

Stockholm Congress Panel Report: Tourism and child prostitution

The panel on Tourism heard contributions from the Chairperson, Jacqueline de Rey, UFTAA (Monaco); Henryk Handszuh, Chief, Quality of Tourism Development, WTO; Patrick Hennesy, Director, DG23, European Commission (Brussels); Ejnar Söder, IHA (Sweden); Richard Smithies, IATA (Switzerland). The Rapporteur was Nicoll Chome, UFTAA (Monaco).¹

All panellists agreed that:

- in this instance, the issue dealt with is children in sex tourism. Most organizations from the travel and tourism industry are not willing to get involved in sexual tourism between adults.
- the travel industry has very often, and wrongly, been pointed at as a important factor in child sex tourism. It must be said that certain categories of travellers (and child sex offenders) are not travel agents' clients: paedophiles (who most of the time use their affinity clubs or circles to organize their travel); armed forces personnel stationed in foreign countries whose travel is organized by their administration; truckers' other offenders are local citizens, commuters, expatriates who do not use travel agents' services but other tourist facilities (hotels, transport...)

Other travellers – leisure tourists, businessmen, congress participants, individuals) will meet the following professionals of tourism in the framework of their travel:

- Outgoing travel agents
- Tourist office staff
- Air/train/cruise/road personnel
- Taxi drivers
- Hotel personnel (conciierge, reception, room maid..)
- Incoming travel agent staff
- Coach staff
- Guides.

Obviously, the degree of awareness of who the client really is, is totally different depending on the category of professional. Hotel concierges, receptionists, guides, taxi drivers are more likely to know a client's demands and actions than the outgoing travel agents.

From the presentation made by the five panellists, we can extract the following:

- For UFTAA, child abuse should be considered a crime. The tourism industry can and should use its influence to try and help put an end to the problem. A good number of travel agents' associations have already committed themselves in the fight against child sex tourism (Australia, France, New Zealand, Sweden et al.) There is no way tourism, a peace industry protecting human and natural environment, can be associated with child sex tourism.
- IHA passed a resolution (February 1995) tackling the subject of child sex tourism, made a survey among its members. Some national associations have already taken actions such as stickers with distinctive logos posted in hotel windows (Taiwan). Hoteliers do not plan to do more for the moment. IHA admits the issue is a touchy one for its sector, but shows a strong will to collaborate with the other partners in the travel and tourism industry.
- IATA supported the aims of the Congress and the actions being taken by governments and other international travel partners. Airlines were becoming more aware of the scope of the problem as a result of growing publicity. Exchange of information and practical ideas as to what can be done were important. It was only possible to find solutions together. IATA itself

has no power of enforcement but it can help by passing on information to its members and liaising with other tourism organizations. IATA will be presenting a resolution to its annual general meeting in November (1996) endorsing the positive action taken by industry to educate staff, inform passengers, cooperate with government agencies and establish guidelines covering advertising and doing business with tour operators and hotels.

- As far as the European Commission is concerned, attention was drawn to recent announcements by the commissioners concerned (Mr Papoutsis and Mrs Gradin) that appropriate initiatives would be taken in the autumn to help combat child sex tourism. The European Union (EU), through its various institutions, especially the European Parliament, had over recent years demonstrated its concern about the problem and, while police and judicial matters fell within the competence of the individual Member States of the Union, which in many cases had adopted very worthwhile measures, it should be possible also, through for example cooperation and support to the industry and to the NGOs concerned, to make significant progress. The need for effective execution of existing laws and for an integrated approach to the problem was essential.
- WTO made a statement in 1995 which is used as a basis for government work against organized sex tourism with a broader approach than the one taken in Stockholm that only deals with child sex tourism. "There would be no child sex tourism if there was no sex tourism." On the other hand, this organization stated that the importance of sexuality in tourism which, under no circumstances can be used to exploit others for prostitution purposes, cannot be denied. Laws clearly defining the responsibilities and sanctions imposed on the actors of the issue is requested by WTO.

Through a limited number of questions from the floor, it appears that:

- In some countries, flights full of male travellers whose sole purpose is to have child sex, are coming in without the aviation authorities trying to exercise any control (Brazil, for instance);
- Some participants insisted that lists of persons known as pederasts, sentenced for pederast action, should be remitted to police officers controlling the entry onto national territory in order to have them under special attention or to refuse such entry, instead of waiting for such persons to commit a 'crime' on the national territory.

In the light of the Declaration and Agenda for Action approved at the first World Congress, the workshops on tourism came to the same conclusions that are listed below and are focused on two central points: more information and training.

As a preamble, it must be stressed and re-emphasized that the tourism industry only deals with child sex tourism issues. Practical measures are proposed for each sector of tourism:

Airlines

1. Show short video clips during flights referring to the dangers of child sex tourism.
2. Have short messages or slogans on air tickets (eg CHILD SEX: NO)

Airports

3. Have posters or photographs with strong messages in arrival halls.
4. Involve customs and police officers, for example to insert informative leaflets in passports.
5. Display informative pamphlets and legal texts re. child sex abuse in VIP lounges.
6. Display warning messages on the screen of automatic teller machines at the time of money withdrawal.

7. Have information kiosk or free-standing display with photographs, legal information.

Tour operators

8. Increase prices, by small amounts, to cover costs of measures to fight child sex tourism.
9. Commit themselves not to offer or become involved in child sex tours and to notify their commitment on the cover of their brochures.

Travel agencies

10. Travel agents to inform their clients of legal, health risks at destination and of the danger of persecution in country of origin (extraterritoriality).
11. Print full information and warnings re. child sex tourism in brochures about every country where the problem exists.
12. Ban all suggestive advertising.
13. Better educate and inform travel agency staff.
14. Consider distributing posters reading "NO to child prostitution".

Hotels

15. IHA to involve hotel associations at national level.
16. List actions to be implemented in a strict time schedule.
17. IHA to prepare guidelines for use by hotels.
18. Strictly control entrance of minors into hotels when there are grounds to believe they will be engaged in child sex activities.
19. Exchange information between hoteliers re. tricks used to go around such bans.
20. Have, in hotel rooms, informative pamphlets, leaflets, drawing clients' attention to the legislation in force re. child sex offenders.

Incoming travel agents

21. Use same dramatic warnings for child sex abuses as now found in certain airports/countries about drug trafficking.
22. Stick posters re. child sex tourism and the sanctions when caught.
23. Involve police at all levels.
24. Go for criminalization of sex relations with minors.

Tourism offices

25. Commit themselves not to give out information on 'hot spots'.
26. Insert warnings related to child sex tourism on maps issued to tourists by tourist offices.
27. Maintain contacts with local airline staff to regularly inform them of the laws and sanctions in force in the destination country.
28. Get the local press to report on actions taken against offenders in destination country.

Other suggestions

29. Run ads in the press against child sex tourism and abuse.
30. Put pressure on the media to report progress of the fight against child sex tourism.
31. Participants also expressed the desire that, within a year, regional meetings be organized on this topic to do a follow-up on these issues. NGOs, governments, the private sector should be in attendance to jointly determine further plans of action.

Participants also developed ideas on 'socially responsible tourism' (SRT), whose principles were:

- Based on hospitality
- On respect of human rights and values
- To ensure sustainability of resources
- Culturally rewarding
- Economically and commercially fair
- Part of socially responsible environment.

Failure to respect these principles brings about a number of negative social effects including CSEC.

- Causes of socially irresponsible tourism are:
- Consumerism
- Irresponsible sexual behaviour of visitors
- Easy access to vulnerable and unprepared assets
- Fragmented responsibility for tourism at government and industry levels
- Disregard of social impact in tourism planning
- Lack of control over foreign management and ownership
- Strictly commercial approach in tourism activities
- Lack of social sensitivity among tourism staff.

Suggested positive developments that could reverse the trend and make tourism more socially responsible:

32. Limits to quantitative growth
33. Competition emphasizing quality
34. Stress put on education for quality including social considerations
35. Need for partnerships (within the industry between sending and receiving countries, and between public and private sectors)
36. Involvement of the community
37. Open a new tourism policy debate.

The following measures were recommended to particularly combat CSEC in tourism:

38. Educate civil society about correct attitudes towards visitors and the visited (introduce tourism in school curricula)
39. Involve travellers in denouncing CSEC (whistle-blowers) to contact points designated within the tourism industry (eg by tour operators).

It was also emphasized that travellers should not be antagonized but rather positively motivated to cooperate (adequate messages are necessary).

40. Determine and exercise special responsibilities of tour guides in preventing CSEC
41. Involve local communities in assuming responsibility for tourism developments and their social consequences
42. Involve travellers in the local community programmes (such as environmental support programmes)

43. Ensure that adequate information against CSEC is available and reaches the traveller throughout the whole trip: before departure, during travel and at destination
44. Strengthen NGO cooperation with tour operators and hoteliers.

The workshop took note of and welcomed the WTO plan to monitor the struggle against CSEC in tourism, specifically to promote best preventive practices and self-regulation.

The general overall statement is that the travel and tourism industry is strongly opposed to any kind of slavery, above all that of children through sex tourism.

Former le personnel;

informer les clients;

pour ne pas déformer les enfants...

¹ IATA = International Air Transport Association; IHA = International Hotel Association; UFTAA = Universal Federation of Travel Agents' Association; WTO = World Tourism Organization.