presentation of an original ticket or a receipt (mentioning the price and date). In the case that it is not possible to keep the public transport tickets, a written explanation, and the original payment receipt must be included with the reimbursement form.

5.2.2. Personal vehicle

Car costs (fuel, tolls, parking) and mileage are reimbursed upon prior written approval of the CEO. Parking costs at the airport or similar are reimbursed if the alternative public transport costs are more expensive or unavailable. Car costs are reimbursed to the driver. When there are several persons travelling in one car, the EHC reimburses one person only.

5.2.3. Taxi

Taxi expenses are only reimbursed under the following circumstances:

- No public transport available
- Early departure or arrival (before 8:00am)
- Late departure or arrival (after 20:00)
- Shared taxi ride with other EHC members (to be mentioned on the receipt) that is cost-effective compared with public transport
- Long travel journey (over 12h)
- Delays because of an extended meeting or transportation (to be justified)
- Health reasons (to be justified)
- In case of perceived personal danger (to be justified)

Taxi expenses are reimbursed upon presentation of a receipt that includes the following information: date, time, travel, price, name of riders if shared and an explanation of why a taxi was used. When possible, a prior written approval from the CEO should be sought. The EHC reserves the right not to reimburse any expenditure deemed to be inappropriate with the Financial Guidelines.

Taxis are not to be used for inter-city transport, unless there are healthy issues.

5.2.4. Visa

Visa costs are reimbursed upon reception of appropriate justifications, including the original receipt and a copy of the visa (on the passport) that mentions the price paid.

The costs of photos, passport, postal services and other such expenses incurred to obtain the visa are not reimbursed. However, travel-related costs required to obtain the visa can be reimbursed, if previously approved by the CEO.

5.2.5. Accommodation

For most events, accommodation for EHC meetings and events are arranged by the EHC. When not organised by the EHC, the traveller can arrange their accommodation themselves. To be reimbursed, the traveller must provide the EHC with an invoice from the hotel, or with a booking confirmation and proof of payment. It is encouraged to find a room with a price under €150, including breakfast and city taxes. Any extra expenses related to the accommodation (i.e. minibar, calls, Wi-Fi) are the responsibility and at the cost of the traveller.

5.2.6. Subsistence costs

- Breakfast up to €15 (only if not already included in the accommodation)
- Lunch up to €25
- Dinner up to €50
- €20 during travel journey (e.g. snacks, coffee, refreshment) for travels longer than 6 hours (from first departure till last arrival at airport/station).

There is no refund of subsistence costs when already provided (breakfast in the hotel, lunch or dinner in the meeting venue...).

Grocery shopping is not reimbursed unless it is clear from the receipt that the items purchased are for a specific meal (breakfast, lunch, dinner).

Alcohol is not reimbursable.

5.2.7. Insurance

The EHC does not have a travel or health insurance policy for the participants to its events. The EHC travel insurance only covers staff and Steering Committee members. Participants should ensure they are covered directly with their own organisation or use their personal insurance for any last-minute cancellation due to political, meteorological, medical or any other reason.

When a participant has been robbed, it is the responsibility of the participant to sort the situation out through the participant's personal travel insurance. This is not covered by the EHC's insurance.

5.2.8. Phone and roaming (only for Staff and Steering Committee members)

Staff and Steering Committee members can claim phone and roaming costs when directly related to EHC work in non-EU countries.

A detailed invoice showing the dates of usage must be provided to get reimbursed.

Data packages and sim cards can also be purchased for non-EU countries in the days before or during the travel if less expensive than estimated roaming costs.

5.2.9. Gifts (only for Staff members)

Gifts can exceptionally be reimbursed when appropriate (e.g. to guest speakers, important meeting or event). Names of the organisations or persons receiving the gifts must be mentioned on the reimbursement form. The limit value for a gift is €30. Any gift above the reference price should be pre-approved by the CEO.

5.2.10. Irregular expenses

Any other expense not mentioned above must be approved by the CEO prior to the purchase.

5.3. Reimbursement procedure

5.3.1. Reimbursement form

Reimbursement forms templates are sent to participants by the person in charge of the meeting or event, and available on the EHC's drive for Staff and Steering Committee members.

The completed reimbursement form and the necessary justifications cannot be submitted at the meeting venue. It must be sent by regular mail or email to the EHC office one month after the meeting at the latest. A Reminder should be sent after 2-3 weeks, and it is up to the CEO to notify the person. If the deadline is not respected, NMO and/or the individual automatically loses the right to be reimbursed, exceptions duly justified will be made on a case-by-case basis by the CEO in agreement with the Treasurer.

The reimbursement form must be completed in full and requires the following:

- Every expense must be justified with an appropriate original receipt (see below for details)
- The NMO that the participant represents must be clearly mentioned
- An email address must be provided, in case the EHC team needs to contact the participant
- The correct bank data must be provided on the form
- The form must be signed by the representative of the NMO

5.3.2. Appropriate documents

Only original/scanned/photographic documents are considered appropriate documents.

Appropriate documents must include:

- Price paid and currency
- Date of purchase
- Detail of the items purchased
- The name of the company from which the purchase was made (either a printed logo or a stamp)

Appropriate documents are:

- Hotel invoice, or booking confirmation with proof of payment (receipt) attached if no invoice was provided
- Train travel tickets and payment receipt, or booking confirmation mentioning date of purchase and price if no receipt was provided
- Transport ticket and receipt mentioning date of purchase and price
- Taxi receipts mentioning date of purchase, time, destination and price, and if shared the names of those in the taxi. Rationale for using a taxi is also required (see above)
- Flight invoice or booking confirmation with cost, date of purchase and all pages of the reservation. All the original boarding passes are required
- Restaurant receipt with the details of the meal

Documents that are not appropriate are:

- Hotel booking confirmation without a proof of payment
- Train/transport ticket not mentioning date and/or price without a booking confirmation or receipt
- Receipt without detail of purchase

5.3.3. Confirmation of the reimbursement

The Finance and Administration Manager checks all reimbursement forms. The Finance and Administration Manager is informed by the person responsible for the event of any event or information to take into consideration to approve the expense.

If a reimbursement form has not been approved, the person/NMO in question will be notified by email. A time limit of 20 working days will be given to forward the necessary justification to the Finance and Administration Manager.

If a small amount (less than €50) is not accepted due to the absence of receipts or justification, the EHC can deduct the amount without prior notification to the participant/NMO. For deductions exceeding this amount, the participant/NMO concerned will always be informed beforehand.

5.4. Cash reimbursement

EHC staff members are not allowed to make spontaneous cash reimbursements to participants during meetings. From a financial and security point of view, payments in cash are to be avoided as much as possible. There are only a few exceptions where cash travel reimbursements can be given.

This is due to the lack of effective bank transfer systems and account structures in the countries of the account holders and to avoid expensive bank transfer costs at local banks (more than €20 per transfer).

The cash reimbursement request, including the estimation of the costs and available supporting documents, must be submitted to and approved by the CEO at least 2 weeks before the meeting.

The EHC's receipt for the cash travel reimbursement must include the amount, the currency, the date, the place, the signature and clarification of the name of the recipient, the NMO, for what the person is reimbursed, the title of the recipient (within the NMO), a statement that the money was received in cash, and the signature of the recipient. Full documentation, including the travel reimbursement form that justifies the expenditure, should be attached to the receipt.

5.4.1. Procedures

The participant requesting a cash reimbursement must send the necessary information to the CEO at least 2 weeks prior to the meeting by email. The following information should be included: the participant's name, the NMO, the activity, indication of the relevant costs (if possible, with copies of the ticket and other potential expenses, such as visa), the amount, the currency, and the date of the activity. The NMO must also authorise the request and confirm that the participant is entitled to receive, on its behalf, the reimbursement in cash.

Cash is ordered accordingly (2 signatories) and collected from the bank if not already available in the EHC office.

The person responsible for the activity receives the money. They will be personally responsible for the money. The person concerned signs a form confirming receipt of the cash.

The NMO in question will be notified (prior to or after the meeting, but not later than one month after the reimbursement was made) that the participant has received the reimbursement in cash.

5.4.2. Authorisation to handle cash reimbursement

Staff or Steering Committee members do not have the authorisation to reimburse participants' travel expenses in cash spontaneously at the venue. The CEO authorises which staff can handle cash. No staff or SC member is obliged to travel with and handle cash reimbursements.

When a participant does not have cash for personal purchases, it is not allowed to lend the participant the EHC's money. The EHC and/or the EHC staff are not responsible for a participant's personal financial situation.

When the CEO is absent for more than 3 days, the Administration Officer handles the procedure in cooperation with the Treasurer or President as authorised signatories for the EHC. If the cash payment is in a currency other than euros, the exchange rate used is the monthly rate published by the European Commission.

5.5. Participation costs

5.5.1. "No show" fees

When a person does not show up at an event, the NMO will receive a "No Show" fee for all the expenses related to the activity in place. This includes meals, accommodation and transport if ordered by the EHC. This fee is compensation for the expenses the EHC must pay, and in consideration that it was not possible to reallocate the space to another person/organisation.

An individual could be exempt from the 'no show' fee in case of force majeure, provided the EHC is informed in due time (depending on the event and conditions already shared with participants) with a valid proof and justification.

5.5.2. Overstays

Staying at the venue extra nights after or before the event can be justified if there are no possible travel means (for example, if the only flight with a vacant seat is on the following day, when the travel booking has been done well in advance of the meeting taking place) or if the costs for an extra night account for a greater saving on travel costs. However, this always needs to be approved by the EHC staff member responsible for the activity before the flight is purchased and with screenshots of the different flight options provided.

Staying longer or arriving earlier is not under the responsibility of the EHC. The participants must make their own arrangement.

5.6. Travel Grants Procedure

5.6.1. Annual Conference

NMOs need to request a travel grant upon opening of registration. The request is sent to the Conference Organisers with copy to the Staff member in charge of organising the event, and the CEO. A deadline to submit a request is set upon opening registration.

A total budget of €25,000 on a first come first served basis will be allocated.

An NMO will be granted a travel grant once every 2 years to provide a rotation of grantees or if the budget has not been fully used by the deadline by other NMOs, then the first come first served basis is applied to those NMOs who already benefited from a travel grant in previous year and that were put on a waiting list. The NMOs will be notified after the deadline if they can benefit from a travel grant.

5.6.2. Other EHC main events except Round Tables

NMOs must comply with requirements set by the EHC and notified upon opening of registration by EHC staff or any conference organisers provider.

5.6.3. Round Tables

The EHC will cover the travel costs up to €500 for up to 5 NMO representatives per Round Table. The EHC will approve up to five requests per Round Table based on the following criteria:

- whether the NMO or NMO member has a current specific and relevant interest in the topic of the Round Table;
- whether the NMO or NMO member is currently advocating on the topic of the Round Table;
- whether the NMO is planning a programme or project on the topic of the Round Table in the near future;
- initially in this process, preference will be given to NMOs or NMO members who have not attended previous Round Tables.

The EHC will cover one night accommodation in Brussels, upon reception of a formal written request sent to the staff member in charge of the organisation of the activity prior to the event, with an explanation and evidence of the extra night accommodation (as stated in 5.5.2.).

6. ADVANCE

6.1. Advance payment to staff members

6.1.1. Principle

An advance is possible in the following situations:

- Advance related to an activity (if an invoice needs to be paid in cash)
- Advance related to a cash reimbursement request (see Chapter 7.4)

6.1.2. Procedure

All advance requests must be sent by email to the CEO at least 1 week before the start of the activity. The CEO approves the request based on the advance request form.

When the advance is in cash, the staff member and the CEO must complete a EHC receipt.

The staff member who received the advance is personally responsible for the money. They must present all expenses related to the advance with appropriate receipts or invoices within the next 5 working days. If the advance is lost or is not properly justified, the staff member must reimburse the missing amount to the EHC.

6.2. Pre-booked travels

6.2.1. Travel tickets for NMOs and Committees

Under exceptional circumstances and with prior approval of the CEO, the EHC can buy travel tickets. The NMO or the Committee member must send a statement assuming the responsibility for the flight cost, in case the participant:

- does not use the flight
- does not attend the event for which the travel ticket has been purchased
- does not provide the EHC with the appropriate documentation.

In those three cases, the NMO or the Committee member is responsible for reimbursing the full cost to the EHC within 4 weeks of receiving the reimbursement request from the EHC.

If the travel tickets are bought with an EHC credit card, the card holder becomes responsible for the cost and its supporting document. In the case they do not receive the required documents from the NMO or participant, they should inform the CEO to start the refund process by the NMO or Committee member.

6.3. Committee attendance at EHC events

6.3.1. Principle

The EHC has established 4 Committees: Youth Committee, Women Committee, VWD Committee and ERIN Committee. To disseminate information and build capacities within each Committee, the Steering Committee decided to have Committee members attending all EHC events. The Committee members attending the EHC events need to register as any other attendees under the same rules defined and notified by the EHC and/or the conference organiser provider.

6.3.2. Annual conference

All members of the four Committees are allowed to attend the Annual Conference. All MAG members are also invited.

6.3.3. Other EHC main events

Leadership Conference: 2 members per Committee (speakers excluded)

Youth Leadership Workshop: all members of the Youth Committee

ERIN Summit: all members of the ERIN Committee

New Technology Workshop: all MAG members and one member per Committee

Round Tables: one member per Committee, and all Committee members if the topic is aligned with the Committee's remit. The travel grant procedure applies for those attendees too.

Strategic Retreat: one member per Committee, preferably the chair. All MAG members are also invited.