

Action programme for customs (Customs 2020), 2014-2020

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This Commission staff working paper on the Customs 2020 programme concerns the progress report for 2017.

The report highlighted that 2017 was the fourth year of activities under the Customs 2020 programme and in many ways similar to 2016.

The numbers of European Information Systems (and their availability), actions, events, trainings and participants remained at high levels, testifying to a strong demand from business owners and national administrations for programme activities.

Budget and new joint action (expert teams)

There were no significant changes to the budget, notwithstanding the absence in committed expenses dedicated to the new type of joint actions introduced during 2016 and that continued during 2017 - the Expert Teams. The vast majority of the spending under the programme continues to be spent on the European Information Systems. The IT related expenditure is projected to rise further in the future, as the new systems connected to the Union Customs Code continue to be developed.

In the area of joint actions, the co-operation between the Commission and national administration in the running and functioning of the customs union would be impossible without the use of project groups, seminars, workshops, working visits, monitoring visits, capacity building activities and other types of joint actions.

Key observations

These can be deduced from the analysis of the performance measurement framework indicators in 2017 are as follows:

- continued strong demand for programme support. This can be seen in the stable levels of the number of activities, organised events and participation levels. These levels are high and similar to 2016 numbers;
- high level of achievement of results of the joint actions is reported by the action managers. The measured level of 3 corresponds to "results achieved to a large extent", which is the case for all joint actions. This indicates that, as in previous years, the business owners see the value of the programme for achieving the policy objectives;
- very positive assessment of the achieved results of the joint actions, their usefulness and met expectations by national customs officials who participated in them. The values remain high and above targets, as in previous years, with minor fluctuations over the years for some of the operational objectives. This shows that the programme participants find that the programme activities correspond to their stated objectives and are professionally useful to them;
- increase in the degree of networking among programme participants. The lasting networking averaged at around 70% during 2015-2016, rising to 84% in 2017, facilitating the exchange of best practices and better functioning of the customs union;

- the European Information Systems are regularly operated and are resistant to increased volume of data traffic. The volume of data traffic on European Information Systems increased by a large margin in 2017, while the performance and availability remained very high;
- there were key new European Information Systems that entered into operation in 2017 (in particular the Customs Decision System and REX), and many more systems entered research and development phases thanks to the support of the programme;
- successful operational development of the Expert Team tool. Three new Expert Teams that were launched during 2016, in the area of cooperation to manage the eastern and south-eastern land border (CELBET), making best use of resources in customs classification issues (BTI) and in customs laboratories, produced their main outputs during 2017;
- significant increase of customs professionals (public and private sector) trained on EU Customs eLearning modules. The use of EU Custom eLearning modules by national administrations increased in 2017 by 43% (increase in number of trained officials compared to 2016). More than 204.000 private sector professionals (traders) trained on EU Customs eLearning courses in 2017.

The Commission concluded that the indicators suggested that during the year the programme was on course to fulfilling its objectives and that it played an important role in facilitating the implementation and development of Union customs policy through its European Information Systems, joint actions and human competency building.