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*MISTRAL is a European research network with the aim of developing a body of knowledge about the support for deployment of renewable energy technology. It is the position of the ESRs engaged in the network that renewable technologies should be used to support a just low carbon energy transition. ESRs are therefore strongly encouraged to reduce their transport-related emissions. Noting the emissions intensity of air travel, this particularly relates to reducing air travel where feasible alternatives exist. At their own discretion, MISTRAL ESRs have adopted a rule to avoid flying when representing MISTRAL in-person, except if surface transport would involve either a) a total travel time of more than 24 hours, and/or b) a significant increase of travel costs.*

The MISTRAL project aims to understand the issues around the development of renewable energy technologies in Europe and beyond through research conducted by Early Stage Researchers. MISTRAL also aims to encourage international collaboration and interaction amongst ESRs and broader communities, both scientific and otherwise. One of the main reasons for supporting renewable energy development is to mitigate climate change and maintain a safe operating space for humanity. Due to the disproportionate greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) associated with aviation at a personal level, MISTRAL ESRs have decided to adopt a travel policy which aims to reduce the carbon footprint of its early stage research members. While the policy on its own is neither perfect in content or process of adoption, nor particularly significant in overall GHG emissions, it is hoped that it can provide impetus to the wider MISTRAL network and beyond to consider adopting similar policies.

The below list of options was openly compiled by the ESRs to be voted upon at an ESR Committee Meeting in January 2020:

- A) MISTRAL members shall not fly when representing MISTRAL.
- B) MISTRAL members shall not fly when representing MISTRAL except if surface transport would involve either a total travel time of more than 36 hours and/or an increase of 50% or €100 to the total travel cost, whichever is the greater.
- C) MISTRAL should not have a policy on whether its members should fly.
- D) MISTRAL members shall not fly under any circumstances.
- E) MISTRAL members shall not fly when representing MISTRAL except in cases of urgency, extreme necessity or no other option.
- F) MISTRAL will encourage its members and others to reduce their air travel.

A lively discussion was had at the ESR Committee meeting with differing opinions on content and aims of travel policy. Issues included the unequal distribution of land-based travel costs associated with the locations of various ESRs. Another issue was raised regarding potential contradictions between taking a stance on the politically charged topic of climate change, and the desire to achieve researcher objectivity.

A basic majority vote was taken resulting in Option B receiving 9 votes and Option F receiving 3 votes. This was followed by a discussion which resulted in the finalised above wording as a compromise, with most notable changes being a proviso that the policy be applied at each ESR's own discretion, and a change in the minimum cost impact from 'an increase of 50% or €100' to the vaguer reference to 'significant' cost increase. These changes were made to reflect the different costs associated with the policy for different, both financially in terms of travel costs but also time constraints and personal situations. This was subsequently brought forward to the following ESR Committee meeting and adopted by consensus.

