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14 extra customs officials for Dublin Airport – Kennedy

FOURTEEN ADDITIONAL customs officials have been allocated to Dublin Airport as part of ongoing efforts to step up the authorities' anti-drug enforcement campaign, reveals Deputy Michael Kennedy today (November 01, 2007)

Deputy Kennedy said: "I have been informed that the airport's Customs Service has recently been increased by 14 people, bringing the total number of enforcement officers there to 50. This increased investment shows that the Government and the Department of Finance is committed to the war on drugs."

"This information emerged from conversations between the Minister for Finance Brian Cowen and I, where we discussed my concerns about the emergence of Johannesburg in South Africa as a major drug trafficking hub."

"In the past 24 months, there have been 7 arrests of passengers arriving from Johannesburg via various European airports. Two of these arrests were in the last two months, where the passengers both came through Zurich. It is clear that the development of major trafficking hubs worldwide is having an effect even at local level and specifically in Dublin Airport."

"In the last 24 months, the total drug seizures from passengers originating in Johannesburg amounts to 120 kg of Herbal Cannabis and 1.5 kg of Cocaine with a combined value of €607, 780."

"However, the Minister re-assured me that the Airport's Customs Service has seen major investment in the last two years and this has resulted for the recent round of successful drug seizures and arrests."

"Customs Officials use local intelligence to identify drug traffickers, and also receives information on individuals using the Airport from international bodies such as the World Customs Organisation, the United Nations Drug Control Programme, Interpol, the Council of Europe, Europol and the UK's Serious Organised Crime Agency," concluded Deputy Kennedy