



ECASBA
EUROPEAN SEMINAR 2023

BRUSSELS

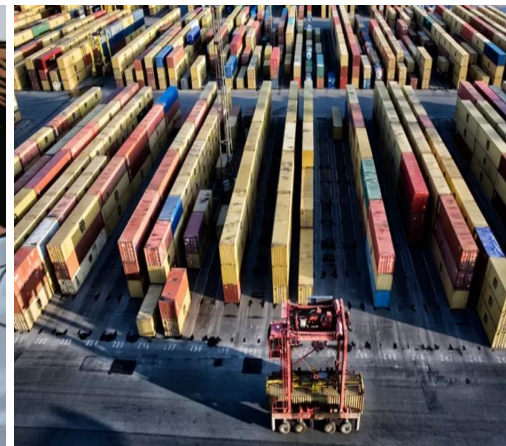
20th JUNE 2023

CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION OF THE TRANSPORT CHAIN
HILDE BRUGGEMAN, NAVES



The “importation” of drugs (cocaine) through EU ports

How ship agents are impacted



Brussels 20/6/2023
Hilde Bruggeman





Agenda



- **Why this topic?**
- **Setting the scene**
- **How are drugs smuggled on ships/through ports**
- **How does this affect us as ship agents?**
- **Way forward / what can we do?**
- **Questions**





Why this topic?

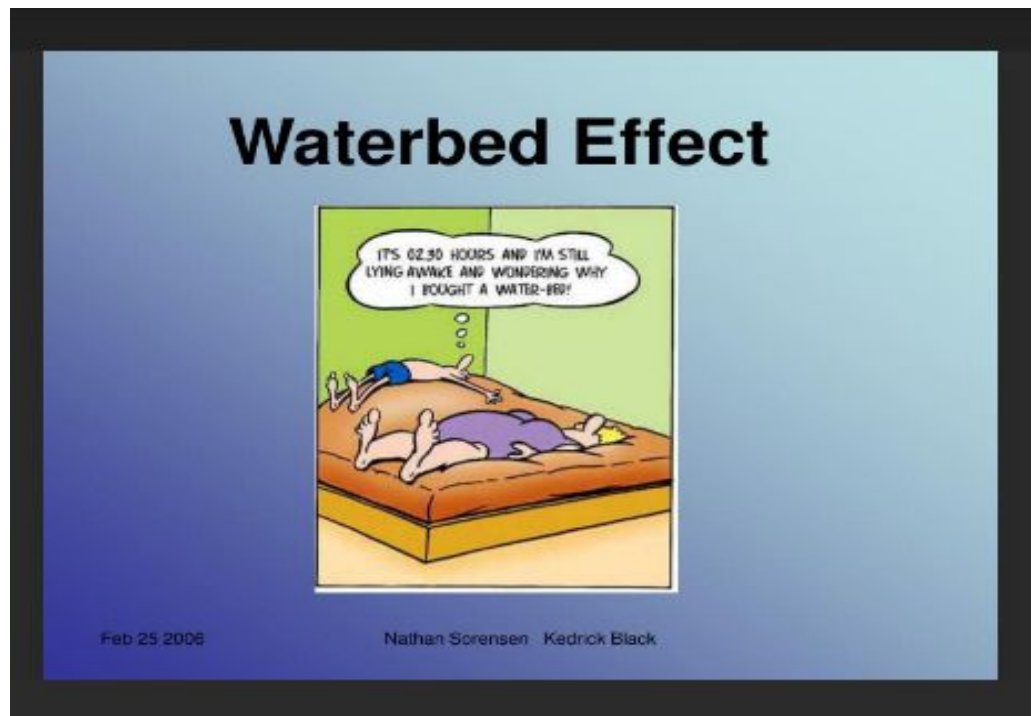


If Rotterdam and Antwerp-Bruges push back cocaine smuggling (in containers), a switch to other / smaller ports & other commodities may occur...

Waterbed effect – shift of the problem

Let us **SHARE**
KNOWLEDGE
and
BEST PRACTICES...

“forewarned is forearmed”



Setting the scene

Ports of Rotterdam and Antwerp-Bruges **cocaine** seizures :

tons/year	Rotterdam	Antwerp
2020	47,75	65,5
2021	72	92
2022	49	110
2023		25



European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (2023), *European Drug Report 16/6/2023: Trends and Developments*, https://www.emcdda.europa.eu/publication/s/european-drug-report/2023_en



Setting the scene

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What is happening?

Supply from cocaine-producing countries has increased

- Increased production (larger area of coca, aerial spraying of coca fields stopped because product used can cause cancer)
- cartels have build up large stocks (cocaine base, coca paste, pure cocaine..)
- cartels have taken over coca fields located in the old FARC areas

Batches of coke smuggled via container ships are getting bigger and 'calculated risks' that smugglers take are getting bigger and bolder

More countries of origin: traditional producing countries + transit countries on the east coast of South America/in the Caribbean (long coastlines, growing seaports,... which can be abused by the cartels).





Setting the scene

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**CONGRES
'BEVEILIGDE HAVEN'**
Drugsaanpak in het havengebied
Rotterdam-Antwerpen
1 april 2022



[How World's Top Shipping Company Became Hub for Drug Trafficking - Bloomberg](#)

- **2022: politicians and policy makers are taking an interest & start focussing on ports and maritime sector... some even pointing fingers at shipping lines...**
- **High level event 17/02/23 Antwerp – declaration signed by 5 shipping companies**
- **Many new initiatives have been deployed: public, private and mixed**





Setting the scene



4 main reasons to cooperate and make maximum efforts against drugs crime

- 1) Protect your employees
- 2) Preserve your own license to operate
- 3) Safeguard operations in general, so that shipping and ports can continue to function as important parts of the logistics chain
- 4) Protect the image of shipping and ports: we are NOT hotspots for criminal activities of whatever kind





How are drugs smuggled on ships/through ports

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Multiple MOs to carry the cocaine:

- Hidden in cargo (mostly fruit)
- Hidden in container structure (cooling engine, corner castings, ...)
- Piggy backing on cargo (cfr sports bags behind container doors)
- Processed or resolved in goods such as jeans trousers, coal,...

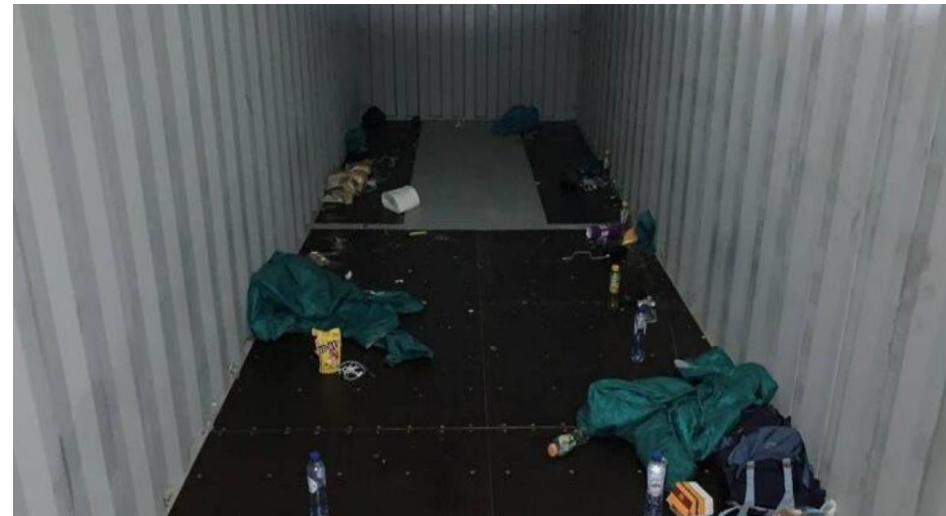




How are drugs smuggled on ships/through ports

Multiple MOs to retrieve the cocaine:

- Rip crew with “normal” access to the Terminals (port labourers, security agents, bus drivers, chaplains, ...)
 - Fetch cocaine from container
 - Switch cocaine to other container
- Hotel containers / Trojan containers
- Pin code fraud / rogue transporter





How does this affect us as ship agents?



- **Inside help and knowledge of the maritime business is needed!!**
- **Employees of shipping lines and ship agents are sought after / are recruited to help facilitate drug smuggling**

How?

- 1) **Recruited through infiltration versus approach**
- 2) **Financial rewards for and/or personal threats towards employees**





How does this affect us as ship agents?



1) infiltration versus approach

➤ Approach - no initial criminal intentions

'interesting' positions / valuable features: import department - planners - wide digital picture

Often vulnerable people with personal problems (debts, addiction,...)

➤ Infiltration - deliberately chosen this workplace with crim intentions

Interim basis versus in-house HRM/selection procedures

Often 'top of the class', sham maneuvers as proof of their honesty

Some already been recruited at school

Makes certain 'interesting' preferred position clear



How does this affect us as ship agents?

2) (Financial) rewards or personal threats

- Huge (financial) rewards / bribery

BUT

No way back, “the finger and the arm”

- Personal threats of physical violence against loved ones
- Violent attacks – material damage and even innocent victims....





Way forward – what can we do?



1) Believe in the premise: *"smuggling follows the path of least resistance"* - shipping lines and ship agencies need to build *barriers*:

- Digital barriers (logging, need to know, **delete pincode** etc)
- Technical barriers (intelligent camera's, smartseals,...)
- Aligned HRM policy (approach / infiltration)

Selection procedures:

Open source screening': social media - luxury lifestyle ?

Screening for critical functions? Within legal framework (existing / under construction)

Checking intrinsic motivation / intended function

Survey previous employers effectively - reason for leaving - crim job hopper

Follow up of existing employees:

Employment law is not fit for adequate reaction at this moment....





Delete pincode

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- Pin code replaced by an **immaterial release right**
- Immaterial release right transferred through a digital backbone from the ship agent to the first release party and further down the chain to the actual driver
- Complete transparency of the chain for customs and/or police
- Driver for pick up has to be appointed by the party holding the immaterial release right (“pick up right”)
- Only drivers that are registered with biometrical data and have a unique identification card can be appointed
- **Biometrical identification** of the actual driver at the terminal (finger scans)
- Terminal system 1) checks if driver is the one appointed by the party holding the release right and 2) identifies the driver through biometrical scanning





Avoid pin code fraud



Examples:

Certified Pick UP

<https://www.portofantwerpbruges.com/en/shipping/safety-and-security/certified-pick>

Secure Container Release

<https://www.securecontainerrelease.com/>

Secure Chain

<https://www.portbase.com/en/secure-chain/>

.... *Does this shift the problem?*

Waterbed effect....





Way forward – what can we do?



2) set up awareness campaigns on community level

➤ Campaign In Antwerp "Our port drugs-free":

- Campaign materials
- Recently also focus on office occupations
- Anonymous hotline (no IP tracking) report will be sent to the police authorities immediately, where it will be thoroughly investigated

<https://onzehavendrugsvrij.be/en/>

➤ Campaign in Rotterdam “port of Rotterdam safe port”

<https://www.portofrotterdam.com/en/building-port/safe-port/undermining-criminality>

<https://www.rotterdamsehavenveilighaven.nl/>





Way forward – what can we do?



3) Put in place some “best practices” in the company

- Awareness campaigns
- SPOC function
 - + liaison with police/customs (formal function “security officer” **under construction**)
 - + knowledge building (discretion)
- Social media
 - blocking personal data - social media
 - work-life communication separation
- Roadmap: what if I am approached...
 - Contact SPOC/ Block account/gsm nr if via soc media/ Declaration / mail to authorities
- Culture of vigilance versus witch-hunting
 - “Suspicious behaviour in the workplace = different from basic processes”**





Way forward – what can we do?



3) **Exchange information amongst each other on a company level – *help each other, we are all on the same side in this***

“Circle of trust” – role an association can play

Reach out to terminals, PFSO’s, port security officer, WSC working group on contraband & trafficking,...

4) **Knock at politicians / policy makers door – what can we do for them, but also: *what can they do for us***

New & better adapted legislation for screening of personnel, labour law, exchange of sensitive information

Trusted partner not only for drugs, but also when the contraband happens to be cigarettes...

Feedback and information sharing with SPOC (“ship agency security officer”)





 **SHARE**

**IT'S OUR PORT:
WE DECIDE WHAT
GOES IN AND OUT**

**Our
Port
Drug-free**

The employees in the port of Antwerp are united against drug-related crime, and you can help us! If you know of or see any suspicious activity, report them on this anonymous hotline. We decide what goes in and out of the port, and your help is essential.





Questions?

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