Customs 2000: Community action programme 1996-2000

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The Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs unanimously adopted the report by Mr Karl VON WOGAU on the "Customs 2000" programme. This programme hoped to ensure the smooth operation of the internal market by establishing uniform conditions at the European Union's external borders. In its common position, the Council took over less than half of the amendments adopted by the EP at first reading. The Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs thus included once again the most important amendments not taken over by the Council. These included the proposals to: - reaffirm the concept of the domestic market (Heimatmarkt); - render the concept of Community customs more tangible (distinctive symbols on uniforms); - ensure genuine mobility of customs officials between the various Member States; - ensure harmonised training (joint further training programmes, European Customs Academy); - harmonise checks with regard to both quality and quantity. It was also important to draw up a proper policy for retrospective checks (post-clearance); - submit a report on the Member States' legal provisions in order to highlight the difficulties encountered and ensure better coordination; - ensure joint interpretation of customs legislation; - ensure that all customs offices could provide real-time information on TIR documents; - computerise the Community transit system; - facilitate access to information stored in the databases of other Member States; - examine discrepancies in the powers granted to customs officers and consider the measures to be adopted in order to approximate and harmonise them; - strengthen cooperation with third countries and particularly the CEECs by opening up to them training programmes such as Matthaeus; - sharing the financing of the programme (ECU 50 million, including administrative costs for the period 1996-2000) between the Community and the Member States;