



Policy on human and wildlife trafficking

May 2021

Policy on human and wildlife trafficking and smuggling

Royal Schiphol Group (RSG) aims to operate the most sustainable airports in the world. Sustainability is a key competence of our organisation, which conducts its operations in a socially responsible manner. Sustainability is crucial to both our future resilience and our day-to-day business operations. Our responsibility goes beyond our own activities. RSG contributes to the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#) and has developed the Most Sustainable Airports roadmap to achieve its sustainability objectives. RSG is committed to fighting human and wildlife trafficking and smuggling by collaborating with sector partners and Airports Council International, and by setting up supply chain management to combat illegal trade.

Since aircraft are frequently used as a method of transport by traffickers, airlines and airports are ideally positioned to help combat human and wildlife trafficking and smuggling by training staff to recognise and deal with trafficking situations, raising awareness by providing information to the public and through partnerships in the supply chain.

The aviation industry can contribute to Sustainable Development Goals 3 (Good health and well-being), 5 (Gender Equality), 8 (Decent work and economic growth), 14 (Life below water), 15 (Life on land), 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions) and 17 (Partnerships for the goals) by adopting business practices that limit the opportunities for humans and wildlife to be trafficked and/or smuggled through supply chains.

“Unfortunately, the aviation sector sometimes plays an unwitting role in human trafficking and the illegal trade in protected fauna and flora. As one of the world’s largest aviation hubs, we can and will work to prevent and fight this problem”

Dick Benschop, CEO and President of Royal Schiphol Group

Human trafficking and smuggling

Human trafficking is the transportation and coercion of people into prostitution, crime and domestic servitude or forced labour, usually following recruitment with false promises of paid work. Trafficking in persons is a form of modern slavery. The trafficked persons are often not aware that they are being trafficked. Women from e.g. Colombia travel to Europe believing that marrying a European man will give them a better life. Upon arrival at their destination, these women are often forced to work in prostitution.

Human smuggling is the illegal transportation of people across borders. Smugglers make a profit from this activity. For example, some people want to move to the Western world, hoping for a better future. They pay the smugglers and are fully aware that they will travel illegally, with illegal travel documents. These people often receive other travel documents in the transit lounge of a large airport. And sometimes, the promised transfer to another country is cancelled and the people don’t know what to do next. If they are in debt to the smuggler, they can easily be coerced into prostitution, crime or forced labour to pay off their debts.

At Dutch airports, most victims are not aware that they have been trafficked. That makes it hard to recognise trafficking straight away, but airport employees could report suspicious situations. Travellers waiting in transit lounges for a long time, lost travel documents, or people who don’t seem to know who they are travelling with or who have organised their trip themselves could be indicators of trafficking or smuggling. These reports from employees form part of the evidence needed to solve cases.

There are three international protocols that are key in combatting human trafficking and smuggling:

- the Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime;
- the Council of Europe Convention on Action against trafficking in human beings;
- the European directive 2011/36/EU on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims.

International organisations like [Airports Council World](#), [IATA](#) and [ICAO](#) provide handbooks and courses to increase awareness in order to combat human trafficking and smuggling in the aviation sector.

Wildlife trafficking

Wildlife trafficking is the illegal trade in protected wild animal and plant species, either threatened with extinction or not threatened, but managed in order to avoid utilisation incompatible with their survival. Wildlife conservation is a shared responsibility.

International airports are often transit points for trafficked wildlife and wildlife products moving between source and demand regions in the Americas, Africa, and Asia. Like other countries, The Netherlands acts as a hub connecting Africa and the Americas to Asia and other European destinations. Amsterdam Airport Schiphol is the primary international airport in the Netherlands. Seizures at Dutch airports have included trafficked mammals, marine products, birds, reptiles and rhino horns.

RSG denounces the illegal trade in wildlife and aims to reduce and prevent such activity. RSG is a signatory of the [Buckingham Palace Declaration](#) and follows a zero tolerance approach. The Buckingham Palace Declaration is a landmark agreement committed to taking real steps to shut down the routes exploited by traffickers in the illegal wildlife trade. As a signatory of the Buckingham Palace Declaration on wildlife trafficking, RSG's responsibility extends beyond its own activities.

RSG has been a member of the [Airports Council International World Wildlife Trafficking Task Force](#) since 2017. Jointly with the Task Force members, we collaborate with our partners in the chain and other parties in the aviation industry like [IATA](#) and the [USAID Reducing Opportunities for Unlawful Transport of Endangered Species \(ROUTES\) Partnership](#) to tackle this trade. Customs shares data with ROUTES on a yearly basis and RSG is working as an intermediary, translating the (public) information from ROUTES to our business, network, roles and responsibilities.

RSG activities

RSG will focus on educating employees, improving awareness, monitoring and reporting, and collaborating with partners to better recognise signals and to facilitate the fight against human and wildlife trafficking and smuggling. The airports will develop an approach to execute the RSG policy.

Educating employees

It is vital that employees stay alert to signals of human and wildlife trafficking. RSG offers information and training to improve awareness among staff so that they can recognise suspected trafficking situations. This training includes Aviation Community Schiphol (LCS) courses and information provided by ACI World and IATA. Although RSG employees are often not in the first line of defence in the supply chain, they may be in close contact with business partners who are. Therefore, it is important that RSG employees know about the topic and can recognise suspected trafficking situations.

Increasing awareness

RSG increases public awareness in public areas and terminals by strategically placing awareness campaign posters to inform customers.

Monitoring and reporting

It is everyone's responsibility – employees and customers – to report suspected cases of human trafficking to Royal Netherlands Marechaussee (+31 800 1814) and suspected cases of wildlife trafficking to the airport's emergency number (+3120 601 2222) so that staff can inform Dutch Customs.

All RSG staff members can call the Integrity Reporting line (+31 800 022) confidentially. RSG expects that the number of reported incidents will increase by raising awareness.

Collaborating with partners

As the airport operator, Royal Schiphol Group plays a facilitating role. It directs the activities at our airport locations and has indirect influence on the activities of third parties. Our ability to assume our social responsibility depends on close cooperation with our suppliers in the entire supply chain.

Royal Schiphol Group
Management Board
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