

POLICY STATEMENT ON CHILD SAFEGUARDING



As an international travel company and the tourism segment of the REWE Group, DER Touristik Group is aware of its social responsibility. After all, we can only succeed commercially over the long term if the impacts of our business operations are in harmony with people and the environment. For this reason, DER Touristik Group is committed to strengthening human rights and preventing human rights violations. This commitment applies both to our own business activities and to our global business partners. It explicitly encompasses the rights of children and adolescents as well as protecting them from every form of exploitation and abuse. After consulting with partners and stakeholders, DER Touristik Group is now implementing an internal child safeguarding policy and related instruments in the form of guidelines, reporting mechanisms and training that are all based on the following principles:

Laws and Standards

DER Touristik Group commits itself and its partners, suppliers and service providers to protecting the rights of children and adolescents. International and national laws, the core labour standards and the agreement on the minimum age of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) are considered to be non-negotiable standards. The aim is to provide children and adolescents with the best possible opportunities to lead independent lives and to prevent any form of child labour.

Children play a prominent role in tourism. This may blur the line between simply participating in such events and commercially exploiting children. The risk of child labour is particularly high in such upstream commercial branches of value creation in tourism as souvenir production, farming, vehicle maintenance and other services. Any form of such work is unacceptable. For this reason, DER Touristik Group continuously evaluates the areas in its

business activities and value creation where the potential for violations of human rights and the rights of children exists. Employees and partners are trained to identify such risks as well as to progressively reduce and eliminate them. A reporting process has been put into place to facilitate reaction to violations. The steps taken to implement the Child Safeguarding Policy are designed to ensure that the employment of adolescents in the value chain is based on legal regulations and international standards.

Product Requirements

DER Touristik Group has defined strict requirements for tourism products and obliges its partners to implement them. This practice ensures that risks faced by children involved in such activities are minimised and eliminated. No negative consequences for children and adolescents should arise from touristic activities. Any physical or mental harm must be avoided that

could affect their future lives as a result of their participation in touristic programmes.

Experts agree that some touristic activities hamper efforts to protect children's rights and negatively impact their future. Such activities include touristic visits to schools and orphanages in which commercial interests are often placed above the well-being of children. Visits to schools disrupt education. Most of the children in orphanages have at least one living parent. The placement of children in such institutions is partially the result of touristic demand. DER Touristik has now issued the requirement that prohibits touristic visits to orphanages and schools from being part of programmes that either the company or its partners offer. These are being replaced by activities in which the rights of children are protected. One way to protect children and adolescents is to apply strict requirements to such activities as overnight visits with host families (home stays) or visits to projects. These requirements are enforced with the assistance of hosts and project partners. In future, DER Touristik will no longer offer volunteering activities because it is not possible to ensure that children will not be involved in the programmes.

Training and Sensitization

DER Touristik Group trains the employees of its tour operators, hotels and destination agencies as well as tour guides and business partners about children's rights and child safeguarding.

The travel management teams of DER Touristik Group have direct influence on the design of tourism products and conduct of activities. Working together with partners, the employees apply the principles of child safeguarding based on the processes, requirements and measures defined in the Child Safeguarding Policy. These efforts include training and raising awareness about children's rights and child safeguarding. Employees and partners, including projects in destination areas or host families (home stays), are incorporated into this work. In addition to learning about requirements designed to protect children's rights in the development of tourism products, these individuals are sensitised about the problem of sexual exploitation of children in tourism and trained to handle suspected cases.

Prevention of Sexual Exploitation of Children

One focal point of the child safeguarding programme of DER Touristik Group is preventing the sexual exploitation of children in tourism. In this process, travellers and partners are made aware of the problem and actions they can take, including reporting suspicious cases. A contractually stipulated zero-tolerance clause covering the sexual exploitation of children applies to all partners, suppliers and service providers.

Perpetrators take advantage of the touristic infrastructure, including hotels, transportation, restaurants, bars and beaches. As a result, employees of destination agencies, tour operators, the hotels operated by DER Touristik Hotels & Resorts and partner hotels play a major role in preventing children from being sexually exploited. DER Touristik Group raises awareness among employees, customers and partners and informs them about easy ways to report suspected cases. Guests, too, can confidentially report suspected cases to tour operator or hotel employees. They can

also make a major contribution to efforts to safeguard children by reporting any suspicions they may have to the platform <https://dontlookaway.report/>. Their observations will be forwarded to the child safeguarding organisation ECPAT or to the appropriate law enforcement authority. Together, we can break through the culture of looking away and strengthen the rights of children throughout the world.

Implementation of the six Criteria of The Code

DER Touristik Group has signed up to "The Code", a set of rules designed to prevent the sexual exploitation of children in tourism and is systematically implementing the six criteria contained in "The Code".

The six criteria formulated by the international organisation "The Code" serve as a framework and benchmark for many tourism companies around the world. It involves guidelines, policies, employee training, the inclusion of partners through contractual agreements, the sensitisation of travellers, the inclusion of a broad spectrum of stakeholders and an annual report covering measures that have been implemented.

Recommendations for Travelers

DER Touristik Group also provides information and recommended courses of action to fight forms of exploitation of children outside the value chain in tourism in locations near touristic infrastructure and in the informal sector.

Travellers are confronted by situations that they may have never experienced in their home countries. Examples include child begging or children who sell products and services near touristic attractions or offer to do some sort of performance. Children are frequently forced to join in this organised form of income generation. As a result of their employment in the informal sector, they are prevented from attending school and leading independent lives. They remain caught up in a vicious circle of poverty. Frequently, this situation leads to dependencies that can quickly result in sexual exploitation. For these reasons, no donations of any type should be made to children. Instead, children and adolescents in need can be supported by recognised organisations and travel companies that are demonstrably active in social activities locally.

Community Engagement

DER Touristik Foundation fosters the social and economic living conditions of people and strives to protect environmental habitats in less-developed tourist regions around the world.

With the help of DER Touristik Foundation established in 2014, the social commitment of DER Touristik Group extends beyond its business activities and ensures that projects are effectively and sustainably assisted. The aim is to use the power of tourism to protect the diversity of our Earth and improve living conditions, particularly those found in less-developed tourist regions, over the long term. In addition to working to maintain environmental habitats and biodiversity, DER Touristik Foundation fosters educational opportunities for children and training programmes for adolescents. In the process, it contributes to sustainable development. Donations made by partners and guests are used completely for development projects.

Stakeholder Dialogue

DER Touristik Group conducts a continuous dialogue with stakeholders like child safeguarding experts and other groups that work on behalf of child safeguarding.

DER Touristik Group is a member of the Roundtable Human Rights in Tourism, the child safeguarding working group of the German Travel Association (DRV), the working group on sustainable tourism of the British travel association ABTA and other committees and industry organisations. Regular discussions with

child safeguarding organisations like ECPAT and its global partner organisations as well as government authorities are conducted. The joint commitment focuses on collaboration in awareness raising campaigns and the implementation of cross-industry initiatives aimed at protecting the rights of children and preventing the sexual exploitation of children in tourism. DER Touristik Group has also signed up to "The Code", a set of rules designed to protect children from sexual exploitation in tourism.

You will find more information about the protection of children's rights in tourism here:

<https://www.dertouristik.com/en/child-safeguarding/>

Violations of the Policy Statement on Child Safeguarding of DER Touristik Group will be handled confidentially upon request. They can be reported to the department of Corporate Responsibility and to the human rights and child safeguarding officer at: **cr@dertouristik.com**