

# Signals and indicators for smuggling and/or trafficking of people

The following elements may play a role in detecting human smuggling and/or trafficking. They are listed here non-exhaustively as examples that, of course, do not need to be present all at the same time.

## **The smuggled and/or (potential) victim(s):**

- may not know in which country they are;
- may not know through which countries they have been travelling;
- may not be able to give a credible explanation about the purpose of the trip;
- may not know the address where they are about to stay;
- may not have a name or phone number of the person or place where they are going to stay;
- indicates that, at some point in time, she/he should be at a particular location (in order to make contact with his supervisor);
- has distinctive clothing or hairstyle — small groups of smuggled persons often have the same characteristics (e.g. all the same color of clothing or bags, etc.);
- is often marked physically (e.g. text written with a stylus on the arm);
- does not know how long she/he will stay at the next address;
- carries no, or virtually no, money;
- is not in the possession of her/his own travel document or residence permit;
- is often in possession of fake or forged travel documents or residence permit;
- often travels together with the smuggler/trafficker ( airplane, bus and/or train tickets).

**ISOLATE THE SMUGGLER/TRAFFICKER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE FROM THE SMUGGLED AND/OR (POTENTIAL) VICTIM(S).**

## **When victim and perpetrator are travelling together:**

### **The smuggler/trafficker:**

- will often be perfectly documented;
- will often be in possession of the travel documents of the victim of trafficking if they are documented;
- may be answering the questions instead of the victim;
- often has a better appearance than the victim.

### **The (potential) victim:**

- may not respond or be talkative (and depends on the smuggler/trafficker to give the answers);
- may appear to be in fear of, or submissive to, the smuggler/trafficker as, in many cases, coercion (threats, violence, etc.) is being used;
- in many cases, has the same ethnic background as the smuggler/trafficker.

**IF A VICTIM INDICATES THAT SHE/HE DID NOT TAKE THE INITIATIVE FOR THE JOURNEY HER/HIMSELF AND/OR DID NOT PAY ANYTHING FOR THE TRIP, THIS MIGHT POINT TO THE SMUGGLED PERSON POSSIBLY BEING A (POTENTIAL) VICTIM OF TRAFFICKING AS WELL. THE CRIMINAL ORGANISATION HAS INVESTED IN THE TRIP, LOOKING FORWARD TO A RETURN ON THEIR MONEY IN DUE TIME.**

### **The smuggler:**

- may be the only one who speaks English and/or may be willing to act as an intermediary;
- may be the only one with a mobile phone;
- may be the only one who carries cash, receipts and phone numbers;
- may be carrying the travel documents of his fellow travellers;
- may be well or better dressed and look different to the fellow travellers (clothes, hairstyle, for example, or eastern clothing versus European clothing);
- may be the only one who doesn't carry luggage with them;

- would probably be the driver of the vehicle;
- could have a different nationality than the rest of the group;
- would try to give the smuggled person instructions, hints, directions, etc.

### **Material evidence:**

Perpetrators and even their victims often learn from mistakes during previous attempts. They will try to hide, cover up, even encrypt or to memorise important evidence such as phone numbers, names and/or addresses. It is important during the search to give this some extra attention. Pay attention to:

- the inside of the collar;
- the inside of the belt, waistband, the hem of the trousers or other parts of the clothing where notes, money, etc. can be sewn or hidden;
- writing on the inside of sleeves or legs of the trousers hidden in shoes or socks;
- between the foil and the paper of a packet of cigarettes;
- written notes on paper money.

Don't allow the perpetrator/victim to dispose of incriminating material. Phone numbers and notes could be stuffed between cracks in the floor, hidden in the seat (of a car) or thrown away outside.

Look for empty bottles (or bottles filled with urine), labels on packaging, (petrol station) receipts, vouchers or foreign currencies may be indicators.

Check for any electronic data carriers (mobile phones, memory sticks, etc). Tampering with cargo (space) may all indicate the complicity of the driver. Cargo seals may have been manipulated. Check the tachograph. Be aware of double bottoms/ceilings in vehicles. Defective cars and/or campers are, or can provide, excellent hiding places.