

# Green Travel Competition: Understanding the freedom of railway traveling

## Introduction

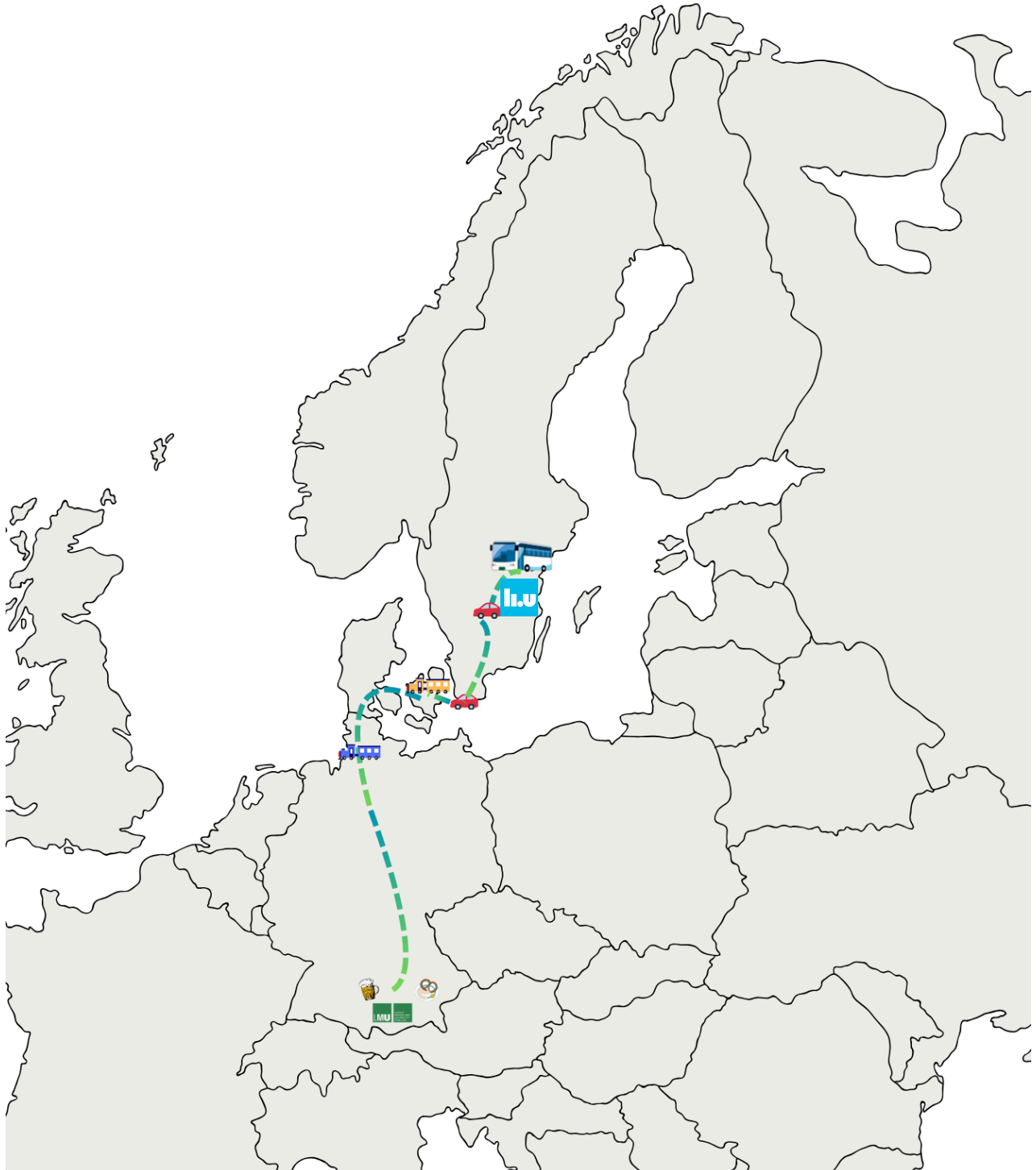
Did you know that in 2021, passengers traveled approximately 345 billion kilometers on European railways? This makes the European region the third largest market for rail passenger traffic in the world (Statista 2021). Since the early 1990's (Wikipedia 2024), European countries have standardized a transport network to service cross-border operations and improved the international trade market. The standardization of railway transportation accelerated the opportunity for people to travel between countries and thereby improved the choice of education- and work preference for large groups of individuals. As an Erasmus-exchange student, I have experienced first hand the freedom and joy of European railway traveling.

My name is Fleur Riller Lendemar and I live together with my boyfriend in Linköping, Sweden. I study a Bachelor's in Global studies at Linköping University and have received the prominent opportunity to attend Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität as an Erasmus exchange student. Here at LMU I aim to fulfill courses within the Department of Media and Communication Science (IfKW).

As a student with a desire to see a lot of the world, nonetheless the European countries, I am thankful for the freedom of railway traveling. Yes, it is more comfortable to hop on an airplane and go from A to B without further effort. The estimated time from Arlanda, Stockholm, to Franz-Joseph- Flughafen is 2.5 hours, which is much more time efficient compared to the three days it took for my green travel route. But with this report I hope to give you a glimpse of the enjoyment and freedom of refraining from fast paced airplane-traveling, and to reveal the unexpected pleasures you meet when choosing a more sustainable way of traveling.

## Travel Route

According to the Erasmus Distance Calculator there are **1173.04** km between Linköping University and the Hauptgebäude at Geschwister-Scholl Platz. Because of the distance, planning a route has to acknowledge risks and costs. In many cases, train- and bus tickets have reduced prices for students, which makes it possible to keep a manageable budget while traveling. Traveling between train- and bus stations means you will arrive in the city center close to your final destination, without having to worry about waiting for your luggage to arrive or finding the right train that takes you from the airport to the city.



*Green Travel Route from Linköping/Linköping University (Sweden) to München.  
Linköping-Jönköping, bus shuttle. Jönköping-Höllviken, Carpooling. Höllviken-Copenhagen,  
Carpooling. Copenhagen-Hamburg, Train. Hamburg-München, Train.*

The route begins in Linköping (white bus) 04.10.24 with a bus shuttle to Jönköping. Bus Shuttles are a priceworthy yet comfortable way of traveling for a few hours. The best part was driving along Vättern, Sweden's second largest lake, where I managed to match my ride with an extraordinary sunset. From Jönköping (red car nr. 1), me and my mother carpooled for three hours to Höllviken. This is my hometown and here is my family home. We stopped for two nights. On Sunday 06.10.24 me, my mother and my Grandmother carpooled to Copenhagen central station (red car nr. 2). Copenhagen is a beautiful city right out of a H. C. Hansen Fairy Tale, and across the central station you can spot *Tivoli*, Danmarks most famous amusement park. The train from Copenhagen (yellow train) was pleasant and I had a lot of time to digest the new adventure that with a pace of 300km/h was closing in on me.

After five hours on the train I have gone through the München-Travel book I got as a present from my boyfriend. I want to share some of my findings:

- No weißwurst after 12 o'clock
- Ludwig II and the Wittelsbach founded many of Bavaria's barock and rokoko architectural heritage
- Oktoberfest is actually in September
- BMW makes 2 million cars every year

With enriched knowledge about Bavaria (but a lot more to learn) I arrived in Hamburg where my connecting train (blue train) to München was waiting. The modern ICE train had almost no delay, and the bistro had all the snacks you could wish for. A pleasant coincidence was that I was seated next to a girl of my age that was from München. She saw my Bavarian book guide and started sharing her tips for coffee shops, second hand stores, traveldestinations, clubs and the instagram account "Rausgegangen". The instagram account shares weekly happenings in München and is the perfect guide for people who want to experience art exhibitions, stand up comedy, club openings and much more.

## Conclusion

Of course the lucky coincidence on the train can happen on an airplane as well, but there is something that makes me believe that choosing this style of traveling enlightens people of their surroundings and creates opportunities you didn't plan for or had expected.

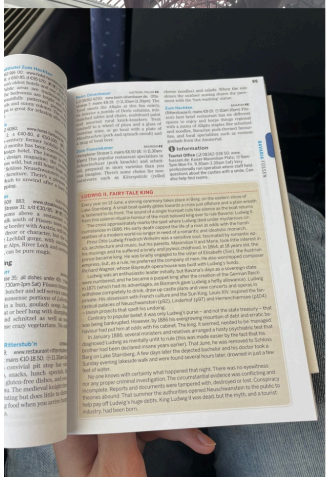
Traveling on your own has its challenges. I quickly understood that you can't be afraid to ask people for help. Managing all the luggage by yourself while buying food, placing your luggage on the train, looking for the right track without using your phone because your stroll with your luggage at the same time is hard to do all by yourselves. Don't be afraid to ask for help, it's astonishing how many people are there to assist solo travelers.



When I had said goodbye to my mother and grandmother in Copenhagen, I thought of the many things traveling via bus, carpooling and train gives you. Carpooling means you can pick up your best people, sing to your favorite songs or listen to your favorite podcast. You can also freely decide when to take a break and let the highway be your smorgasbord of lunch opportunities. Carpooling is a perfect setting for long talks and catch-up conversations, good food and nice views.



Traveling via train also has its many benefits: Space, greenery surroundings and a lively people-watching scene. I am a big fan of grand central stations, and as illustrated in the romcom *Love actually*, seeing people greeting each other, hugging, kissing and waving farewell is humbling to watch in a world where people nowadays look more at their screens than at each other. There is something captivating watching people getting on a train, stressed runners trying to catch the last one, sun-kissed backpackers discussing their next destination and regular commuters rolling their eyes about the whole situation.



And last but not least, when you have found your seat on the bus or train, and you forget about the *Love Actually*-scene and the humbling feeling you just had, you can always pick up your phone and use the internet access bus-, car- and railway traveling provides you with.