



# POLICY STATEMENT ON CHILD SAFEGUARDING

As an international travel company and as the tourism segment of the REWE Group, DER Touristik Group is aware of its social responsibility. After all, we can succeed in business over the long term only 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 young people as well as every form of exploitation and abuse. After consulting with partners and stakeholders, the 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**

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

Children are actors in touristic activities in many different contexts. Such activities 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 touristic value creation as souvenir production, farming, vehicle maintenance and other services. Any form of such work is unacceptable. For this reason, the 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 exist. 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 done on the basis of legal regulations and international standards.

## **Product Requirements**

The DER Touristik Group has defined strict requirements for touristic products and obliges its partners to implement them. This practise 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. They should not suffer any physical or

mental harm 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 growth as individuals. Such activities include touristic visits to schools and orphanages in which commercial interests are placed above the well-being of children. Visits to schools disrupt instruction. 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 Group has now issued the requirement that prohibits touristic visits to orphanages and schools from being part of the programmes that either the company or its partners offer. Such programme offerings 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 guest families (home stays) or visits to projects. These requirements are enforced with the assistance of hosts and project partners. In future, DER Touristik Group will no longer offer any volunteering activities because it is hardly possible to ensure that children will not be involved in the programmes.

### **Training and Sensitization**

The DER Touristik Group trains the employees of its travel organisers, hotels and destination agencies as well as travel management teams and business partners about children's rights and child safeguarding.

Employees who work in the relevant departments of the DER Touristik Group have direct influence on the substance of touristic products and activities. Working together and with business partners, these employees apply the principles of child safeguarding on the basis of the processes, requirements and measures defined in the Child-Safeguarding Policy. These efforts include training and sensitisation measures on children's rights and child safeguarding. Employees and partners, including projects in destination areas or guest families (home stays), are incorporated into this work. In addition to learning about requirements designed to protect children's rights in the development of touristic 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 the DER Touristik Group is preventing the sexual exploitation of children in tourism. In this process, travellers and partners are sensitised to the problem and learn about actions they can take, including the reporting of suspicious cases. A contractually stipulated zero-tolerance clause covering the sexual exploitation of children applies to all partners, suppliers and service providers.

Perpetrators sexually exploiting children take advantage of the touristic infrastructure, including hotels, means of transportation, restaurants, bars and beaches. As a result, employees of destination agencies, the travel management team, the hotels operated by the brands of DER Touristik Hotels & Resorts and

partner hotels play a major role in preventing children from being sexually exploited. The DER Touristik Group sensitises employees, customers and partners about the problem and informs them about easy ways to report suspected cases. Guests, too, can confidentially report suspected cases to the travel management team 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**

The DER Touristik Group has signed "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 known as "The Code" serve as a framework that offers orientation to many touristic companies around the world and provides them with a baseline that they can use to measure their performance. This framework involves guidelines, policies, employee training, the inclusion of partners through such steps as 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**

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

As they travel in destination countries, guests are confronted by situations that they have never experienced in their home countries. Examples include begging children 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 robbed of an opportunity to attend school and eventually lead 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 donations to organisations and travel companies that are demonstrably active in social activities in destination areas.

### **Community Engagement**

The DER Touristik Foundation fosters 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 the DER Touristik Foundation established in 2014, the social commitment of DER Touristik Group is bundled beyond its Group business activities and ensures that support

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, the DER Touristik Foundation fosters educational opportunities for children and training programmes for adolescents. In the process, it makes a contribution to long-term development. Donations made by partners and guests are used completely for development projects.

### **Stakeholder Dialogue**

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

**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 the 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](mailto:cr@dertouristik.com)

The DER Touristik Group is a member of the Roundtable Human Rights in Tourism, the child-safeguarding working group of the German Travel Association, the working group on sustainable tourism of the British travel association ABTA and other committees and industry organisations. It conducts regular discussions with child-safeguarding organisations like ECPAT and its global partner organisations as well as government authorities. Their joint commitment focuses in particular on collaboration in sensitisation campaigns and the implementation of cross-industry initiatives aimed at protecting the rights of children and preventing the sexual exploitation of children in tourism. The DER Touristik Group has also signed "The Code", a set of rules designed to protect children from sexual exploitation in tourism.