Customs 2000: Community action programme 1996-2000

1995/0087(COD) - 19/12/1996 - Final act

OBJECTIVE: to adopt a programme to ensure coordinated action by the Member States and the Commission on customs matters for the period 1996-2000. COMMUNITY MEASURE : Decision No 210 /97/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council adopting an action programme for customs in the Community ("Customs 2000"). SUBSTANCE: 1) The objective of the programme is to increase the effectiveness of customs procedures and controls at the Union's external border while ensuring transparency in the application of Community law and identifying the difficulties encountered in implementing that law. For this purpose, Community action supplementing and supporting the action of the Member States in this field is based on a common framework of objectives with seven main aims for action: -to guarantee that Community law is applied in such a way as to achieve equivalent results at every point of Community customs territory in order to: .avoid distortions likely to prejudice the proper functioning of the internal market, .protect the Community's interests, particularly its financial interests, . afford an equivalent level of protection to the Community's citizens and economic operators; -to provide a framework for considering the Community dimension in the organization of customs services and in the provision of infrastructures and equipment, and promote the joint use of operational material; -to foster initiatives that Member States may propose in order to improve the overall efficiency of customs administrations; -to help Member States develop training for customs administration officials by adapting it to their changing role in the implementation of Community customs rules; -to contribute to the establishment or development of high-quality customs services in third countries that so request under agreements to be concluded with those countries; -to encourage openness and efficiency of customs action for the benefit of legitimate trade by strengthening relations between the Community's customs administrations; -to help the customs administrations of the associated countries which wish to accede to the Union. 2) Implementation of the programme: the programme entails genuine partnership between the Commission and the Member States in the Customs Policy Committee, made up of Directors-General of Customs Administrations from the Commission and the Member States. 3) Awareness of Community action: measures are taken to contribute to awareness of the Community dimension of customs, particularly by providing that customs officials may wear uniforms featuring the twelve-star symbol of the Community. 4) Specific measures: the programme provides for a series of specific measures, including: -improving customs controls: .by making sure that controls are carried out homogeneously, .by ensuring better application of existing Community provisions, .by means of collaboration between customs services to avoid distortions of competition, .by promoting methods of identifying and analysing risks and a posteriori control techniques, etc; -monitoring and improving Community rules and procedures; -recovery of customs duties unpaid or evaded, or recovering amounts wrongly paid out; -combatting fraud: a genuine policy to combat fraud is to be formulated at Community level to take account of the progress of European integration, the Community's international commitments and developments in the customs situation in this regard. This policy is to aim in particular at taking maximum advantage of existing legislation and improving the exploitation of information at Community level, making the fullest use of information technology and the use of computer systems by the customs services; -improving the working methods of customs administrations, particularly in the fields of risk analysis, use of audit techniques to check undertakings' accounts, the use of computerized handling of customs procedures, and the conclusion of memoranda of understanding with economic operators in order to establish appropriate control facilities; -identifying, in partnership with Member States, particular sectors of customs legislation which should be monitored. In particular, this will involve organizing visits to particular points in Community customs territory in order to identify the best working methods and any difficulties in implementing the rules observed at the various sites studied; -reviewing the role and powers of customs officials; -rational and coordinated use of resources; -determination of administrative customs penalties to ensure that Community legislation is enforced effectively; -training of customs officials (particularly,

development of training for instructors, initial training, exchanges of officials, in due course the introduction of common core training programmes for customs officials, extension of the Matthaeus programme to the Central and Eastern European countries that wish to accede to the Community, etc); - training and technical assistance actions for the customs administrations of third countries; -improving relations between customs administrations and operators engaged in external trade. 5) Reports and evaluations: the programme is to be subject to continuous evaluation by the Commission, which will forward to Parliament and the Council, by 30.06.1998 at the latest, an interim report on its implementation, and, by 30.06.2001, a final report. In the meantime, by 30.06.1999, the Commission is to submit a communication on the desirability of continuing the programme. 6) Financing: the financial framework for the programme (without prejudice to actions for which funding is provided under other Community programmes) is ECU 50 m for the period 01.01.1996 to 31.12.2000. Each Member State is also to participate in the achievement of the aims of the programme to the extent of its involvement. ENTRY INTO FORCE: the decision enters into force on 04.02.1997. The programme is applicable from 01.01.1996.