



VERENIGD INKLARINGS BUREAU NV

SHIPPING AGENTS - IMPORT & EXPORT CUSTOM CLEARANCE AGENTS
FERRY BOOKINGS - MARINE INSURANCE - WAREHOUSING

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Cigarette & Tobacco smuggling

In March 2000, the UK Government launched its “Tackling tobacco smuggling strategy”.

The indicative levels for honest cross-Channel shoppers bringing back tobacco is now 3,200 cigarettes (equivalent to 6 months supply for the average smoker) and 3 kilograms for hand-rolled tobacco.

There will be more prosecutions of large scale and regular smugglers. Customs will prosecute anyone who commits violence against Customs staff. Small-scale first time offenders will be offered their vehicle back for a fee equivalent to the amount of duty which has been evaded. Scale and repeat offenders will have their vehicle seized, and not restored. Cross-Channel operators will be challenged to step up the part they play in cooperating with Customs to catch smugglers, by providing accurate and timely information, both to Customs and the public.

Criminals who are caught and successfully prosecuted can expect severe penalties, including jail sentences and heavy fines.

Customs urges the courts to use all sanctions available against offenders, including driving disqualifications, seizure of their vehicle, compensation orders and confiscation of their assets.

Unscrupulous hauliers also risk the removal of their operating licences and vehicle rental companies who persistently hire vehicles to smugglers face steep payments to gain their vehicles back.

It is of major importance that transport companies check the integrity of the loading and delivery places. Furthermore drivers should assist and control the loading of their vehicles.

Too often illicit and illegal cargo is being found packed between the regular cargo! On arrival in the UK, the (innocent) driver may be put in jail and the vehicle will be confiscated. Customs will interview the driver and will send the transport company a detailed questionnaire.

After evaluation of the contents of the interview and questionnaire a fine will or will not have to be paid and the vehicle will be or will not be returned to the owner.

**Procedures and more detailed information can be obtained at :
HM Customs & Excise, Post Seizure Unit, Plymouth, United Kingdom.
Tel: 0044 1752 765817 – Fax: 0044 1752 765816**

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