

Joint Statement of EU and Global Industry & Trade Associations on International Customs Day 2025

Theme: "Customs Delivering on its Commitment to Efficiency, Security, and Prosperity"

On International Customs Day 2025, the undersigned industry and trade associations, represented in the European Union's Trade Contact Group (TCG) reaffirm their commitment to fostering a strong partnership between customs authorities and the trade community. In line with the World Customs Organization's (WCO) 2025 theme: a Commitment to Efficiency, Security and Prosperity, our organisations emphasize the critical need for increased investment in customs operations and effective public-private partnerships to address the growing complexity of global trade and to achieve greater efficiency, security, and economic prosperity.

Our organisations call for efficient, stable, and innovative IT systems to align customs processes with the rapidly evolving supply chain. These systems should also boost business competitiveness through streamlined, business-friendly procedures that ensure smooth and predictable operations, particularly for trusted economic operators. Digital solutions, such as interoperable platforms and real-time data sharing, are essential for enabling a border that works for trade and security, able to implement centralized clearance and the "single window" approach. These advances will ensure that customs procedures are both efficient and capable of supporting a future oriented customs reform both in the EU and around the world. Customs IT Systems must proactively adopt the latest technologies moving beyond a reactive stance of retrospective over-regulation. Legislators and regulators should ensure that any IT-related elements of new customs legislation are designed for swift updates in both system processes and technology.

Simultaneously, strengthening border security must remain a priority. Advanced technologies, including artificial intelligence and machine learning alongside ambitious, trusted partnerships between industry and law enforcement, are pivotal in enhancing risk management systems and combating illicit trade while ensuring the seamless flow of legitimate goods. This dual focus on security and facilitation ensures that customs authorities can adapt to emerging threats while increasing trade facilitation for legitimate business.

Furthermore, our organisations stress the importance of investing in the recruitment and training of a highly skilled workforce. Customs professionals must be equipped with the knowledge, the expertise, and the tools to navigate the complexities of modern trade environments and leverage innovative technologies effectively. Building this capacity is fundamental to achieving the goals of International Customs Day 2025.

We call on policymakers to prioritize the adoption of effective and balanced legislation and the allocation of resources to customs authorities, recognizing their pivotal role in enabling trade, securing borders, and driving economic growth. Investments in IT infrastructure and workforce development will ensure customs can deliver on its commitments, meet the objectives of the WCO's 2025 theme, and support the goals outlined in the EU Customs Reform.

This International Customs Day, our organisations ask all stakeholders to reaffirm their dedication to ensuring that customs authorities and economic operators have the regulatory frameworks, partnerships, tools, and resources they need to tackle future challenges and to fulfil their critical role in the global trade ecosystem.

Date: January 23, 2025

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