

# Sustainability claims & *"Greenwashing"* in aviation

Air Transport Towards 2050  
Rome, Italy

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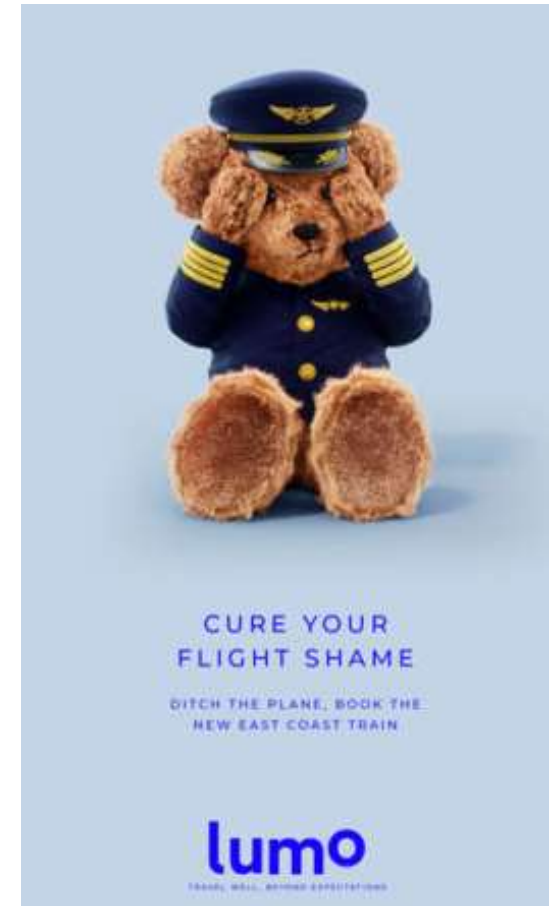
# Trends | Let's Go Green

## Influences

- Governments: international & EU decarbonisation measures
  - EU 'Fit For 55' package: RefuelEU (SAF) & EU ETS
  - ICAO: Carbon Offsetting & Reduction Scheme for Int'l Aviation (CORSIA)
- Consumers: more conscious, demand for greener options
- Airlines: more focus on "Environmental, social and Governance" (ESG) policies and "environmental footprint"

## Aviation specifically targeted:

- Influence of **public opinion** and **reverse greenwashing**
- Under scrutiny from **local authorities**
- Increase in climate litigation cases
  - Everything you say can and will be used against you



# Examples



*"All you have to do is drop your plastic bottles in any of the pods and scan the QR code next to them to earn Etihad Guest Miles and help make a difference to the planet."*

## NL Authority Consumers & Markets:

*'Fly greener to [...]' or claiming that offsetting emissions leads to sustainable flights gives consumers wrong impression.*



# Examples



## UK Advertising Standards Authority:

*"Many of these initiatives [are] targeted to deliver results only years or decades into the future."*

*We also understood that there were **currently no environmental initiatives or commercially viable technologies in the aviation industry***

*which would **substantiate the absolute green claim***

- *'**protecting its future**'*
- *'**sustainable aviation**'*

*as we considered consumers would interpret it in this context."*



**Etihad Airways**  
Sponsored

We understand the impact that flying has on the environment. That's why we're taking a louder, bolder approach to sustainable aviation.

# Airline Greenwashing Bingo

**Our airline is committed to sustainability because...**

We've bought new aircraft with lower emissions	We've signed a SAF offtake agreement	We offer recycled coffee cups on board	We have the lowest emissions of any airline
We're offering recycled tote bags to our passengers	Our emissions intensity is going down	We're enabling guilt-free flying	We're turning waste into fuel
We've done a trial flight using SAF	We're electrifying all our ground vehicles	We're reducing our emissions	We've signed up to Net Zero by 2050
We've invested in research into hydrogen aircraft	We give our passengers the option of offsetting their flights	We got rid of our printed magazines to save weight and fuel	Our emissions per passenger are lower than our competitors



# Dilemma for aviation

- Aviation is not a sustainable activity; flying is harmful to the environment
  - “Advertisements promote more flying instead of less” = more pollution
- Promotion of currently available measures has limited effect on sustainability (for now)
  - **Carbon offsetting** is increasingly criticised
  - **Sustainable Aviation Fuel** – how sustainable is it? Only small percentage, scaling up is a slow process
  - **Zero emissions technology** (hydrogen/electric) is still in its infancy
- At the same time:
  - Necessary to show commitment to sustainability => “License to operate”
  - Profits and funds are needed to finance the **sustainability transition** of aviation.

Does ‘green’ advertising ‘manipulate’ the ‘average consumer’ to fly more?

food for  
thought