

Drug smuggling in Dutch seaports





Drug smuggling in the port of Rotterdam

This past week, the Dutch public prosecutor reported that authorities had found and confiscated two consignments of cocaine in the port of Rotterdam — one in a consignment of beef and another in a cargo of pineapples. Both had been shipped from Brazil and were consigned to a receiver in Switzerland. The combined quantity of the drugs was 600 kilos, with an estimated value of EUR 35 million.

These recent finds reflect a trend of high-value smuggling attempts in recent years. These attempts are frequent and often concern large quantities of drugs. The method appears to be the same, namely that the drugs are brought on board in South American ports in the cargo or otherwise hidden on board. The criminal networks then seek to intercept the drugs either in the port or after discharge en route to the named consignee. There have also been reports of drugs being passed to persons on the quayside or to a passing barge.

Our recommendations in relation to these type of incidents is as follows:

1. It is important that shipowners who are trading between South America and Rotterdam ensure proper watchkeeping and checks on board prior to and during departure and arrival. The shipowner should ensure that these measures are properly documented. This can prevent problems, but also allows the owners to show that they took appropriate preventative measures and acted in good faith.
2. Have a clear and concise drugs policy and ensure that the crew are fully familiar with its contents. Ensure that implementation and checks are properly documented and reported.
3. In the event that there are any suspicious incidents during the voyage, these should be reported to the Owners, and advice should be sought from local specialists about the need to report the incident to the authorities, as well as which preventative measures should be taken.
4. In the event that drugs are found, we recommend arranging legal representation as soon as possible and ensuring that the relevant evidence is secured. As the consequences will differ on a case-by-case basis, and it is crucial that the necessary procedures are followed, the involvement of a local correspondent is recommended to protect the interests of both the crew and her owners.

The team at NNPC Correspondents has experience with these types of cases and is available 24/7 to assist should any such incident occur or if you require assistance with appropriate preventative measures.



Successful handling of narcotics case without legal assistance

We recently handled a narcotics smuggling case involving a tanker at anchor off Rotterdam. The crew discovered drugs hidden in the vessel's underwater structure during a routine inspection and informed the Dutch authorities. The narcotics were confiscated, and the crew was found not to be involved. The vessel was allowed to continue its voyage without delay, and no fines were issued to the shipowner. We stayed in close contact with the police and customs to protect the owner's interests, which we managed successfully without legal assistance, thanks to our in-house expertise and network.



Correspondents

NNPC Correspondents B.V.
Vasteland 12 E
3011 BL Rotterdam
The Netherlands

Phone: +31 (0)85 483 31 21
E-mail: correspondents@nnpc-correspondents.nl
Website: www.nnpc.nl