

# The Maritime Executive

INTELLECTUAL CAPITAL FOR LEADERS

## More than 700 Kilos of Cocaine Seized in One Week in Port of Rotterdam



In one week, Dutch authorities reported seizing more than 700 kilos of cocaine all concealed in refer boxes (Openbaar Ministerie)

Published Aug 20, 2024 5:57 PM by [The Maritime Executive](#)

Dutch officials made a series of cocaine seizures totaling more than 700 kilos all coming through the Port of Rotterdam in just a matter of days. Police report that they believe the intended recipient of the containers was not involved in the smuggling, but it was part of an effort by the drug cartels to use legal shipments to smuggle narcotics.

The seizures came as the major European ports and governments launched a concerted effort to interrupt the flow of cocaine and other illegal drugs. International police have warned that the drug gangs have infiltrated the operations of the European ports and are being more aggressive in their smuggling tactics.

The largest of the seizures was 514 kilos of cocaine found in a shipment of avocados. The containers had originated in Peru and traveled via Panama to Rotterdam. A second shipment also of avocados following the same route but destined for a different company in the Netherlands was discovered to contain a concealed shipment of cocaine. This second seizure recovered 100 kilos of cocaine.

The police reported these two seizures on August 14 and two days later made a further discovery of cocaine. This time they were making a routine check on an empty container and found 39 kilos of cocaine in the construction of the container. The refer box had been used to bring bananas from Ecuador.

The following day, August 17, the police reported yet another seizure. Again, during a regular inspection of a refer box transporting bananas they located cocaine. This shipment was coming from Costa Rica and was found to contain 60 kilos of cocaine.

The four interdictions totaled 712 kilos of cocaine. Police put the estimated street value at approximately €53.5 million (\$59.5 million).

In each of the cases, it seemed that the importer had nothing to do with the smuggling. However, the cartels are showing a preference for refrigerated boxes for their smuggling. Earlier in August, Greek authorities reported they found 34 kilos of cocaine also in a shipment of bananas. A year ago, Dutch authorities reported their largest single seizure, totaling over 8,000 kilos in 12 pallets of bananas, and that same month Spanish authorities reported their largest seizure of nearly 9,500 kilos of cocaine also in a banana shipment.

Belgian authorities reported in 2023 they seized 116 tonnes of cocaine in Antwerp up from 110 tonnes in 2022. They used this information to advocate for additional action by the European Union and police in a coordinated effort to interrupt the flow of cocaine and other drugs through Europe's leading ports.