

Open letter: Davos 2025 - Corporate leaders should show the way towards sustainable travel

Date: 16 January

To the World Economic Forum (WEF) and its participants,

Next week 20-24 January, global business leaders are again convening in Davos at the World Economic Forum (WEF) to address key global and regional [challenges](#), including “*stewarding a just and inclusive energy transition*”. The WEF [Global Risk Reports](#) have, since several years, recognised environmental degradation and climate change among the highest threats to both global security and economic development.

Transport is the [main source](#) of emissions of the Annual Meeting. We welcome that, this year the WEF has significantly stepped up its efforts in [encouraging participants to travel by train](#). This offers an opportunity for WEF 2025 to serve as a **turning point in the transition to energy-efficient and green travel**. And to once and for all shake its reputation as an annual [private jet destination](#), being perceived by many as a symbol of the “hypocrisy” of those claiming to be world leaders.

Private jets are the [most polluting](#) mode of transport on the planet per passenger kilometer, and their emissions [increased by 46%](#) between 2019 and 2023. Dissuading the use of private jets is thus more important than ever to curb corporate executives’ travel footprints.

So we, signatories of this letter, turn to Davos 2025 to ask:

- Participants to comply with the Annual Forum sustainability standards prioritising rail over other modes of transport.
- The WEF to act as the safeguard of its own recommendations, ensuring compliance.

To make tangible gains, we analysed the flight paths of corporate-owned jets during Davos 2024, and chose two illustrative examples. For a company based in Europe such as Volkswagen, the [very short round trip flights](#) of its jets between Germany and Switzerland caused 7.9 tons of CO₂,¹ **comparable to one trip around the Earth in a petrol car**. Travelling **by train would have saved over 99% of emissions**.

For a company based in the United States such as Johnson & Johnson, whose executives [travelled by private jet](#) in previous editions, the 120 tons of CO₂² emitted during the flights of its jets **between the U.S. East Coast and Switzerland is comparable to 14 trips around the Earth**. Flying commercial instead would have saved up to 87% of emissions.

¹Including non-CO₂ effects, the trips emitted between 13.4 and 23.6 tons of CO₂ equivalent (depending on the time scale used for Global Warming Potential: 1.7 for GWP at 100 years, and 3 for a GWP between 20 and 50 years. Based on Lee *et al.*, 2021).

²Including non-CO₂ effects, the trips emitted between 200 and 357 tons of CO₂ equivalent (depending on the time scale used for Global Warming Potential: 1.7 for GWP at 100 years, and 3 for a GWP between 20 and 50 years. Based on Lee *et al.*, 2021).

Using a private jet is emblematic of the global inequality of resources and efforts to address planetary threats. Any private jet going to Davos sends the message that large global companies, with all their means and power to lead by example, lack the real will and responsibility to make simple changes to help keep warming below 1.5 degrees.

We call on Davos 2025, the WEF and its participants to serve as a model to spark broader change, and boost the trend towards energy-efficient travel. The world's eyes are upon you now - make this a milestone to accelerate the transition.

