



Tobacco smugglers: Husband and wife Igoris Terskis and Tatjana Terskaja

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‘Nothing to Declare’ couple sentenced

A married couple who walked through the customs green channel at Bristol Airport with 561 times more tobacco and 54 times the amount of cigarettes than allowed, have been sentenced after an investigation by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC).

Husband and wife Igoris Terskis, 47, and Tatjana Terskaja, 47, from Redruth, Cornwall, were stopped and searched at Bristol Airport by a Border Force officer on 7 February 2017 after they arrived on a flight from Tenerife.

The officer found 11,000 king size cigarettes and 140.5 kilos of tobacco packed into seven holdalls and receipts showed the couple bought them at a shop in Tenerife. The duty evaded was £30,536.

The couple were arrested, the tobacco seized and the matter was referred to HMRC for investigation, which revealed that between April 2015 and February 2017, Terskis and Terskaja had made 16 trips to France, Tenerife and Gran Canaria.

Investigators uncovered that despite having a declared joint income of £20,800 in 2016-17, a total of £55,330 was deposited in cash into their bank accounts from July to November 2016.

The pair pleaded guilty to two counts of evasion of duty. The total duty evaded on cigarettes and tobacco was £162,000.

Richard Wilkinson, Assistant Director, Fraud Investigation Service, HMRC, said:

“Terskis and Terskaja were wrong to think they could get away with smuggling tobacco into the UK for their own financial gain. The illegal tobacco trade has a harmful effect on legitimate businesses and deprives us of money needed to fund our vital public services.

“The duty evaded on this tobacco was enough to pay the salaries of seven nurses in Cornwall for a year.

”HMRC works closely with Border Force to tackle tobacco smuggling and disrupt this illicit trade. I urge anyone who has information about the smuggling, selling or storing of illicit tobacco to report it online to HMRC, or contact our Fraud Hotline on 0800 788 887.”

Igoris Terskis was sentenced to 26 months in jail and Tatjana Terskaja was sentenced to 20 months in jail, suspended for two years, at Truro Crown Court on 8 October 2018.

Confiscation proceedings to recover proceeds of the crime are under way.

Notes for Editors

1. Igoris Terskis, (DOB 20/5/1971) of Wilkinson Gardens, Sandy Lane, Redruth, Cornwall, was sentenced to 26 months in jail at Truro Crown Court on 8 October 2018, and was ordered to pay a £120 victim surcharge.
2. Tatjana Terskaja (DOB 26/9/1971), also of Wilkinson Gardens, Sandy Lane, Redruth, Cornwall, was sentenced to 20 months in jail suspended for two years, and ordered to pay a £100 victim surcharge. A four-month curfew, between the hours of 10pm and 6am, was also imposed on her.
3. Terskis and Terskaja both pleaded guilty on May 11 2018 at Truro Crown Court to:
 - a) the fraudulent evasion of duty between 10 April 2015 and 6 February 2017;
 - b) the fraudulent evasion of duty on 7 February 2017.
4. The Canary Islands are not part of the EU for customs purposes and travellers are advised to follow the rules for countries outside the EU. The duty-free allowance means you can bring in a certain amount of goods for your own use from outside EU without paying duty or tax.
5. The individual tobacco allowance is: 200 cigarettes or 100 cigarillos or 50 cigars or 250g tobacco. The allowance can be split – a traveller could bring in 100 cigarettes and 25 cigars (both half of the personal allowance).
6. Fully qualified nurses start on salaries of £23,023 on Band 5 of the NHS Agenda for Change Pay Rates. <http://www.nhsemployers.org/your-workforce/pay-and-reward/agenda-for-change/pay-scales/annual>
7. Follow HMRC's press office on Twitter @HMRCpressoffice.

HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) is the UK's tax authority.

HMRC is responsible for making sure that the money is available to fund the UK's public services and for helping families and individuals with targeted financial support.

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