



This project is funded by the European Union

PROTECTING CHILD RIGHTS  
IN THE TRAVEL SECTOR

# TRAINING NOTES FOR COACH COMPANY PERSONNEL





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May 2019

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*These training notes were prepared as part of the Project for Combating the Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism in Cooperation with the Private Sector that Respects the Rights of Children that is supported by the EU Delegation in Turkey to be used in internal training in the tourism sector.*

## Child-Friendly Tourism

Child Friendly Tourism is an approach that aims at establishing travel environments that are free from all forms of violence, healthy and safe, in keeping with the aim of protecting the rights of children in tourism and travel. In this context travel businesses should:

- Take precautions and offer services that will ensure the health, hygiene and safety of children in their vehicles;
- Protect children from all forms of violence and sexual exploitation during travel;
- Inform personnel and clients of child-friendly tourism;
- Contribute forming social and environmental awareness focused on children.

## Advantages of Protecting Child Rights in Travel for Coach Companies:

- Positive perception, increased demand and positive media visibility through the publicity of child-friendly tourism with a good communications strategy,
- Lowering of potential risks to do with organised crime such as the sexual exploitation of children by businesses which have increased awareness in these fields,
- Stronger cooperation and partnership with leading firms in the protection of child rights in the sector.



*These Training Notes are intended to inform coach company personnel about what they should do should they come across or suspect the sexual abuse or exploitation of children.*

# Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children

One of the greatest risks for child-friendly tourism is the sexual abuse or exploitation of children on premises or means of transportation of travel companies. Sexual abuse is defined as any form of sexual activity that takes place between a child and an adult, or two children who are in a relationship of impropportionate responsibility, trust and power due to age or developmental differences. Sexual exploitation is the sexual use of children for any kind of gain including cash, goods, other material or other forms of gain (such as forcing children into prostitution, their use in pornography, sale for sexual purposes).

## Those Carrying Out Abuse/Exploitation

- They are not only men and may be women. There is no typical age range or marital status for these people.
- They may come from any social, economic or cultural segment of the society.
- While they may not normally be sexually oriented towards children at the travel beginning, they may carry out abuse or exploitation if they find amenable
- Or they may be travelling for purposes of sexual exploitation or abuse.

## Children Under Risk

- Lost or living in the street,
- Has been discriminated against due to race, ethnic identity, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability
- Refugee, alone (unaccompanied) children
- Has faced violence within his/her family or has been neglected by his/her family,
- Children who live in poverty in tourism regions and who do not have access to education are at greater risk. compared to other children.

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*By Turkish law, the sexual abuse and exploitation of children are crimes. It is a legal responsibility to report to authorities (the police, the gendarmerie, the prosecutor's office) in case of having reasonable suspicion of such crimes or witnessing them. Coach companies may come across signs of sexual abuse or exploitation when issuing tickets or during travel. On the following page, causes for suspicion regarding these crimes and what should be done in this case have been listed.*

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<b><i>Suspicious Circumstances</i></b>	<b><i>What Should be Done</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adults who arrive at coach stations with a child or children who are observed not be a member of their family,</li> <li>• Adults asking to buy a ticket for the child or children collectively without wanting to share the IDs for the child/children,</li> <li>• Children who are suspected to have been subjected to sexual abuse/exploitation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Are timid and scared,</li> <li>▪ Stay away from ticket counters,</li> <li>▪ Have bruises and wounds on their bodies,</li> <li>▪ Wear clothes that are not appropriate to the climate conditions of the region,</li> <li>▪ Do not have many belongings with them.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By standard procedure, an ID for a child is required to issue a ticket. No tickets can be issued if an ID is not presented. According to a decision of the Transport Ministry which was taken in 2018: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tickets may only be issued with the provision of a valid ID,</li> <li>• ID information and ID number of passengers buying tickets will be recorded,</li> <li>• Separate tickets will be issued to all passengers travelling within a group (even if they are of the same family). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ If the suspected individual seeks to buy tickets from other travel firms within the coach terminal upon being denied a ticket, terminal security should be alerted.</li> <li>▪ Should an ID be provided for the child/children for buying a ticket, it should be examined carefully. It should not be forgotten that the Temporary Protection ID issued for refugee children may be especially open to forgery.</li> <li>▪ If there are suspicions that the ID may be fake, the situation is noted, the manager is alerted as soon as possible and a report should be prepared for the police if needed.</li> <li>▪ If there are doubts of abuse/exploitation after the issuing of a ticket with the provision of ID, the manager is alerted of the situation. The manager informs the host/hostess of the coach on which the suspect will ride and tells them to observe the children during travel.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## What Should Be Done in Case of Witnessing Sexual Abuse/Exploitation of Children

The sexual abuse/exploitation of children may take place in terminals or on a coach while travelling. For an instance, the trafficking of children at terminals or the sexual abuse of children on a coach may be witnessed. In such cases, first-hand witnesses should take immediate action.

- If the witnessed incident takes place at a terminal and, the police at the terminal are unavailable, private security should be alerted at once. No actions should be taken to endanger the security of the child/children when reporting the incident.
- If the witnessed incident takes place on a coach while travelling, the incident is reported to the driver, who should stop at the nearest police point en route and reports the incident. If there are no police points nearby, the crime should be reported and the vehicle stops at a position identified by the police or the nearest rest stop is reported to the police.
- Until the police can intervene, the suspected abuser and the child should not be left alone and if possible various pretexts (such as the seatbelt malfunctioning) should be used to change the seat of the child.
- Once the police arrive, all information about the suspected passenger should be given, if necessary by contacting the central company office. The witnessed event and the conditions raising suspicions, if any, should be narrated to the police.
- From the moment the police are alerted and until they arrive, calm should be maintained and other passengers should be prevented from interfering in the incident to the extent possible. Some passengers may try to harm the suspected abuser physically, endangering the lives of both the child and other passengers on board.



# Communicating with Children in Cases of Abuse/Exploitation

- In cases involving children being subjected to violence or those that may require an emergency intervention, the staff member communicating with the child should introduce himself/herself and explain how they may help the child to instil trust. The staff member should take care not to give too much information about their own person and try to focus on the immediate needs of the child.
- Children who have been subjected to sexual exploitation (forced into prostitution, sold for sexual purposes) may not be comfortable around security forces. Nevertheless, promises that are impossible to keep (such as "Don't worry, your family will not know" or "I will not tell the police what happened") should not be made.
- Given the trauma the child has been through, he/she should not be made to recount the incident and not many questions should be asked about the incident. The testimony of the child will be received by the authorities.
- During the entire process, clear language that is appropriate to the age of the child and that he/she will understand should be used.
- During and after such incidents, children may experience mental confusion, intense anxiety, anger and surprise. These emotional states may cause children to react in a variety of ways (such as providing false information, an exaggerated account of what happened, avoiding communicating, acting aggressively etc). It should not be forgotten that such reactions by the child are normal under the circumstances and the child should by no means be approached by dismissing what he/she has to say, judgementally, accusatorily or angrily.



..... For more information on subjects covered by these Training Notes, please visit the website [www.cocukdosturizm.org](http://www.cocukdosturizm.org)





This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of International Children's Center and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union

