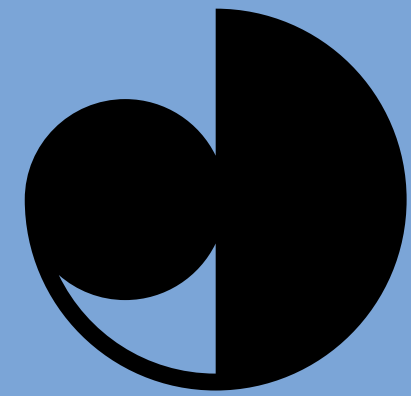




FINNISH JAZZ
FEDERATION

On The Rails

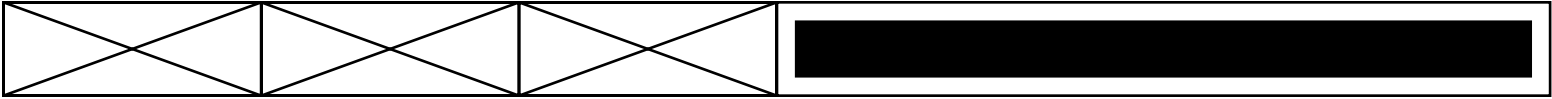
Checklist for a carbon-smart
European jazz tour



Taiteen edistämiskeskus
Centret för konstfrämjande
Arts Promotion Centre Finland



DATBLYGU TRADDODIADAU GWERIN
FOLK DEVELOPMENT FOR WALES



On The Rails - Checklist for a carbon-smart European jazz tour

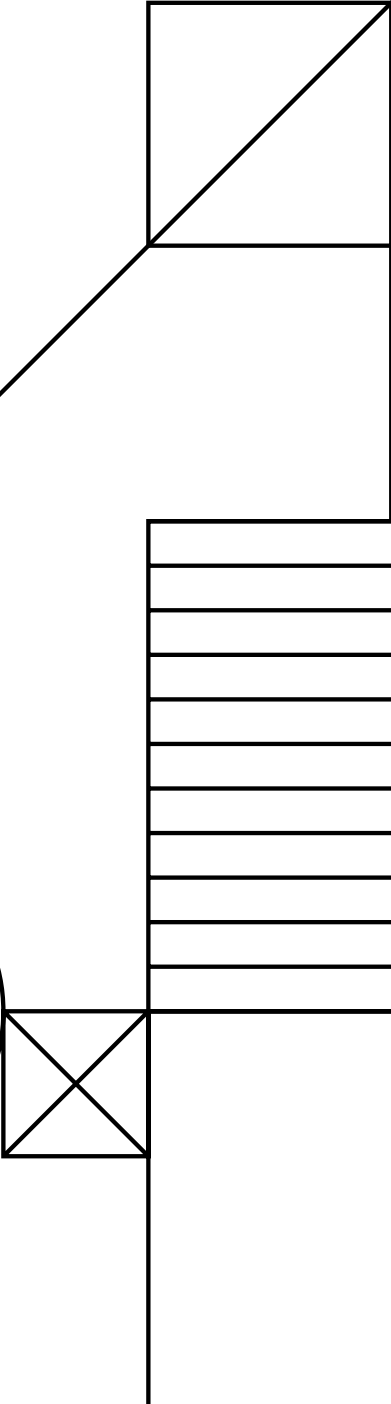
In 2022–2023, the Finnish Jazz Association implemented the On The Rails project, which piloted a train tour in Central Europe. The project explored different ways to facilitate low-emission jazz tours between two countries on the edge of Europe: the UK and Finland. The Welsh project partner Trac Cymru is a folk music organisation, which meant that the collaboration took place between two genres with similar touring practices and concert venues.

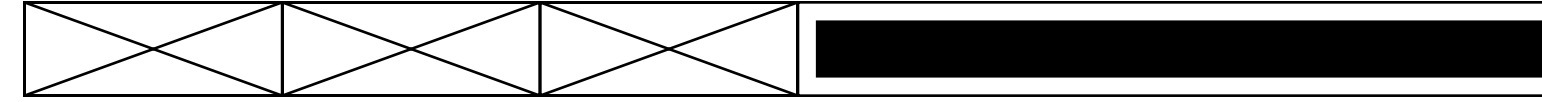
Information on good practices was collected and shared through international industry events for jazz and folk music professionals, participating in both sectors’ European networks, and collaborating with sustainability experts and projects.

In June–July 2023, the ensemble [Kaisa’s Machine](#) undertook a five-concert tour as part of the project, presenting concerts along the train tracks in four countries. The tour was designed to gather experiences and find solutions to typical challenges for jazz ensembles, such as issues rising from international concert sales and day-to-day tour production. The tour was produced by Minnamurra Agency. Building on the experiences from this tour, a folk ensemble from Wales will venture on a similar rail tour to Finland in 2024. The Finnish Jazz Federation, in turn, will utilise the contact network and results acquired through the project to develop its domestic touring activities to become carbon neutral by 2030 and share carbon-smart practices in its international collaborations. The carbon footprint report was compiled by Puuni Ltd. The On the Rails project received funding from the Arts Promotion Centre Finland.

Based on the experiences of the project participants, the results of previous projects, and comments from climate experts, a “checklist” for more sustainable international rail tours was produced to support artists who are in the planning stages of their international jazz tour. Not designed to be a comprehensive guidebook, the checklist has been developed specifically for small (jazz) ensembles and includes practical experiences gained through the project, especially on how to avoid common pitfalls related to wellbeing.

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On the Rails tour – findings and carbon footprint

Common tour planning challenges are often related to areas such as the lack of international contacts or professional representation, the conflicting schedules and goals of musicians who are involved with several different ensembles, or communications between organisers based in different countries.

When planning and implementing a tour by train, on the other hand, it is necessary to prepare for various risks caused by public transport connections and functionality, which can cause stress and, at worst, may erode the well-being of the performers throughout the tour. For artists to be able to unwind and recover, all production outside transport, such as accommodation, meals, break times, event technology and backline, as well as other concert arrangements, should be first-rate.

Getting around by train in a large area requires more planning and often more travel time compared to travelling by air. However, train travel has many positive aspects, which have only recently begun to be appreciated by live music professionals planning their tours. [Europe Jazz Network's "green riders"](#) encourage not only artists, agents and concert organisers, but also audiences to choose trains or other forms of ground transport over air or sea travel, and to avoid travelling with or transporting heavy touring equipment.

When it comes to climate-warming greenhouse gas emissions, the train is the undisputed number one choice on European tours. In the EJV comparison, emissions from six train journeys of different lengths were only 6.9% of those of similar air journeys. In the domestic pilot tours carried out as part of the [Finnish Jazz Federation's carbon-neutral touring mod-](#)

[el](#) project, a combination of train and electric cars achieved reduced emissions of up to 97.6% compared to a similar tour with a diesel-powered minibus.

The train travel emissions of the On The Rails tour were approximately 0.016 t CO₂e for a four-piece tour line-up on the route Munich–Amsterdam–London–Bangor–London–Copenhagen. By air, the emission load on the same route (via Liverpool) would have been c. 3.3 t CO₂e. In other words, the emissions were about 0.5 % of the carbon dioxide equivalent of the flights. Adding to this the departure and return flights from Helsinki to Munich and from Copenhagen to Helsinki, the amount of CO₂e increases by approximately 2 tonnes in both options.

The project report concluded that it makes sense to also make the occasional compromise when necessary, while remaining aware that departing Finland by air immediately increases the emission load, even with low-carbon travel methods chosen for the rest of the tour. Emissions from flying from Finland can be slightly reduced, for example, by opting for a propeller aircraft from Helsinki to Stockholm or Tallinn. Cruise ships are not a significantly better option either, considering their emissions and other environmental impacts, but if emissions from accommodation are also included, an overnight stay on a ferry can "save" one hotel night's worth of emissions while crossing the Baltic Sea. Local transport in concert locations also contributes to transport emissions.

During both the On The Rails project and the Finnish Jazz Federation's Finnish tours, the musicians also felt that being able to work online and stretch one's legs was a definite perk of train travel, as well as having a stronger sense of control

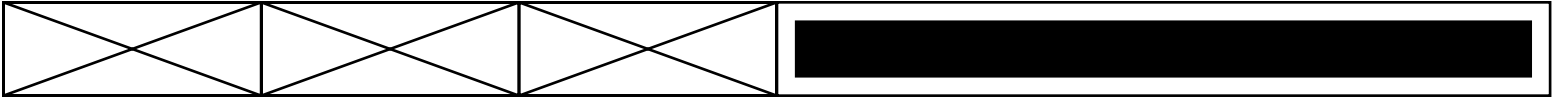
over one's own travel with the option of getting off the train if needed. The fact that you can't (or shouldn't) carry all your technical gear or instruments on the train was both liberating and stressful for the musicians. On the one hand, travelling light translates to more free time and less worry, not having to look after valuable and heavy luggage, but on the other hand, it can be stressful not knowing what kind of backline is waiting at the concert venue and whether there will be time to rectify the situation if the technical equipment or instruments provided are substandard. A train tour requires seamless and professional advance cooperation with the concert venues' technical managers.

Of course, travelling with genuinely low emissions also requires local transport being carried out by electric vehicles or low-carbon public transport – or with human-powered transport. In this project, taxis and commuter trains were used to some extent, as well as walking to hotels located close to train stations. The participants were pleasantly surprised when one of the concert organisers offered the use of bicycles to the performers.

The total emissions from transportation on the On The Rails tour were 2.5 t CO₂e.

On train tours, it is possible to stay overnight on the train, which of course saves emissions from hotel stays, but on this tour, musicians stayed in hotels near train stations whenever possible. The standard of hotels close to stations can be hit and miss, and it is always a good idea to check guest reviews prior to booking, for example, to find out about the safety and noise levels in the area, as well as shops and dining options.

Checklist for a carbon-smart European jazz tour



This can reduce stress levels when returning to your accommodation after the concert – when someone just needs a good sleep, someone else wants to go for a run before bed, for example.

In addition to the energy consumption of individual rooms and the whole building (e.g., heating, electricity, cooling), the emission impacts of hotel accommodation are increased by all services available to guests, even if the guest does not use them. All hotels provide cleaning services and freshly laundered bed linen. Most hotels have a restaurant, many offer a range of other facilities such as meeting venues, transport and entertainment services, gym, sauna or swimming pool. All these services are included in the calculated, average carbon footprint of each overnight stay.

Many hotels demonstrate their sustainability through different certificates and programs, such as Green Key, ISO 14001 or the Nordic Swan Ecolabel. Participating in these programs, however, does not oblige the hotel to report the carbon footprint of an overnight stay to the hotel guest, and often the figure voluntarily provided by the hotel only takes into account a fraction of the true emission sources. Larger hotel chains, in particular, should be queried about the climate impacts of their operations in order to establish universally accepted calculation methods and emission factors in the future. Apartment accommodation, such as private accommodation rented through online booking platforms, has a lower emission factor compared to hotel accommodation, caused by the absence of additional services.

However, on a multi-country tour, high-quality hotel accommodation can provide faster recovery times, compared to having to make one's own breakfast or deal with less than functional facilities and noise from residential buildings.

When staying in a hotel, everyone can reduce their own carbon footprint through actions such as choosing healthy vegetarian options for breakfast or by opting for less frequent room cleaning and towel changes when staying for more than one night.

The total emissions from accommodation on the On The Rails tour were 4.6 t CO₂e.

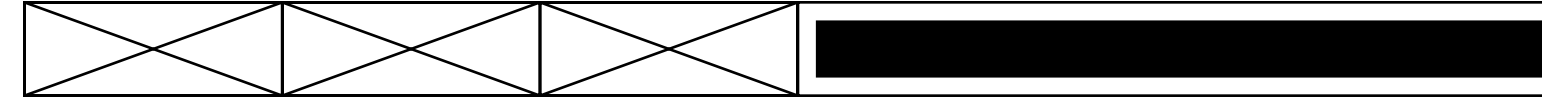
The tour's carbon footprint calculation also covered purchased goods and services. These included backline and staff hire for a self-produced concert, as well as venue hire. Our own ticket risk concert was marketed exclusively through digital channels, without printed collateral to increase the carbon footprint. Trac Cymru, the Finnish Jazz Federation's partner organisation, invited partners and British promoters to the concert, encouraging them to arrive by train. As the local community took care of catering and waste management for the small event, these were not considered to have a significant impact on the carbon footprint. The concert was presented acoustically in an old stone church, which was not heated during the summer months.

The total emissions from purchased goods and services on the On The Rails tour were 0.5 t CO₂e.

The calculation did not take into account emissions which were not directly related to production and contracts, such as artist catering or lifecycle emissions from merchandise sales. The band's rider requested concert organisers to provide local, seasonal vegetarian food whenever possible, avoid single-use and plastic products and unnecessary transport, consider switching to renewable energy, and ensure a healthy and safe working environment for performers and staff.

The total production-related emissions of the On The Rails tour were 7.6 t CO₂e. The Finnish Jazz Association sequestered a corresponding amount of carbon through Puuni Ltd's domestic reforestation projects and thus participated in supporting Finland's carbon neutrality goal.





Checklist for a carbon- smart and wellbeing-conscious European tour

Groundwork is the foundation of professionalism

Define for yourself and your bandmates what an international tour means to you and what kind of assistance is needed to make it happen. Start planning your tour by asking why, what and how:

- why go on tour, why to this particular area, why in this particular time;
- what do we want to achieve for ourselves, what new can we offer to our booking agents and audiences, what (in terms of investments) are we ready to do to achieve this;
- how do we carry out the practicalities of the tour and how do we manage risks?

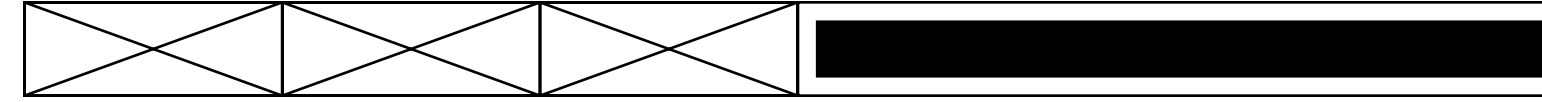
If the tour is sold or produced by an agent, make sure that the values, expectations, and resources of both parties are compatible. Allocate responsibilities in advance and draw up a plan, including interim goals. In addition to the distribution of income, agree on how you will plan to bear financial risks. Your arrangement is not balanced if one of the parties carries no risk at all. It is a good idea to have regular meetings where everyone can openly share their progress with different schedules and tasks. It is important that the agent keeps the band on top of possible challenges in gig sales, for example, and presents alternative solutions to problem areas. Similarly, the band must stick to what has been agreed – for example, a change in the time reserved for the tour or the line-up can cause a nasty snowball effect on the tour's cost structure or the agent's workload.

Keep your promotional material up to date and commission or have texts translated to several languages. Take an active and interactive role in social media, do not just push content about yourself: share other people's content, react, encourage, comment, discuss. If it doesn't come naturally to you to keep sharing new videos in social media, at least produce a few high-quality, short promo videos to upload to a streaming service. You can then use them as needed to showcase your music and live performances, as well as the style and story of yourself/your band. Showing personality will make you more memorable.

Compile all technical riders and stage maps in English, and also prepare a minimum setup guide for the band to bump in independently if necessary. Sometimes you might get an unexpected gig offer outside of concert halls, and you should be "ready to strike" with short preparation time. It is also a good idea to have the minimum setup guide handy if the concert is self-produced in a smaller location or in less-than-usual circumstances.

Prepare an editable contract template in English. You can also use it as a basis both for familiarising yourself with general contract terms in English and for considering the terms on which you want to produce concerts. You can also include a "green rider" or "inclusivity rider" in the contract, where you can define what kind of values and activities you want to support with your performances. You can approach organisations such as the [Finnish Musicians' Union](#) for help with contractual matters and get tips for responsible riders from the [Elma.live platform](#), for example.

It may also be a good idea to prepare a general marketing proposal: how will the band use their own channels to communicate about the gig, what will the audience numbers be, and correspondingly: what are your own expectations for the club or festival in terms of promoting your performance? Make sure that your tour has a capacity to invoice and your bookkeeping is up to date. On international tours, all operations are made easier if you operate through a company that can invoice and has a credit card. The card is the best option for prebooking travel and accommodation and for any unexpected changes during the tour.



A year before the tour – financial planning and PR

It is advisable to start securing funding and partners at least one year in advance. International touring activities in Finland are funded by, among others, [Finnish Music Foundation MES](#), the [Nordic Culture Fund](#), [bilateral cultural funds](#) and the [TelepART Mobility Support Platform](#). Depending on the tour focus, Finnish embassies and cultural institutes may sometimes provide assistance in organising concerts. [Music Finland](#) also offers various support services for the jazz sector. At European level, it is useful to keep checking for ongoing international projects on the websites of the [Europe Jazz Network](#) and the [Voice For Jazz Musicians in Europe](#), among others. The best way find information and form partnerships is to join either of the two networks and participate in Europe's most important jazz industry event, the annual [Jazzahead! trade fair](#) in Bremen. The [Finnish Jazz Musicians' Association](#), along with the Finnish Musicians' Union, are good contacts in terms of acquiring and sharing information relevant to musicians. The [Finnish Jazz Federation](#) serves the sector mainly in matters related to Finnish jazz culture, but the organisation and its member associations also have extensive European and Nordic networks. The "Stakeholders" section of the [Jazz Finland database](#) includes listings of funding agencies that have supported jazz and Finnish jazz agencies.

Choose 2-3 festivals or clubs that could serve as focal points for your tour and international career. Spend plenty of time getting to know them and the culture around them. Is your artist profile compatible with their programming and audience base? Will your performances bring added value to them? Visiting events as an audience member helps to establish personal relationships with key people, either on site or, for example, at industry events. Getting to know the culture and customs of your target country or region is not only polite, but also helps build trust.

Find out if the club or festival belongs to a network of colleagues who co-present artists. Such networks can be either silent or public. Some venues advertise their collaborations on their own websites or through their Europe Jazz Network projects, for example. Recent sustainability projects in the jazz sector include the [Footprints project](#) in Central Europe and its offshoot, [Better Live Music](#), a club network project. In the Nordic countries, the sustainable network of promoters is supported by the [Nordic Jazz Comets](#) collaboration concept between the Nordic Jazz Federations. When you build a connection with one promoter, it may also be easier to reach out to others in the network. Still, keep in mind that it is not their job to sell your concerts – avoid approaching a concert organiser with a wish list, asking to pass on your request to their own partners. Neither is it productive to ask promoters for ideas or nearby contacts who could offer you a gig. They receive many similar requests, and it is often impossible to even take the time to respond to everyone.

If the performer is not previously known in the touring area, it is also good to consider the option of getting a warm-up gig for a more well-known artist or collaborating with a local soloist. Also think about your own values and explore ways to deepen your connection with local audiences and communities beyond the concert itself. Volunteering, for example, can at its best provide experiences, build permanent, personal connections and even widen your fan base.

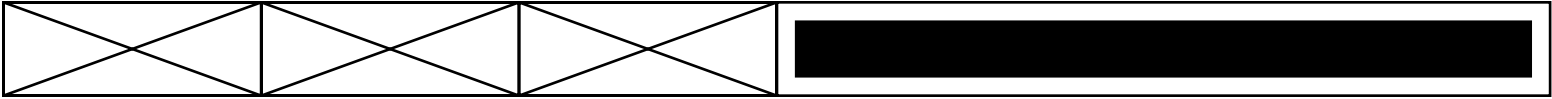
It is a good idea to plan the timing of the tour in view with the live music performance seasons of the destination area. In Central and Northern Europe, the least favourable season for jazz clubs is from June to August. At the same time, summer is a prime time for jazz festivals, and many multi-genre clubs feature live jazz music in their summer patios. City festivals, on the other hand, tend to focus on jazz during the spring and autumn seasons.

International bookings are usually made one year or at least six months in advance. If you don't have 2-3 of the most important performances of the tour contractually confirmed five months before the start of the tour, you should not expect to secure them after this point. An alternative is to present several performances in smaller venues, for smaller audiences and maybe for a smaller fee, or to produce some of the concerts yourself. You should never start your own ticket risk productions from scratch, instead try to connect with a local organisation or person who you already know and who might wish to co-produce with you. It is worth checking that the contracts you have in place for the gigs that have already been booked do not include an exclusivity clause regarding a certain area or time period!

Travel and accommodation should be booked six months prior to the tour, as well as venue hire, event technology and staff for any self-produced concerts. This way, you will have a wider range of services to choose from and you can avoid price increases in these dynamic systems. Especially with ground travel, it is worth investing in the smoothness of travel and the comfort of accommodation. By booking early, the savings made will free up the rest of your allocated budget to allow for any unforeseen changes.

Carbon footprint calculators are handy for starting to monitor emissions from the planning stages onward. Even if the data provided is not exact, or you haven't firmed up your plans yet, the calculators can help you form an overall picture of the emissions structure for the tour. After that, you can think about ways to reduce the largest sources of emissions. At the very least, identify the areas which are easiest and most impactful for you to influence, and take action accordingly. Various calculators have been developed in several countries specifically from the perspective of artists or events, and in Finland, one such browser-based calculator will be published

Checklist for a carbon-smart European jazz tour



on the Cool Music website at www.viileamusiikki.fi, where you can also familiarise yourself with Finland’s live music climate roadmap and sign your own pledge.

You can also plan ahead to offset the unavoidable emissions of the tour or commit to other climate actions. You should also create a budget item for this, even though the carbon footprint of a train tour is considerably smaller compared to one-off gigs by plane, for which airlines often also offer compensation programs.

How to manage a stress-free train tour?

Have all travellers’ passport details, including name and date of birth, and contact details ready before you start booking trips and accommodations. If your tour lineup is international, make sure to check visa or other additional travel document requirements for each country. Also make sure that everyone’s passport will be valid for long enough. Remember to take out travel insurance for all travellers and their luggage. If you plan to travel in several countries, consider getting an InterRail or Eurail pass, which provides flexibility and savings on train tickets.

Opt for direct connections, even if they are more expensive than trips with multiple transfers or using more than one mode of transport. Every transfer adds strain on the passenger, no matter how smoothly it may go.

Make sure to reserve seats on all trains, and preferably your own cabin. Also be prepared to invest in first class tickets for long travel legs or particularly congested parts of the journey –even a small investment in travel comfort will lift the overall morale on tour! Consider the possibility of a night train and

sleeping cabins when applicable. It is worth reserving a separate seat for large luggage items.

When planning your route and timetable, allow enough time for any potential changes. Train traffic is often affected by work stoppages, track work, weather conditions or technical delays. Make sure that the band is not scheduled to go to soundcheck right after arrival, especially after a long travel leg. Recovery after travel will be faster if you can go directly from the train station to your accommodation, check in and have a couple hours off.

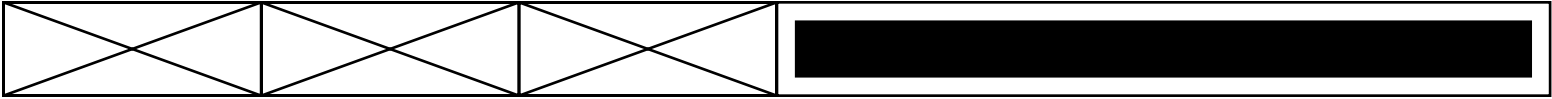
When planning the tour, allow time for at least one leisurely meal every day, and for private time for rest or recreation for each member of the group.

When choosing accommodation, you should consider its quality, responsibility and easy access to public transport. Apartment accommodation without added services is a good climate choice, but in terms of recovery time on a long tour, it may be good to include one or more quiet and well-serviced accommodation options, with access to private rooms and a healthy breakfast.

Before travelling, it’s a good idea to download the most common taxi apps to your phone, such as Uber and Bolt, train apps, and public transport apps for your destination cities. Apps give your timely information of any potential changes and make it easier to change your own plans.

Wi-Fi is available on most of the European train network, but connections can be prone to disruptions. It’s a good idea to save screen shots of travel tickets and other important documents on your phone. Do this on all passengers’ phones, as travellers sleeping on the train can be exposed to petty theft. Make an itinerary to share with everyone in the group. In-





clude information on travel and accommodation, as well as details of all gigs, any applicable special arrangements and schedules, as well as meals and local transport. Also add the contact details for all concert venues. Likewise, don't leave any aspects of your self-produced tour unfinished before setting off, even if they might seem straightforward to complete while on tour! Please also remember that you will have to clear goods to and from the UK, as it is outside the EU! If you are organising a small concert in the UK, hire all event technology and backline locally.

A small stack of CDs is easy to take along, but general band merchandise quickly fills up the suitcases and ends up as waste. If you want to produce something clever for sale or as a memento of your gig, you should get in touch with local providers at your key concert locations to commission items such as custom-made jewellery or textiles made from recycled materials. This way you will also be remembered by the supplier. Once again, find out about import and export restrictions outside the EU, for example to the UK.

Invest in your social media channels during the tour and schedule a range of posts, not just your concert promo. It's easier to produce content when you get to know your travel route, local culture and, for example, the main sights or local viral phenomena. Prepare a plan for the "must post" content, with any other spontaneous stories being a bonus. Remember to tell your audiences why you choose to travel by train and talk about any unexpected twists or insights along your journey.

Save all electronic invoices and receipts, as well as photos of all physical invoices and receipts. Archive them in a designated place and organise in appropriate folders as they come. Don't leave everything for after the tour, as you will need to allocate time for tour after-care, such as thanking the concert organisers, the team, audiences and partners, as well as requesting feedback and writing funding reports.



Useful links for planning a sustainable tour:

[Elma.live](#)-responsibility platform

[Julie's Bicycle's climate tool](#) and its user guide for tour planning

[Cool Music climate road map](#) for Finnish live music

More information about the On The Rails project:

The Finnish Jazz Federation, info@jazzfinland.fi

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