Customs 2000: Community action programme 1996-2000

1995/0087(COD) - 09/10/1995

The committee adopted the report by Mr von WOGAU on the action programme for customs in the Community ("Customs 2000"). This programme aimed to ensure the smooth operation of the internal market by harmonising conditions at the EU's external borders. The programme should guarantee equal treatment for both citizens and external trade operators. In this way, the internal market could become a genuine domestic market ("Heimatmarkt") by the year 2000. Most of the amendments adopted by the committee related to specific improvements to customs operations in the Community: - Achieving genuine mobility of customs officials between Member States to raise awareness of the concept of customs in the Community; - Improving checks by harmonising them both quantitatively and qualitatively. A genuine policy for retrospective checks (post-clearance) should also be drawn up; - Ensuring common interpretation of customs legislation; - Improving the results obtained in the collection of duties evaded or the recovery of amounts wrongly paid out by giving greater consideration to the measures taken by the Member States and by identifying the cases in which the guarantees established under Community law were inadequate in relation to the risks incurred; - Permitting access to information stored in the databases of other Member States; - Examining the discrepancies in the powers granted to customs officers and the measures to be adopted in order to approximate and harmonise these powers; - Increasing the use of computer systems by the customs services as rapidly as possible; - Creating a European Customs Academy with a view to improving training; - Strengthening cooperation with third countries, notably the CEECs, particularly by extending the Matthaeus programme to these countries.