



3.4 TUI Nordic: Combating Sexual Exploitation of Children

Description of Good Practice

TUI Nordic, one of the leading tour operators in Europe and part of World of TUI (TUI AG), recognising its responsibility towards the environment and the communities in which it operates, supports the work of ECPAT (see Box 1), a worldwide organisation combating the commercial sexual exploitation of children, by implementing ECPAT's Code of Conduct in its operations.

The Code of Conduct for tour operators in relation to the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) in travel and tourism was developed in 1998 by ECPAT, in collaboration with TUI Nordic and other stakeholders.

Signatories to the Code of Conduct commit themselves to:

- Include the aim of working against CSEC in their policy statements;
- Train staff on how to combat CSEC;
- Provide information about CSEC to customers;
- Put pressure on suppliers by including a clause against CSEC in their contracts (with hotels, for example);
- Provide information to key people and organisations by creating a network in destinations to raise awareness among local people; and
- Annually report the company's achievements to the Code Secretariat.

Implementation

TUI Nordic's actions to implement the code include:

- Official recognition in the company's responsible tourism development policy statement of the connection between tourism and CSEC, and of the company's support to ECPAT;
- Delivery of training modules to all staff, including background information on child abuse and exploitation, information on ECPAT and argument training (to respond to arguments that are frequently used to try to absolve tour operators of responsibility);
- Distribution of information to all customers through brochures, leaflets and the company web site; and
- Awareness-raising programmes for customers, during welcome meetings, and in hotel books and information leaflets in four pilot destinations (Brazil, Dominican Republic, India and Thailand). An in-flight video is shown to customers and a specific clause is included in hotel contracts.

The company's efforts are supported by five ambassadors, who have been trained by ECPAT/Sweden. These ambassadors were highly involved in launching TUI Nordic's policy statement. The company prepared its own training module, which became a required part of training for overseas staff. A free copy of the book *Rosario is Dead* by Swedish author Majgull Axelsson is also distributed to employees and is a compulsory part of the training session.

In pilot destinations, selected in collaboration with ECPAT, TUI Nordic works with hotel suppliers. In particular, a clause is included in all contracts with suppliers in pilot destinations explaining TUI Nordic's

Box 1: ECPAT

ECPAT (initially End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism and now End Child Prostitution and Trafficking in Children for Sexual Purposes) was founded in Thailand in the early 1990s, to respond to the sexual exploitation and trade of children. The group now has offices in 45 countries and addresses child exploitation worldwide. In 1996, a world congress in Stockholm brought together 122 countries that adopted a declaration and an agenda for action, which includes the responsibility of the tourism industry. In 2002/2003, ECPAT conducted a survey of 1,000 individuals about their knowledge and attitudes on CSEC, which showed high levels of awareness and indicated that people feel that CSEC has a strong connection to poverty and that the problem is most frequent in Asia and in Eastern Europe. For more information, see www.ecpat.org.

involvement in this issue and highlighting the fact that the company will immediately cancel any agreement or contract if abuse results from a hotel employee acting as an intermediary (see Box 2). Since the introduction of this clause, no contracts or agreements have been cancelled.

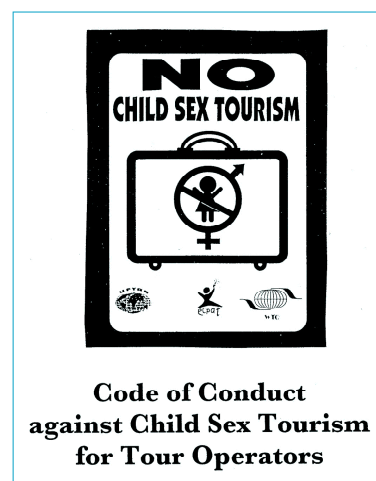
Co-operation with ECPAT and TUI Nordic's progress on this issue is continuously reported back to the organisation and to its customers, using brochures and internal news materials.

Benefits

ECPAT has reported that the number of pedophiles in Thailand is decreasing. However, this decrease comes at the expense of other countries, particularly in Central America, where ECPAT is only now getting more strongly involved.

TUI Nordic has seen a number of benefits from its involvement with the ECPAT tour operators' Code of Conduct, including:

- Increased credibility in its commitment to the development of responsible tourism;
- Increased customer interest in this commitment. A number of letters and comments from customers saying that they like the actions and commitment undertaken have been received;
- Appreciation from employees, who are proud that their company is addressing this topic; and
- Positive reactions from local suppliers and local communities.



TOUR OPERATORS' CODE OF CONDUCT
AGAINST SEX TOURISM

Comments

During the winter season 2002/03, a customer survey on attitudes towards the problem with CSEC was conducted in Phuket, Thailand, by a master's student, to compare levels of awareness among Scandinavian and non-Scandinavian tourists about the Code of Conduct. All the respondents knew about the CSEC problem, however only eight people (all Scandinavians) said they had been informed by their tour operator about CSEC and the tour operators' measures to combat the problem. The rest of the respondents, regardless of nationality, said they had received information about CSEC via the media.

The main challenge of this initiative was to take the first step, understand the problem and define TUI Nordic's role in the process. ECPAT/Sweden contributed greatly to this process. The enthusiasm of the company's employees was critical to the success of the programme, which has been widely implemented by tour operators throughout Europe and is compulsory for members of the Tour Operators' Initiative.

Box 2: Extract on Sexual Exploitation of Children from TUI Nordic's Hotel Contract

The commercial sexual exploitation of children is an increasing problem. Specifically, there is a growing problem with child prostitution in tourist destination countries. TUI Nordic recognises that the problem is linked with tourism, and our firm belief is that sexual exploitation of children is a fundamental abuse of a child's human rights and dignity. For this reason, TUI Nordic has decided to contribute to the task of tackling the problem and thus protecting children from sexual exploitation. A way for the tourist sector to achieve this is by promoting good practices and self-regulation. In this work, we recognise the influence we have as a major player in the tourist sector. Even if we have no reason at all to believe that this kind of abuse has been carried out in your hotel, hotels often are the scene of the abuse, whether we like it or not. For this reason, we urge you to support us in the campaign against this problem. We believe that, by staying vigilant and taking a few simple steps, you will ensure that neither your hotel – nor its good reputation – are compromised. We would also like to take the opportunity to inform you about our position if we learn that commercial child abuse has taken place at a hotel contracted by TUI Nordic. If the abuse has been a result of an employee at the hotel acting as intermediary, we will, with immediate effect, cancel any agreement or contract.