

Conference
Preventing sexual abuse of children
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Combating child sex tourism: The Dutch multiyear, multi-angle approach

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Summary

Protecting children

The Dutch government takes it as a fundamental assumption that all children must be protected from sexual violence. This includes children in other countries. This concern is magnified when Dutch nationals are involved. With the plan of action the Dutch government takes responsibility for its own citizens involved in sexual abuse of children across the Dutch border.

Creating barriers: prevention, repression and cooperation

It is essential to create as many barriers as possible to prevent Dutch nationals from travelling abroad for the purpose of subjecting children to sexual abuse. General preventive measures will not suffice here. Several different paths to prevent children from being abused by Dutch nationals abroad or to prosecute these individuals already exist. With this plan these measures are now being built on to tackle the problem of child sex tourism. In the next couple of years, the Dutch government and her public and private partners will strive to install these barriers:

Prevention

Best case scenario is that we prevent children from being abused. A measure that should make this possible is (among others) the screening of employees and volunteers within children's aid agencies through an International Certificate of Conduct. The Netherlands encourages NGOs, aid agencies, charitable institutions, schools and orphanages in other countries to require a Certificate of Conduct for their employees and volunteers in child sex tourism destination countries. Another preventive barrier is the long-term supervision of sex offenders. A bill is in the making that will regulate the long-term supervision of sex offenders. This bill will make it possible to place convicted child sex abusers under long-term supervision. A third step to prevent child sex tourism is the refusal to issue and revocation of passports. As and when necessary, a request will be submitted to include the personal details of a convicted paedophile considered at high risk of reoffending in the Passport Alert List. The Netherlands also participates in the SOMEK-project. The aim of this project is to make recommendations at a European level on exchanges of information regarding serious violent and sexual offenders, to

enable member states to optimise the supervision of these individuals to prevent repeat offending.

Investigation and prosecution

If the abuse already happened, the focus shifts from prevention to repression. A way to improve this reactive phase is improving availability of and access to information by the police and the Public Prosecution. Moreover, there are currently efforts underway to enhance information gathering from third parties such as NGOs and members of the public regarding alleged child sex tourists and improve the way this information is used. In addition, in 2014 there will be another campaign on national airports to combat child sex tourism and ways will be sought to link up with the European campaign against child sex tourism, under the slogan 'Don't look away'. The Dutch police regularly contact the local investigating authorities through the Liaison Officer (LO) and offer to help with the investigation and prosecution of the suspect concerned in the country where the offence was committed. The National Police will increasingly work with LOs who can be deployed flexibly, known as 'FILOs'. A last example of the reinforcement of investigation and prosecution is the creation of a handbook on combating child sex tourism. The handbook will chart best practices, among other things, and will be regularly updated and supplemented.

National and international cooperation

Given the transnational nature of child sex tourism and the numerous government agencies and NGOs involved in tackling it, effective cooperation between these parties is essential. To explore new forms of collaboration and expand existing ones (or to place them on a more permanent footing), a number of measures and paths will be included in this plan of action. This includes measures such as an enhanced cooperation with NGO's, judicial cooperation with child sex tourism destination countries, international master classes, the Interpol Specialist Group on Crimes Against Children (ISGCAC), Non-Anonymity project, active participation within international organisations and forums and a structural cooperation with the Royal Military and Border Police (KMar).

Useful links:

ECPAT: www.ecpat.nl

internet hotline: www.meldkinder5ekstoerisme.nl