

Workshop on

# “Strengthening Competitiveness of the Internal Market by Developing the EU Customs Union and its Governance”

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## PROCEEDINGS





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### **Abstract**

This report summarises the discussion that took place at the workshop on “Strengthening Competitiveness of the Internal Market by Developing the EU Customs Union and its Governance”. The Union Customs Code is a key element of the ongoing actions to modernise EU customs. With the aim of discussing the main challenges related to this topic and the recent proposal of the European Commission to postpone the deadline of 2020, the workshop was hosted by Ms Virginie Rozière, MEP.

This document was prepared by Policy Department A at the request of the Committee on Internal Market and Consumer Protection.

This document was requested by the European Parliament's Committee on Internal Market and Consumer Protection.

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Original: EN

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Policy departments provide in-house and external expertise to support EP committees and other parliamentary bodies in shaping legislation and exercising democratic scrutiny over EU internal policies.

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Manuscript completed: May 2019

Date of publication: May 2019

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This document is available on the internet at:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/supporting-analyses>

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For citation purposes, the study should be referenced as: DOBRITA, A., Proceedings of the Workshop on "Strengthening Competitiveness of the Internal Market by Developing the EU Customs Union and its Governance", Study for the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection, Policy Department for Economic, Scientific and Quality of Life Policies, European Parliament, Luxembourg, 2019

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

|                |                                     |
|----------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>DA</b>      | Delegated acts                      |
| <b>EU</b>      | European Union                      |
| <b>IA</b>      | Implementing acts                   |
| <b>IT</b>      | Information Technology              |
| <b>MEP</b>     | Members of the European Parliament  |
| <b>NCTS</b>    | The New Computerised Transit System |
| <b>Q&amp;A</b> | Questions and Answers               |
| <b>UCC</b>     | Union Customs Code                  |
| <b>VAT</b>     | Value-added tax                     |

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The workshop began with MEP Virginie Rozière introducing the topic of the Union Customs Code (UCC) and presenting the speakers.

Opening the first panel, Prof Dr Tobias Stoll discussed in his presentation the current state of affairs of the Customs Union, the governance challenges that the UCC raises, as well as the interconnection of the IT system. Prof Stoll indicated that the main objective of the workshop was to gather information and examine the issues raised by the Commission's proposal to prolong the UCC's deadline.

The presentation of the second speaker, Mr Jos Verstraten, focused on the effects of postponing the infrastructure reform on the achievements of an efficient Customs Union, as well as on the possibilities to develop the Customs Union. Mr Verstraten pointed out that the Customs Union faces a period of transition. He talked about the lack of a system that results in reduced potential for trade facilitation and in ineffective customs controls. In practice, when talking about trade facilitation, the lack of e-government has repercussions on the Single Market. The fact that it is not fully implemented has a direct impact on the competitiveness of EU.

The second panel was opened by Mr Stephane Boissavy who focused on the French experience in implementing the UCC Work Program at the national level. Mr Boissavy also offered some proposals for improving the governance of the IT system in the coming years. He pointed out that France is concerned about the postponement of the program until 2025 and that his administration would prefer to stick with the 2020 deadline.

Then, Mr Vincent Van Immerzeel presented the challenges that Belgium has to face in the development phase of the IT system. In conclusion, Mr Van Immerzeel stated that Belgium supports the European Commission in the suggested way forward regarding the postponement. He also stated that, from the perspective of Belgian customs administration, the IT system is an absolute necessity for the good functioning of the Customs Union.

The next speaker was Mr Rob Roodenrijs, from the Customs Administration in the Netherlands, and his presentation points out the lessons that the Netherlands learnt in the process of implementing the IT system, as well as on suggestions to other Member States on how to implement the IT system. Concluding, Mr Roodenrijs stated that cooperation would be a cost-saving solution for all the Member States.

Mr Rory Geddis was the last speaker of the second panel. His focus was on the German experience with the implementation of the UCC. Mr Geddis emphasised that the UCC is intertwined and interdependent with other policy areas, and for this reason a coherent and structured implementation is needed.

Afterwards, a Q&A session took place where speakers took answers from the audience and replied to their interlocutors. The main issues discussed concerned the IT system delay and the level of investment of each country that is necessary for the implementation of the IT system.

The point of view of the European Commission was presented by Ms Susanne Aigner. In her presentation, Ms Aigner pointed out that the 2020 deadline was from the beginning very ambitious, in the same way as the 2016 deadline was for the entry into force of the UCC. Meeting deadlines is essentially due to the endless efforts of the Member States and Trade Associations.

Finally, stakeholders from different organisations and fields had a chance to present their cases. They mostly agreed on key points such as the need to have better communication between Member States, the need to focus more on the quality of the systems than on their speed, and the need to have a coherent and structured implementation of the UCC.

Before the concluding remarks, the Consumer Choice Centre had the chance to present the interests of consumers and to transmit their worries.

The workshop concluded with a quick recap of the main points, as well as a highlight on the general consensus among the experts regarding steps necessary to foster the implementation of all the IT system.

## 1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION



**Ms Virginie Rozière MEP**, opened the workshop sessions by pointing out that the implementation, development and governance of the Union Customs Code is extremely important for the functioning of the Internal Market.

Ms Rozière explained that even though the subject of the workshop was the implementation of the Custom Code, it is important not to neglect the delay that the Commission is proposing for the electronic customs and the effects that this delay may cause.

In her introductory remarks, Ms Rozière stated that the essential character of the policy was neglected and that there were only discussions referring to the technical questions that the UCC raises. Despite the fact that the technical aspect is certainly important, the political dimension and the cohesion of the European space cannot be ignored.

## 2. PANEL 1: STATE OF PLAY OF CUSTOMS REFORM AND OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

**Prof Dr Tobias Stoll** began his presentation by discussing the current state of affairs of the Customs Union and the related governance challenges. Internally, he explained, the main issue is the free movements of goods, while externally, it is more the common customs tariffs and the common trade policy.

Prof Stoll pointed out that the Commission proposal to postpone the deadline until 2025 is not just a deadline. It also has implications for the millions of economic operators in the European Union and for the common market. He underlined that the 2020 deadline obliges them to switch over to the IT system at precisely this deadline. Otherwise, the 2020 deadline will have legal consequences for the economic operators, and that is why a prolongation is now necessary.

The first main point of the Prof Stoll's presentation is that the electronic part and the rulebook part of the UCC are very closely interrelated. The rulebook can develop its full potential only in connection with the IT system.



Prof Stoll emphasised that from the seventeen components of the IT system, only a small number are under the responsibility of the Member States, while the large majority is taken care of at EU level. Furthermore, only some of those components need postponing, because the majority of them are in good shape already.

The second point that Prof Stoll made is that some of the projects are still waiting for a definition, so it is not simply about implementing them.

In his concluding remarks, Prof Stoll discussed the challenges of the electronic environment, distinguishing between systematic and dynamic challenges. For the systematic challenges, he pointed out prioritisation that means to decide in the management system which system comes first. The decision depends not only on relevance, but also on the number of internal systemic questions. This means that in many cases it is not possible to continue with some components of the electronic system before the problems with other components are not fixed. Regarding the dynamic challenges, Prof Stoll identified the following: technological innovation, the single window, data protection, cybersecurity, import controls, as well as Brexit. In his opinion, the dynamic challenges can aggravate over time, hence, they need more attention. He also pointed out that the longer you have to wait for the implementation of an IT system, the more new challenges, innovations, and new expectations appear. Therefore, postponing can result in even more complexity.

Prof Stoll concluded by saying that it is important to create a better risk communication system because of the many economic operators that rely on the IT system and on the dates given for its further development.

**Mr Jos Verstraten**, the Senior Tax Director at PwC Netherlands, focussed his presentation on the effects that the postponement of the infrastructure reform can have on the achievements of an efficient Customs Union.



Mr Verstraten pointed out that the implementation of rules and guidelines is necessary, but more necessary is legislation to have serious coordinated actions. Thus, these coordinated actions will ensure that information on new rules and procedures is widely available and easily managed on a day-to-day basis, as well as effectively and uniformly applied.

According to Mr Verstraten, customs face a transition period. There are inconsistencies in the system that result in an unfulfilled potential of trade facilitation and ineffective customs controls. He stated that the lack of e-government and the unimplemented legislations have repercussions on the Single Market and results in a loss of potential in trade facilitation that has, in the end, a direct impact on the competitiveness of the EU.

In his concluding remarks, Mr Verstraten insisted that each Member State is currently responsible for implementing its national systems. However, in reality, each Member State has its own national interests when focusing on its national IT system and they are not working in the same way. This makes it harder to develop a European system. In his view, systems should push everyone in the same direction with the same way of working.

### 3. PANEL 2: EXPERIENCE OF MEMBER STATES IN REFORMING CUSTOMS UNION: PAST DEVELOPMENTS AND FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

**Mr Stephane Boissavy** focused in the first part of his presentation on the challenges that France encountered in the process of implementing the UCC Work Program at national level. He stated that France is working on two main important programs: one related to arrival and presentations, and one related to imputations.

The fact that the deadline for these programs could be postponed beyond 2020 is a major concern for France, that has already made so much investment on the IT system. He explained that France is quite reluctant to stop the work and wait for an undetermined period. Mr Boissavy stated: “We would like to be able to carry on and, even if some Member States want to wait a longer period to develop the IT system, we would like to stick with the deadline of 2020”.

Mr Boissavy pointed out that one of the main challenges to implement the IT system is the legal basis on which France has to develop the systems at national level (Annexes A and B of DA/IA) and the fact that they are constantly evolving. The continuous changes in the regulations create difficulties in the development of the IT system. Mr Boissavy declared: “If the legal rules are evolving constantly it is difficult for us to adapt”. Another challenge that Mr Boissavy pointed out is the impact of the other EU projects, such as the VAT e-commerce package. It has a tremendous impact on the custom import system. France will have to recreate the system to receive 20 times more declarations as it does today (25 million declarations). “Hence, everything needs to be upgraded”, emphasised Mr Boissavy.

In the second part of his presentation, Mr Boissavy suggested some proposals mainly to improve the governance of the IT system. Firstly, he proposed that it is necessary to undertake a compressive legal assessment before beginning to develop any IT system. This means to make sure that each Member State is in line with the UCC Work Program calendar, and that it matches with the regulations and with other programs. He added: “When we will start, it is important to know that the rules will not change in the meantime”. Secondly, he suggested that a phased approach is more relevant. The third proposal he made was to be able to work on multi project planning because the UCC Work Program has 17 projects and it is important to have a better understanding of how these different projects are intertwined.

**Mr Vincent Van Immerzeel** focused in his presentation on the challenges that Belgium faces in the implementation of the IT system, as well as the conditions on which Belgium can accept the proposal of the Commission to postpone the deadline set in Article 278 of the UCC. One challenge that Mr Van Immerzeel emphasised is the interconnection of the electronic customs systems with other systems (the



platform for airports, seaports). He explained that these also have to implement new technologies.

Mr Van Immerzeel stated that Belgium would agree on the proposal of the EC to modify the deadline until 2025 only under certain conditions. Firstly, Belgium prefers prioritising better quality of the systems rather than speed to avoid the problems that can come with a system built too fast. The second condition pointed out by Mr Van Immerzeel was that Belgium would not agree with additional costs for the Member States in case of a delay: "For us, this is not acceptable".

In his concluding remarks, Mr Van Immerzeel stated that, for the Belgian custom administration, the IT system is an absolute necessity for the good functioning of the Customs Union. He also thanked the Commission for its ambitious way of governing the IT planning and the deployment process for 28 Member States.

**Mr Rob Roodenrijs** started his intervention by pointing out that the development of the IT system increases the competitiveness of the European Union. He stated that the Netherlands is aware of the fact that it has to serve the EU with a stream of goods coming into Europe (more than 40% of third country goods are coming in through the Netherlands). Because of this responsibility, the Netherlands has started a long time ago (in the 1980s) the automation process of their customs. Mr Roodenrijs noted that, in order to facilitate that stream of goods, the Netherlands developed several national systems to help them become quicker in the import and export of goods, and also to have facilitation for the customs itself.

In the second part of his presentation, Mr Roodenrijs shared the lessons that the Netherlands learnt in the implementation process and he offered some suggestions. First, before starting EU projects, it is important to have a look at the definitions and the process that describe the future systems. He stated: "It is necessary to describe processes in advance". Secondly, Mr Roodenrijs suggested the scoping of projects in order to make sure that the projects do not become bigger than it was intended.

Concluding, Mr Roodenrijs mentioned that cooperation would be one of the things that can help. In his opinion, cooperating by sharing the progress developed already by other Member States is a cost-saving solution for Member States.

**Mr Rory Geddis** started by saying that the 2020 deadline was from the beginning too ambitious. Even



if the UCC was adopted in 2013, it is important not to forget that the other legal acts, which are of major importance for the IT system implementation, were adopted late in 2015, and the last legal act was adopted in 2016.

One of the challenges that Germany confronted with was that UCC would oblige them to increase the number of customs declaration per annum from 230 million by 70 thousands authorisations.

Mr Geddis added that the current authorisations have to be reassessed if they comply with the rules of the UCC and, on top of that, new applications are coming in every day.

Mr Geddis also talked about the interdependence of the legal acts. He emphasised that around 10 national IT programs have to be updated and implemented, but the problem is that the legal package

is highly complex and fragmented. Changes in the legal projects, he explained, have an impact on the IT projects because are all intertwined.

About the Commission's proposal to postpone the deadline until 2025, Mr Geddis stated that the proposal should include not only the trans-European IT system, but also the national IT system. He explained that Member States need specifications from the Commission to update the national systems. If they are updating them and it is necessary to wait for the trans-European systems to be implemented, Member States fear that this would oblige them to re-update the national systems. Mr Geddis considered that this situation would generate additional costs for customs but also for traders who may reduce in the end their competitiveness.

In the last part of his presentation, Mr Geddis offered some solutions from the German point of view. Firstly, the extension of the deadline until 2025 could be possible but only if it includes operational deadlines for the related legal acts. Secondly, quality should prevail over speed. Third, the implementation of the UCC and other policies should be coherent, such as the VAT package that also has to be implemented. Indeed, the other policy areas are intertwined and interdependent so a coherent and structured implementation is necessary.

At the end of the second panel, Ms Virginie Rozière asked questions concerning the IT system delay and the reason why the customs IT system are so specific in comparison with other IT system from different policy areas. Ms Rozière also asked for clarifications from Germany regarding their position, as well as the level of investment of each country that is necessary for the implementation of the IT system.

Prof Dr Stoll and Mr Boissavy took the floor. Prof Stoll stated that there are two different deadlines, one legal and one technical. The legal deadline, he explained, is the main problem because if the electronic systems are not in place, businesses will have to claim against the EU for not being able to pursue their custom transactions. He considered that it is justified to call the UCC provisions a legal deadline because businesses cannot do their customs transactions on paper anymore, if the deadline remains as it is.

Regarding the investments, Ms Boissavy explained that it is not only about investment, is it also about several steps that need to be taken in the implementation process of the IT system. He explained that these steps include setting the business case, then developing, testing, and training. He also stated 2 or 3 years are necessary for this. The core aspect of the business case is not definite which explains why more time is needed in order to be ready.

## 4. VIEW FROM THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Ms Susanne Aigner, the Head of Unit for Customs Legislations, focused her presentation on the legal framework of the UCC. She mentioned that the need to amend the deadline of 2020 was discussed in the Commission meetings with the Member States and with the experts. It became clear then that it is not possible to meet the deadline for all the systems. The UCC, explained Ms Aigner, tries to resolve issues such as the harmonisation of data requirements, facilitation as well as simplification, but there are different data requirements in the different Member States. It is much more difficult than to implement new systems, added Ms Aigner.

Furthermore, Ms Aigner stated that the EU would only benefit after all the systems are in place. Regarding simplification, Ms Aigner pointed out that it has to be balanced with the control aspect, because the UCC has to also protect the EU citizens. Ms Aigner added that trade representatives and Member States also participated in the meetings, because their feedback is very important and helps guarantee uniform interpretation and implementation. Trade representatives, she explained, are also invited to the discussion regarding the IT system, because not only the Member States and the Commission have to deploy and develop the IT system, trade groups also have to introduce the systems and provide data. As a conclusion to this point, Ms Aigner stated that the delay did not come as a surprise to trade stakeholders.



The second point of Ms Aigner's presentation was regarding communication.

She pointed out that having systems that can communicate with each other is not simple. The electronic systems are interlinked, and their aim is to achieve not only the best solutions for simplification, but also for control purposes and reusing data. "There are not only 17 systems that we are talking about. We are talking about very

complex and serious systems, almost circular", Ms Aigner stated. These systems have been partially developed already, which means close to 80% of the systems will be completed by the Member States and by the Commission by the end of 2020. "We are not talking about postponing everything", insisted Ms Aigner.

In her concluding remarks, Ms Aigner recognised that the Commission made a mistake when it underestimated the effort that it will take to harmonise and to align the data elements with the global standards that have been translated in the European data model.

## 5. ROUNDTABLE - VIEWS FROM STAKEHOLDERS

### **Mr Maurice Fermont - Business Europe, Customs Adviser**

Mr Maurice Fermont started his presentation by pointing out that Business Europe supports the entry into force of the UCC, but that it is concerned about the risks of losing the balance between simplification and security requirements.

His intervention focused on the one hand on the specific challenges of the UCC implementation, and on the other hand, on the simplification that businesses need from policy makers in order to improve the competitiveness of the Internal Market.



Based on these challenges, Mr Fermont emphasised the business needs.

First, they need self-assessment. In the strongest form of simplification, goods will be labelled with identification number upon their arrival in the EU. This would be an ideal system, instead of making import declarations at the time of the import. Companies should be able to file these declarations periodically as a means of simplification, added Mr Fermont. The risk control should be done before, in order to facilitate this

simplification and this would lead to a change from a transaction-based process to a business oriented process. While the UCC includes the basis of this simplification, they are missing in the implementing/delegated acts. Second, the postponement of the implementation is very disappointing for trade because the delay has a negative impact on achieving a centralised customs clearance.

Mr Fermont concluded his presentation by stating that businesses encourage Member States and the Commission to make use of pilot projects with trade where possible because that could be an early identification of unseen problems.

### **Mr. Matthias Maedge - International Road Transport Union (IRU), Brussels General Delegate**

Mr Maedge had two main comments related to the needs of clarification and simplification for the business sector.

He stated that the delay is not a problem as long as it is clear. Transactions and operations must stay efficient in time and money. Planning is the key word and businesses are certainly able to digitalise at a much faster pace. He also stated that businesses understand that the delay of the implementation of the UCC in some Member States may cause a problem for moving faster.

Furthermore, Mr Maedge pointed out that seamless and efficient trade depends on the Customs Union. The lack of harmonisation is bad for trade and business, but Mr Maedge stated that they could accept the delay of the implementation of the UCC if it leads to more clarity and efficiency.

The same information should be required by all customs, the common set of data and the common technical specifications. Quality goes before speed, Mr Maedge added.

Mr Maedge concluded his intervention by saying that the definition of a realistic timeframe from a business point of view, and continuous close involvement of the business community are the keys to success. Mr Maedge added that businesses are devoted and dedicated to support the Member States and DG TAXUD in the trade content group, and in the electronic custom coordination group. He stated that good solutions for transport are good solutions for the Internal Market, for the EU/non-EU trade, for EU trade and for the consumers.

**Mr Miguel Angel Caramello Alvarez - Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER), Chief Legal Officer**

In his presentation, Mr Caramello Alvarez discussed the customs transit system called New Computerised Transit System (NCTS). He noted that NCTS is not so friendly for the rail sector because it has different codes which means that the rail sector has to adapt its codes for the NCTS. Mr Caramello Alvarez pointed out that a very high investment is needed to adapt the systems in this transitional period. There will be many data introduced manually which is labour intensive and will mean that the rail sector will lose a lot of time. This means the loss of slots and, as Mr Alvarez emphasised, if the rail sector loses slots it is a real drama, especially for international transport. Concluding, Mr Alvarez mentioned that the rail sector needs another system that will help it simplify the transport procedures.

**Ms Annemie Peeters - European Sea Ports Organisation, Adviser on Trade Facilitation, Customs and Security Committee**

Ms Annemie Peeters first stated that seaports largely depend on public services and authorities as facilitators for the trading companies. Customs authorities are the gatekeepers that pursue the highest standards in security and safety, Ms Peeters added. Therefore, seaports warmly welcome the UCC legal package. Seaports, Ms Peeters explained, are in favour of the aim to implement a harmonised customs legislation and harmonised connected IT system, whilst ensuring a level playing field between Member States. Ms Peeters pointed out that a negative aspect of the legal acts is that they are not as explicit as they should be, which leads to a broad interpretation between customs authorities and in the end to a diverging implementation of the harmonised custom legislation.

In the second part of her presentation, Ms Peeters made some remarks on the existing unclarities of the amended legislation, and she offered some suggestions. Firstly, the need to harmonise the interpretation of the UCC among Member States to create a level playing field in order to stimulate legitimate trade and to prevent anticompetitive behaviour. Secondly, the need to strengthen collaboration between customs authorities of Member States to act as one custom authority in order to reinforce the Internal Market. Thirdly, the need to avoid optional elements (e.g. optional data elements in customs declarations) to harmonise customs procedures and to avoid additional costs for the logistic chain. Finally, the need to ensure sufficient funding to develop and deploy IT infrastructure on both European and national levels.

**Ms Tonka Kostadinova - European Express Association, Director, Customs Regulatory Affairs, DHL Express Europe**

Ms Tonka Kostadinova pointed out in her presentation that the UCC is a package that guarantees the competitiveness of the EU and European business. She also noted that the UCC ensures the security and safety of the EU citizens. In her concluding remarks, Ms Kostadinova stressed that the full benefit of the UCC will be fully ensured when the entire IT system will be implemented.

**Mr Dominique Willems - Senior customs expert, Comité de Liaison Européen des Commissionnaires et Auxiliaires de Transport du Marché Commun (CLECAT)**

Mr Dominique Willems started his presentation by saying that the UCC has an enormous impact on their customers. One of the main issues relating to the UCC, Mr Willems explained, might be the highest expectations of management because if you are already at the very top it is of course difficult to make major improvements. Mr Willems also added that customs are already largely, maybe even more than 95%, digital.

**Mr Luca Bertoletti, Consumer Choice Centre**

Mr Luca Bertoletti focused his presentation on safeguarding the interests of the consumers in the EU. He pointed out that consumers are worried about the cost of the delay following the postponement of the deadline to 2025, because in the end those that will pay the costs will be the consumers by paying more taxes. Another important point that Mr Bertoletti emphasised is that digitalisation should be consumer friendly and that consumers should be offered the tools to understand the Customs Union. Mr Bertoletti mentioned that consumers are wondering why a 5-year delay is necessary and whether it is a real problem with the IT system and its implementation, or whether there is another reason for the delay.

## 6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

After the presentations of all the stakeholders, Ms Virginie Rozière (MEP) took the opportunity to thank all of the participants for their presentations and interventions. She briefly summarised the main points of each speaker and welcomed the information given by the Commission regarding the postponement of the deadline to 2025. Ms Rozière pointed out that the discussions put into perspective the technical reality of implementing the IT system, but they also offered a legal perspective of the UCC that explains the necessity of a postponement.



## 7. WORKSHOP PROGRAMME

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**WORKSHOP**  
**for**  
**INTERNAL MARKET AND CONSUMER PROTECTION COMMITTEE**  
**on**  
***Strengthening Competitiveness of the Internal Market by Developing the EU Customs Union and its Governance***

**Chair: Ms Virginie ROZIÈRE (MEP)**

**9 October 2018, 15.00 – 18.30**  
**Room - Brussels: Altiero Spinelli A5E-2**

### AGENDA

**15.00-15.10**      **Welcome and introduction:** Ms Virginie Rozière (MEP)

**Panel 1**              **State of play of customs reform and options for the future**  
***State of the customs union and governance challenges***

**15.10-15.25**      Prof. Dr Tobias Stoll, Goettingen University

***Effects of postponing IT infrastructure reform on the achievement of an efficient customs union and options to develop the customs union***

**15.25-15.40**      Mr Jos Verstraten, Senior Director, PricewaterhouseCoopers

**15.40-16.00**      **Q&A session**

**Panel 2**              **Experience of Member States in reforming Customs Union: past developments and future opportunities**

**French, German, Dutch and Belgian experience**

**16.00-16.10**      Mr Stephane Boissavy, Directorate-General of Customs and Indirect Taxes, France

**16.10-16.20**      Mr Vincent Van Immerzeel, Customs attaché, Administration générale des Douanes et Accises, Belgium

**16.20-16.30**      Mr Rob Roodenrijs, Customs Administration of the Netherlands, National Office

**16.30–16.40** Mr Rory Geddis, Senior Customs Expert, German Federal Ministry of Finance

## **16.40-16.50 Q&A session**

### **View from the European Commission**

**16.50-17.00** Ms Susanne Aigner, Head of Unit for Customs Legislation, DG TAXUD

**Roundtable aiming at presenting views from stakeholders on challenges and future opportunities**

### **Views from stakeholders**

**17.00-17.05** **Business Europe**, Mr Maurice Fermont, Customs Adviser

**17.05-17.10** **International Road Transport Union (IRU)**, Mr. Matthias Maedge, Brussels General Delegate

**17.10-17.15** **Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER)**, Mr Miguel Angel Caramello Alvarez, Chief Legal Officer

**17.15-17.20** **European Sea Ports Organisation**, Ms Annemie Peeters, Adviser on Trade Facilitation, Customs and Security Committee

**17.20-17.25** **European Express Association**, Ms Tonka Kostadinova, Director, Customs Regulatory Affairs, DHL Express Europe

**17.25-17.30** **Comité de Liaison Européen des Commissionnaires et Auxiliaires de Transport du Marché Commun (CLECAT)**, Mr Dominique Willems, Senior customs expert

**17.30-17.35** **Federation of Customs Brokers and Customs Representatives, CONFIAD**, Mr Massimo De Gregorio, President of CONFIAD

### **Safeguarding interests of European consumers**

**17.35-17.45** **Consumer Choice Centre**, Mr Luca Bertoletti

### **General discussion**

**17.45-18.25** General discussion among experts and participants

**18.25-18.30** Conclusion and closing remarks - Ms Virginie ROZIÈRE (MEP)

## 8. SHORT BIOGRAPHIES OF SPEAKERS

### **Prof Dr Tobias Stoll, Goettingen University**



Prof Dr Stoll holds the Jean Monnet Chair for European Union and Global Sustainable Development through Law and is a Professor for Public and Public International Law and at the University of Göttingen. He co-directs the Institute for International Law and European Law and heads the Department for International Economic and Environmental Law.

Prof Tobias occasionally acted as a member of German delegations to multilateral negotiations and did work with the United Nations, the European Parliament, the German Federal Parliament, and advised several governmental and non-governmental organisations. Prof Tobias actually serves as a Dean for Research and internationalization and Erasmus coordinator.

### **Mr Jos Verstraten, Senior Director, PricewaterhouseCoopers**



Following a career with Dutch Customs, Jos joined PwC in 1995 to provide advice to clients on more complex customs and international trade issues. He has a wide range of experience in customs matters, such as excise duties, control procedures (in particular on customs duty relief procedures), classification and VAT. In addition, Jos has extensive worldwide experience in customs and related matters and is specialised in audits and reviews on customs and VAT matters. Before joining PwC, Jos' service with Dutch Customs included leading the technical committee of several major customs offices.

### **Mr Stephane Boissavy**



Mr Boissavy works for the Directorate-General of Customs and Indirect Taxes in France.

### **Mr Vincent Van Immerzeel**



Mr Van Immerzeel is the Customs attaché for the Administration générale des Douanes et Accises in Belgium.

**Mr Rob Roodenrijs, Customs Administration of the Netherlands, National Office**



Mr Rob Roodenrijs has always been involved in developing simplifications and facilitations in customs procedures. He organised the initial setting up of Single European Authorisations between multinational companies in the Netherlands and other Member States customs administrations (the UK and Germany). Mr Rob Roodenrijs also took part in the Brussels-negotiations for the Modernised Customs Code.

**Mr Rory Geddis**



Mr Geddis is a Senior Customs Expert at the German Federal Ministry of Finance.

**Ms Susanne Aigner, Head of Unit for Customs Legislation, DG TAXUD**



Ms Susanne Aigner joined the European Commission to work on international customs matters and customs legislation, most recently as Acting Head of the Risk Management and Security Unit in DG Taxation and Customs Union. At the EU, Susanne was extensively involved in the development and implementation of EU customs policy and legislation, including the Modernized Customs Code, the Common Risk Management Framework and the Authorized Economic Operator system.

**Mr Maurice Fermont, Customs Adviser, Business Europe**



Mr Maurice Fermont is working as an adviser on international trade and investment at Business Europe. He gained experience in trade issues while working at the European Commission's DG Trade, and has a good understanding of Asia after having spent one year in China. He was a research assistant at RAND Corporation, and received extensive training at the Netherlands Institute of International Relations, Clingendael.

**Mr Matthias Maedge, Brussels General Delegate for the International Road Transport Union (IRU).**



In his role as a General Delegate of the IRU Permanent Delegation to the EU, Matthias Maedge's vision is to further increase IRU's voice for commercial road transport in Europe and to ensure that the industry is ready for the challenges and opportunities ahead. Prior to his involvement in the alternatively fuelled vehicle business, Matthias worked in the German parliament (Bundestag) and served as research associate to the shadow Secretary for Education.

Matthias started his professional career as an Officer in the German army.

**Mr Miguel Angel Caramello Alvarez, Chief Legal Officer, Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER)**



Mr André Hoddevik is Head of e-procurement unit in the Department for public procurement in the Norwegian Agency for Public Management and eGovernment (Difi) and Secretary General in OpenPEPPOL AISBL. He was the Project Director of the Pan-European Public Procurement Online (PEPPOL) project 2008-2012. He is a contributor to European cooperation on e-procurement and e-invoicing through his national responsibilities and in his role as Secretary General in OpenPEPPOL.

**Ms Annemie Peeters**

Ms Peeters works as an Adviser on Trade Facilitation, Customs and Security Committee, European Sea Ports Organisation.

**Ms Tonka Kostadinova**



Ms Kostadinova is the Director of the Department Customs Regulatory Affairs, European Express Association, DHL Express Europe.

**Mr Dominique Willems**



Mr Willems is a Senior customs expert, Comité de Liaison Européen des Commissionnaires et Auxiliaires de Transport du Marché Commun (CLECAT). He is in charge of Digitalisation/IT and Customs & Indirect Taxation.

**Mr Massimo De Gregorio**



Mr De Gregorio is the President of CONFIAD, Federation of Customs Brokers and Customs Representatives.

**Mr Luca Bertoletti, Consumer Choice Centre**



Luca graduated with a degree in Political Science from the University of Milan in December 2014. He worked as a Business Economics Analyst for the Italian magazine The Fielder in Milan and as Think Thank Coordinator for the Austrian Economics Center in Vienna. He is a fellow of Competere Institute in Rome, a columnist for Atlantico Quotidiano, and he sits on the scientific board of New Direction Italia.

## 9. PRESENTATIONS

1. **State of the customs union and governance challenges** by Prof Stoll
2. **Effects of postponing IT infrastructure reform on the achievement of an efficient customs union and options to develop the customs union** by Mr Verstraten
3. **Opportunities and challenges of the EU customs it reform** by Mr Van Immerzeel
4. **Implementation of the Union Customs Code in Germany** by Mr Geddis
5. **Customs Administration of the Netherlands** by Mr Roodenrijs
6. **Workshop on strengthening the competitiveness of the internal market by developing the EU Customs Union and its governance** – by Mr Maedge
7. **Challenges of IT customs reforms** by Mr Caramello-Alvarez
8. **Confédération Internationale des agents en douane** by Mr De Gregorio
9. **European seaports need efficient customs** by Ms Peeters
10. **French experience in reforming Customs Code** by Mr Boissavy
11. **Strengthening the competitiveness of the Internal Market by developing the EU customs union and its governance** by Mr Bertolotti

### ACCESS THE FULL CONTENT OF THE PRESENTATION HERE:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/events-workshops.html?id=20180907wks01861>





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This report summarises the discussion that took place at the workshop on “Strengthening Competitiveness of the Internal Market by Developing the EU Customs Union and its Governance”. The Union Customs Code is a key element of the ongoing actions to modernise EU customs. With the aim of discussing the main challenges related to this topic and the recent proposal of the European Commission to postpone the deadline of 2020, the workshop was hosted by Ms Virginie Rozière, MEP.

This document was prepared by Policy Department A at the request of the Committee on Internal Market and Consumer Protection.

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