

USER NOTE

Funded User Travel Regulations

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*K. Baranasic, S. Bertini, T. Kobaidze, H. Shie,
and S. Petter
for the User Office
at European XFEL*

Revisions

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Abstract

This document describes the travel regulations for funded users who will come to do beamtime experiments at the European X-Ray Free-Electron Laser Facility (European XFEL).

For communication, approvals, and provision of services in the context of this note, European XFEL is represented by the User Office and the Travel Office of the facility (useroffice@xfel.eu).

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1 General rules

Before Funded Users start travelling to the European XFEL, they must read and follow the procedures and rules set out by European XFEL in order to be able to receive reimbursement for their travel expenses.

1.1 Funded User

In the framework of a scheduled experiment proposal that has been peer-reviewed and accepted by European XFEL, a Funded User is an experiment participant proposed by the Main Proposer for travel funding by European XFEL following the present rules.

1.2 Eligibility and number of Funded Users per proposal

Up to six users can be funded per proposal, selected among users affiliated with institutions located in shareholder and associate countries of European XFEL. The date of signature of the *Convention concerning the Construction and Operation of the European X-Ray Free-Electron Laser Facility* marks the start of user funding eligibility. Revisions in the number of Funded Users per proposal may be possible for budgetary reasons in future or for specific experiments at any time (e.g. screening).

Users affiliated to organizations in the Hamburg/Schenefeld area are *not* eligible for funding.

Under some specific conditions, shipping funding can be provided instead of travel funding for an eligible experiment participant. The relevant rules are available on the European XFEL user website¹.

1.3 Visits to the European XFEL combining different purposes

If a Funded User's participation in an experiment is combined with a longer invited visit for business-related purposes with one of the groups of European XFEL, travel costs will be covered by the budget of the latter following the rules established by European XFEL. If a Funded User will stay longer than the experiment duration, the person responsible for the European XFEL budget funding the extension must inform European XFEL in writing prior to the trip in order to share the travel costs and cover extra costs caused by the longer stay. Extended stays involve a different and more complex procedure than normal stays. In case of an extended stay or complex travel planning, it is recommended to approach European XFEL well in advance.

1.4 Assistance to Funded Users

It is the responsibility of Main Proposers to submit requests for assistance for eligible members of the experiment team following the European XFEL funding rules via the online Arrival Form (A-form) in the User Portal to European XFEL (UPEX)² at least five weeks before the start of the experiment.

Funded Users are strongly encouraged to request assistance from European XFEL for their travel/accommodation arrangements related to an experiment

¹ https://www.xfel.eu/users/user_guide/shipping (see bottom of webpage)

² <https://in.xfel.eu/upex>

through their Personal Arrival Form (PAF) in UPEX³. The submission of this form is mandatory for requesting reservations at the Guest House by any experiment participant (including non-Funded Users). Even if travel and accommodation are organized by European XFEL, all Funded Users **must** submit a reimbursement request (see Section 3.3, “Travel reimbursement below). Among other things, this will also enable the disbursement of daily allowances.

The above-mentioned assistance to Funded Users by European XFEL will include travel arrangements, which generally cover reservation of accommodations, airfare bookings, and the provision of supporting documents for German entry visa applications. Train booking should be self-arranged by the Funded User unless otherwise decided by European XFEL. The reimbursement of rental car costs is subject to specific conditions and prior approval by European XFEL (see Section 2, “Reimbursable expenses”).

1.5 Self-booking by Funded Users

Funded Users self-book their travel itineraries only after prior approval by European XFEL. In such cases, the reimbursement can be made only if the invoices are issued to European XFEL, especially for hotel and rental car (only if previously approved).

The invoice address is as follows:

European X-Ray Free-Electron Laser Facility GmbH
Holzoppel 4
22869 Schenefeld
Germany

Scanned original receipts and invoices must be submitted to European XFEL along with the travel reimbursement request via email at invoice@xfel.eu.

³ https://www.xfel.eu/users/user_guide/registration/index_eng.html

CAUTION: All parts of the receipts and invoices need to be scanned, including the back page, unless the page is blank.

All users (regardless of whether they are funded or not) shall immediately inform European XFEL in writing (preferably by email) if, for any reason, their trip/stay has to be cancelled or modified. No-show charges or late cancellations fees may apply with regards to e.g. the accommodation costs at the European XFEL Guest House or hotels. For the European XFEL Guest House case, the cancellation terms are communicated in the reservation confirmation.

In case a beamtime cancellation is made on behalf of the experiment group, European XFEL cannot guarantee alternative beamtime slots. In particular, no refund will be given for costs already incurred by users independent of their eligibility. If costs are already incurred by European XFEL due to cancellation by a Funded User, a refund request will be sent to the respective user for refund purposes; exceptions will be made for properly documented medical reasons.

In case an experiment is cancelled by European XFEL, the facility will try to find a new date for the experiment on a best-effort basis. If the travel bookings have already been self-made by the experiment participants before the cancellation, only Funded Users are entitled to a partial or total refund of travel costs that are effectively incurred. In case a new experiment date can be found, the costs for re-booking the airfare or train fare for up to six Funded Users per group can also be covered by European XFEL.

Users from the private research sector participating in a peer-reviewed non-proprietary proposal experiment can be funded if eligible with respect to their country of affiliation, within the limit of the number of users per experiment, as stated above. Industrial users carrying out proprietary research experiments (charged for use of beamtime purchased from European XFEL, with no commitment to strive to publish results) will not be funded by European XFEL under the scheme described in this document. Besides, no travel funding by European XFEL is possible for User Consortium Priority Access experiment participants.

2 Reimbursable expenses

This section is applicable only if the requirements of the travel funding for Funded Users are fulfilled.

Depending on the need of the experiment, deviation from approved start and end dates for travel arrangements and accommodation can be granted subject to European XFEL approval. A total of four additional days before/after beamtime per each Funded User can be proposed.

Scanned original receipts and invoices must be submitted to European XFEL along with the travel reimbursement request (currently, the completed and signed Visitor Allowance form) only via e-mail at invoice@xfel.eu.

CAUTION: All parts of the receipts and invoices need to be scanned, including the back page, unless the page is blank.

2.1 Subsistence costs (daily allowance)

Each Funded User will receive a daily allowance of 30 € per day (including travel days), up to the maximum number of days of the approved beamtime schedule (from preparations until follow-up).

No daily allowance is paid for extended stay due to private reasons.

European XFEL does *not* reimburse Funded Users' individual meals based on actual costs per receipt.

European XFEL will pay out the daily allowance per bank transfer in euro (€) to Funded Users after they submit their travel reimbursement requests. This means Funded Users have to pay their subsistence costs first.

2.2 Accommodation

In general, European XFEL will reserve a certain contingency of rooms at the European XFEL Guest House on site or at a hotel nearby for each scheduled experiment, but the rooms will be booked for Users only after submission of the Personal Arrival Form in the User Portal of European XFEL (UPEX). The same applies for Funded Users as soon as their travel funding is approved by European XFEL for the number of nights of the approved beamtime schedule (with some flexibility concerning preparations and experiment follow-up, as described in Section 3, “User travel arrangements”). Priority is given to Funded Users if room availability is limited with respect to non-funded users, other guests, or visitors.

No funding is granted for extended stays due to private purposes.

Only if there is no availability at the European XFEL Guest House, European XFEL will select a hotel in the Hamburg/Schenefeld area, based on the most economical nightly rate and easy connection for time saving with regard to transportation.

European XFEL pays the accommodations of the Funded Users without breakfasts.

Only in exceptional cases and after prior approval by European XFEL, the Funded Users can self-book their hotel accommodations. In such cases, the maximum reimbursable limit is subject to a decision by European XFEL, in general not more than a maximum 100 € per night and without breakfast. The same given maximum limit shall apply if the accommodation is booked with compulsory breakfast. If self-booking is allowed by European XFEL, the Funded Users can get reimbursed only if the accommodation invoice is issued to European XFEL (see Section 1.5, “Self-booking by Funded Users”, for the detailed invoice address).

Funded Users staying at private residences will receive a lump sum of 20 € per night, without receipt.

2.3 Travel expenses

European XFEL reimburses the most economic or cheapest way of transportation. Travel expenses for Funded Users are covered for the journeys from home to the European XFEL premises and back, at a maximum for the time within the approved experiment period. These journeys can be between home and the closest airport or closest train/bus station in the home city (in Germany or abroad) in order to travel to Hamburg/Schenefeld, in Hamburg/Schenefeld between Hamburg Airport, or the closest train/bus stations to the European XFEL premises, and between the place of accommodation to the European XFEL premises and back.

Major deviation of travel dates from the start and end dates of the approved experiment requires justification and prior approval by European XFEL.

The following subsections describe the scope and limit of the cost items, which are covered by European XFEL for Funded Users.

2.3.1 Airfare

European XFEL covers *economy-class* airline tickets only. The reservations and reimbursement are based on the cheapest available fare. Deviation from this policy is possible only with prior approval by European XFEL. The European XFEL Travel Office will book the airfare for Funded Users through the contracted travel agency as soon as their travel funding as indicated in the Arrival Form (A-form) is approved, at a maximum for the period of the approved beamtime schedule. Depending on the needs of the experiment, deviation from the previously approved start and end dates can be granted, subject to approval by European XFEL (see the general information at the beginning of this chapter).

The use of air transport for inland travel is justified only if *one* of the following is true:

- If the price of a plane ticket is more economical than other means of transport and either flying reduces the travel time by one business day or traveling by train will take more than six hours each way.

- The cost-effectiveness can be demonstrated by other financial considerations (e.g. cost savings compared to alternative means of transport or avoidance of additional daily and overnight allowances). A comparative calculation can be prepared by the contracted travel agency.

If a private stay/extension is included, European XFEL covers only up to the maximum price of the airfare for the period of the approved beamtime schedule (including preparation and/or follow-up). A price comparison must be provided to European XFEL.

Only in exceptional cases and after prior approval by European XFEL can Funded Users self-book their airfare within the allowed limits.

2.3.2 Train fare

European XFEL covers *second-class* train tickets only. Funded Users should self-book their train trips as soon as their travel funding is approved by European XFEL, at a maximum for the period of the approved beamtime schedule (including preparation and/or follow-up), following the travel dates stated in their Personal Arrival Form (PAF). In general, a regular fare is the maximum allowed. Booking of the next available class is permitted only with prior approval by European XFEL.

If a private stay/extension is included, European XFEL covers only the maximum price of the train fare for the period of the approved beamtime schedule (including preparation and/or follow-up). A price comparison must be provided to European XFEL by the Funded User.

BahnCard reimbursement

European XFEL does *not* subsidize BahnCard purchases. However, when self-booking the train tickets, Funded Users are encouraged to use their BahnCard from the German railway company or any other train membership card or similar discount card from other railway companies in the Shareholders' countries in order to obtain a reduced train fare for cost savings. The card details will be requested if, in exceptional cases, European XFEL does the train booking for the Funded Users.

2.3.3 Private car or rental car

Use of a private car or a rental car is only eligible for reimbursement with *prior written justification*, including a detailed explanation, and must be approved by European XFEL *in advance*.

If a private car is used, the car mileage is reimbursed at 0.20 € per driven km, without damage coverage.

For exceptional cases, if a private car is needed for transportation of heavy or sensitive experiment equipment from inland or abroad, provided European XFEL has approved the use, a car mileage of 0.20 € per km, without limit for the total driven km and without damage coverage, is reimbursable, but not more than the equivalent train fare or airfare for a similar trip. The incurred toll fees and parking fees will also be reimbursed. A price comparison of the equivalent train fare or airfare for a similar trip, including the associated expenses, must be provided *before the trip* to European XFEL for approval.

If a private car is used, it is recommended that the Funded Users clarify and obtain approval from their home institute concerning the insurance coverage (damage and liabilities) as well as safety and security aspects due to transportation of sensitive equipment, chemicals, and hazardous materials prior to the trip. Funded Users are responsible for the provision of the delivery note and the transportation documents accompanying the equipment being transported from the home country to Germany and back as well as for the import/export procedures, in particular with respect to customs. The same recommendation applies if a rental car is used. All consumables and materials to be brought on site need *prior approval* by European XFEL in the framework of a proposal.

If the use of a rental car has been previously approved, European XFEL covers the actual cost of a compact, intermediate, or standard rental car, including gasoline for a round trip, for the portion of the trip that is for official business. In general, the reimbursable amount is not more than the equivalent train fare or airfare for a similar trip, unless otherwise decided by European XFEL after reviewing the rental car need. There is no reimbursement for extra expenses due to usage on site.

After confirmation of *approval* by European XFEL, the Funded Users may self-book the rental car within the allowed limit and can get reimbursed only if the rental car invoice is issued to European XFEL (see Section 1.5, “Self-booking by Funded Users”, for the detailed invoice address).

Using a rental car for commuting from the accommodation venue to European XFEL and back is not a valid justification for rental car reimbursement. Only if the accommodation is arranged by European XFEL outside of the premises, the commuting distance from accommodation venue to and from European XFEL can be reimbursed at 0.20 €/km.

2.3.4 Local transport

European XFEL covers local transportation expenses in second/economy class (i.e. metro, bus, or tram/train tickets in the departure city/country and in Hamburg/Schenefeld) for travel days.

European XFEL reimburses the costs of HVV tickets (Hamburger Verkehrsverbund, the network of local public transportation companies) up to the maximum amount of a daily ticket fare for local transports in Hamburg/Schenefeld, typically on arrival and departure dates of the period of the approved beamtime schedule (including preparation until follow-up). The current applicable rates of the metropolitan Hamburg public transport system (including Rings A–B or Rings 1–2) can be viewed here:

<https://www.hvv.de/en/tickets/single-day-tickets>

2.3.5 Taxi

Generally, the use of collective public transport is encouraged. However, European XFEL can cover taxi expenses in the departure, origin city, country, and/or Hamburg/Schenefeld only after acceptance of a justification.

Reimbursement can be made only if the taxi receipt is provided in its original form and shows the start time of the taxi ride.

Use of taxi is justified in these cases:

- Taxi is needed for the travel between 23:00 and 06:00.

- Carrying bulky/heavy luggage (i.e. more than 25 kg) for experiment needs
- Health reasons (in this case, a medical certificate has to be provided to validate the justification, upon request)

Carpooling or taxi sharing during the operating hours of public transportation is not a valid justification.

The justification is subject to assessment and approval and requests for reimbursement of costs may be rejected if provided documentation is not sufficient.

2.3.6 Other travel-related expenses

All other travel-related expenses associated with booking of travel itineraries for a business trip to conduct a beamtime experiment at the European XFEL are subject to justification and approval by European XFEL. They can be reimbursed only if the original invoice/receipt is provided. A scanned original receipt in online form is acceptable.

If the other travel-related expenses exceed 250 € (gross), an invoice issued to European XFEL must be provided (see Section 1.5, “Self-booking by Funded Users”, for the detailed invoice address).

Examples of other travel-related expenses:

- Extra seat reservation during a long-distance flight with a minimum of five hours duration in one straight flight (i.e. long legroom seat), provided there is a written justification due to either health reasons (supported by the required medical certificate) or business purposes.
- Seat reservation fee for train ticket.
- Service charges for airfare or train fare bookings.
- Check-in baggage fee.
- Extra fee for bulky business luggage for transportation of experiment equipment, samples, and/or materials, provided there is a written justification. Approval must be obtained from European XFEL *before the trip*. Note that shipping costs for materials, equipment, and samples are not covered by European XFEL, unless otherwise approved for funding

following specific conditions (see Section 1.2, “Eligibility and number of Funded Users per proposal”).

- Storage fees for luggage.
- Credit card charges if used for paying travel-related expenses.
- Foreign currency exchange fee, proportional to the amount used for paying travel expenses (not for meals or subsistence expenses).
- Entry visa processing fees (e.g. photograph, consular fee, entry visa handling fee, or service charges) only if the onsite visit takes place.
- Parking fee at the airport is reimbursable up to a maximum of 15 € per day, unless it is proven to be cheaper than taking a taxi, if taking a taxi would have been inevitable.

A documented explanation should be given for any unusual expenses not listed above (in exceptional case and to be agreed by European XFEL).

Approval of full reimbursement is contingent upon meeting the guidelines and limitations established in this document.

There are some expenses that are *not* covered by European XFEL.

Examples for non-reimbursable expenses:

- Internet access is available on the European XFEL premises in all areas. No additional internet access fee will be reimbursed (e.g. in a hotel).
- Fines and losses of personal belongings.
- Travel equipment (for example, luggage or bags).
- Tips.
- Daily newspapers, gifts, hotel index, city maps, or topographic maps.
- Travel insurances (e.g. additional travel accident insurance, travel cancellation insurance, travel liability insurance, air accident insurance, or overseas medical insurance).
- Replacement, repair, or cleaning of travel amenities or clothes.
- Expenses for credit cards (annual fee).

- Expenses for foreign currency exchange used for paying for meals or subsistence needs.
- Medical or medicine costs.

2.3.7 **Insurance: Health, accident, and private third-party liability**

It is mandatory that all users have medical and accident insurance coverage during their visit to European XFEL. This has to be arranged *before* the travel. For users affiliated with EU countries, it is recommended to get a blue-and-white European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) or, for longer periods of “posting”, to obtain an “S1” certificate from the respective national health care provider to ensure full access to medical services in Germany.

It is recommended that all users have *private third-party liability insurance* during their stay in Hamburg/Schenefeld. Seeking advice by a personal insurance advisor in the country of origin for this purpose is recommended.

 **CAUTION:** Private third-party liability insurance does not cover damages caused in our facility.

Further details concerning insurance coverage, premium rates, and registration procedures can be obtained by emailing useroffice@xfel.eu.

Users must check with their employers about rules and specific requests for travelling and participating in experiments at the European XFEL.

3 User travel arrangements

This section describes the procedures and requirements for Funded Users to arrange their beamtime experiment trips to European XFEL and claim the expenses that are incurred during their trips.

3.1 Travel funding request

In order to qualify for travel funding, the following requirements must be fulfilled:

- Beamtime proposal is accepted and beamtime is scheduled.
- Travel funding for eligible users is requested by the Main Proposer via the online A-form in UPEX up to five *weeks before the start of the experiment*.
- An individual Personal Arrival Form (PAF) is submitted by the nominated Funded User in UPEX *no later than 10 days prior the trip*

European XFEL checks the eligibility and decides on the approval of travel funding for the Funded Users according to the date of entry and the availability of funding. This is also a basis for matters relevant to entry visas, if applicable.

3.2 Travel bookings

In principle, European XFEL supports the arrangement of Funded User trips, for services detailed in Section 2, “Reimbursable expenses”.

This section is applicable only if the requirements of the travel funding are fulfilled.

3.2.1 Accommodation reservation and booking

European XFEL provides support for reservation and booking of accommodation following the scope and limit set out in Section 2.2, “Accommodation”.

Reservations of rooms for non-Funded Users are invoiced directly to the respective users. Accommodation bookings for Funded Users are invoiced to and settled directly by European XFEL.

3.2.2 Airfare booking

European XFEL provides support for the reservation and booking of airfare following the scope and limitations set out in Section 2.3.1, “Airfare”.

Airfare bookings for all Funded Users are made by European XFEL, any exceptions must be previously agreed in writing by European XFEL.

Airfare bookings for Funded Users are invoiced to and settled directly by European XFEL.

3.2.3 Train fare booking

European XFEL encourages self-booking of train fare following the scope and limits set out in Section 2.3.2, “Train fare”. For booking of train fare via the German railway company *Deutsche Bahn*, an invoice for the paid train fare must be provided when claiming the costs.

3.2.4 Rental car

Reimbursement of rental car costs is subject to prior approval by European XFEL and needs valid justification. Generally, European XFEL does not provide support for the reservation and booking of rental cars. Scope and limits of the reimbursement are set out in Section 2.3.3, “Private car or rental car”.

3.3 Travel reimbursement

This section describes the procedures, that Funded Users can use to claim reimbursement for the incurred travel costs related to their beamtime at European XFEL.

This section is applicable only if the requirements of the travel funding request and travel bookings are fulfilled (see Sections 3.1, “Travel funding request”, and 3.2, “Travel bookings”).

3.3.1 Submission of the reimbursement request

After the trip takes place, reimbursement is made for the expenses that were not pre-paid by European XFEL. The settlement is made as soon as possible by European XFEL, provided that all the relevant receipts/invoices, required justifications, bank data for payment purpose, etc. are available and conform to the applicable funded user travel regulations.


All reimbursements are settled and paid by bank transfer in euro (€), provided that full bank details have been supplied by the Funded Users. European XFEL is responsible for any bank charges incurred in relation to such transfers.

Cash payment is *not* possible.

To qualify to receive funding for a user trip, the following requirements must be fulfilled:

- Beamtime proposal is accepted.
- Beamtime is scheduled.
- Request for travel funding is submitted and approved by European XFEL, based on eligibility conditions and limits and funding availability.
- All check-out procedures at European XFEL are completed (e.g. transponder is returned).
- Completed and signed Visitor Allowance form is submitted by each Funded User to European XFEL electronically at invoice@xfel.eu **no later**


than three months after the visit. Claims sent back after this time limit will not be processed.

 **CAUTION:** Due to year-end closing, claims for reimbursement of Funded User trips completed in the previous year must be sent at the latest by the end of January the following year.

- No acceptance of collective invoices/receipts. Each user must submit their own invoices/receipts.
- All relevant receipts, requested data, or needed justifications must be provided along with the claim, especially for self-paid invoices/receipts (e.g. hotel invoice, train fare, rental car, local transport tickets, and boarding passes).
- If car mileage is claimed, a PDF printout of Google Maps indicating the claimed distance must be sent with the claim.
- If foreign currencies are used, the European XFEL-approved online currency converter (www.oanda.com) should be used. Conversion is made on the date of payment.

3.3.2 **Attaching documents (invoices/receipts) and sending the claim to European XFEL**

The personalized European XFEL Visitor Allowance form shall be used by Funded Users for claiming reimbursement. **All relevant receipts/invoices per scanned copy** must be sent to European XFEL (see above) at the same time as an attachment to the completed and signed Visitor Allowance form.

 **CAUTION:** All parts of the receipts and invoices need to be scanned, including the back page, unless the page is blank.

Subsequent claims of travel reimbursement for an already settled trip by Funded Users shall be avoided as much as possible and may not be accepted.

In case any subsequent request is submitted, the respective Funded User must indicate and inform European XFEL *in advance* and provide justification why there will be a subsequent claim.

If a subsequent claim is approved by European XFEL, the deadline for such a claim is **no later than three months** after the last day of the eligible

beamtime stay of the claimed trip. Subsequent claims sent back after this time limit will not be processed. The claim shall be submitted following the procedures set out in Section 3.3.1, “Submission of the reimbursement request”.

4 Other related matters for Funded Users

4.1 Support for the German entry visa process

If an eligible and approved user (including a non-Funded User) needs to apply for a German entry visa, he or she must contact European XFEL for information or supporting documents, at the latest immediately after the user group registration is submitted to allow enough processing time from the local/home authorities.

European XFEL will prepare the invitation/confirmation letter by European XFEL for the beamtime visit following the details provided in the accepted beamtime proposal by European XFEL. Invitations for visa purposes for all users, can be issued only for the dates of the stay related to the experiment.

The process of acquiring a German entry visa is the responsibility of the respective eligible and approved user, if needed.

Assistance is provided only for eligible and approved users, not for spouses, partners, family, or relatives traveling together for private reasons.

The associated costs for acquiring the German entry visa for Funded Users are reimbursable if receipts are provided. (For details, see Section 2.3.6, “Other travel-related expenses”). European XFEL does *not* cover the costs in case the reason for the cancellation of pre-booked air or train tickets and accommodation is due to a visa missing or is not requested and obtained in time from the German authorities after the invitation for beamtime has been sent. In this case, European XFEL may request a refund of advanced payments regarding travel and accommodation done by European XFEL for the cancelled trip. The invoice will be sent to the organization of the user.

4.2 Combination with a private stay

Funded Users are allowed to combine personal and business travel as long as the Funded Users are responsible for all paid costs over and above the expenses incurred during the time period of and related to the approved European XFEL beamtime stay. If a private stay is planned, the funded Users must inform European XFEL *in advance* when planning to combine the trip with a private stay. Accommodation, travel expenses and daily allowance are only paid for the beamtime-related period approved by the European XFEL. Therefore, a comparison of air or train fares, as if there were no private-related extension, must be provided and properly documented in advance.

Private-related stay shall be arranged by the Funded Users themselves.

4.3 Travel of another person related to the Funded User

Another person related to the Funded User can be the spouse, family member, or another person who accompanies the Funded User.

European XFEL does not pre-finance or reimburse the travel expenses of the other person related to the Funded User.