



ECA
Piloting Safety

COMBATting HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN AVIATION

– ECA Position Paper –

BACKGROUND

Human trafficking (human trafficking, trafficking in persons - often abbreviated as TIP, or trafficking in human beings), despite being both a crime and a violation of human rights, is one of the most profitable and fastest growing black market businesses, and an important source of revenue for terrorism. It is a cross-border issue that is not restricted to large cities, but also affects smaller communities, rural areas and tourist areas.

Growing globalization, coupled with economic and social crisis, means that almost every country in the world has some sort of involvement in this type of “trade”, whether as country of origin, transit, or destination. Human trafficking takes a variety of forms, including sexual exploitation, forced labour, modern slavery, forced marriages, organ trafficking and exploitation for criminal acts.

According to the International Labour Organization, more than 70% of the cases identified today are related to women and young girls, and more than 25% are children.

When people are deliberately brought into exploitation, it is considered to be human trafficking. This is done through the threat or use of violence, fraud, deception, abuse of power or exploitation of helplessness. This may involve forcing people to travel, usually with legal papers which are taken from them in advance. National borders are often crossed legally.

After the initial journey, the victims continue to be blackmailed, exploited or influenced by the perpetrators. This is different from “people smuggling” which describes the cross-border journey in agreement with and under payment by the person concerned, and where contact with the smugglers ends at the destination country (UN, 2018).

Especially in the EU’s space free of border controls, known as the Schengen Area, travelling around and crossing national borders is simpler than in other parts of the world. These circumstances could facilitate the act of human trafficking and complicate its notification.

CONNECTION TO AVIATION

As a fast-growing transportation means, aviation is also increasingly being used for human trafficking. However, aviation’s unique nature presents many opportunities to identify and react to human trafficking, as passengers are kept under observation during the entire process, from check-in to passport control on arrival.

Therefore, the aviation transport sector in the EU is predestined for measures against human trafficking:

- Aviation personnel can be easily trained to recognize conspicuous behaviour and subsequently inform relevant authorities and trigger further response.
- The necessary cooperation between air and ground crew, national air traffic services and responsible authorities of different countries is simply to be implemented in the EU since collaboration already exists.

POSITION

The ECA encourages the European regulators and the European aviation industry to combat human trafficking in Europe.

Not only the moral principles, but also the fact that human trafficking finances the international terrorism lead ECA to conclude that the following measures should be taken to help combat human trafficking in aviation:

1. The introduction of flight crew, cabin crew and airport staff training modules¹ in recognizing human trafficking. Such training should include:
 - the early recognition of possible signs of human trafficking
 - appropriate actions to be taken
2. - familiarisation with industry publications on the subject.² The establishment by all European operators of a standardised procedure for crews to deal with potential victims and perpetrators as well as on suspect persons on board and on the ground.³
3. The introduction of a standardised European reporting chain and corresponding procedures for suspicious circumstances observed by the flight crew, relayed by the cockpit crew to the responsible authorities via air traffic control or the operator and in similarly from ground staff to the responsible authorities.
4. Whether crew members are willing to report an event of suspected human trafficking is largely dependent on the perceived risks associated with reporting. Therefore, the identity of crew members reporting suspected human trafficking should not be recorded.
5. The development of public European campaigns to raise passenger awareness of human trafficking and the possibility of reporting suspicious signs to airport staff and/or aircraft crews.

¹ Such as the ICAO free e-learning course:

<https://www.icao.int/Newsroom/Pages/Cabin-crew-to-be-better-equipped-to-prevent-human-trafficking.aspx>

² Such as ICAO Circular 352 Guidelines for Training Cabin Crew on Identifying and Responding to Trafficking in Persons:

<https://www.icao.int/safety/airnavigation/OPS/CabinSafety/Documents/Cir.352.alltext.en.pdf>

³ In accordance with the IATA Human Trafficking Guidelines, Annex 4 TIP Assessment Form:

<https://www.iata.org/contentassets/b24797c51f6a4b02a6b9036c49bc0b81/human-trafficking-guidelines-v1.pdf>

Sources:

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