Customs 2000: Community action programme 1996-2000

1995/0087(COD) - 25/10/1995 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted the report by Mr Karl von WOGAU (PPE, D) on the "Customs 2000" programme with the following amendments: - the programme should do more to raise awareness of customs in the Community. In this respect, it was important to ensure genuine mobility of customs officials within the Community. Officials should also wear the same uniform throughout the Community or at least display common symbols that were easily recognisable (the 12 stars of the Community); - a single European customs authority could eventually be established and financed with the portion of levies and customs duties currently received by the Member States. In Parliament's view, the creation of a European domestic market required common protection of external borders and the total removal of internal barriers by the year 2000; - checks should be harmonised both qualitatively (by developing targeting and risk-analysis techniques) and quantitatively (by approximating the frequency of checks). A proper policy for retrospective checks (post-clearance) made on transnational companies should also be drawn up; - customs legislation should be interpreted in a similar manner and there should be greater standardisation within the customs services themselves (particularly with regard to staff); - to improve the results obtained in the collection of duties evaded or the recovery of amounts wrongly paid out, the Commission should submit a report on the difficulties encountered in this area by customs authorities in the Community and take all possible steps to coordinate the action of Member States in cases in which the guarantees established under Community law were inadequate in relation to the risks incurred; - increasing the use of computer systems by the customs services: ensuring that, by 1 January 1997, all customs offices could provide real-time information on TIR documents issued and received and that the common transit regime was computerised before 1 January 1998; - concluding protocols of agreement with any authorised representative of external trade operators in order to establish appropriate facilities for controlling, checking or exchanging information which may help to protect the Union's financial interests; - proposing measures to facilitate access to information stored in the databases of other Member States (and, if necessary, measures for entering in a single database the data stored by the 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; - considering eventually creating a European Customs Academy to provide common basic training for customs officers; - cooperating with third countries (particularly the CEECs) by extending training programmes such as the Matthaeus programme to these countries; - with regard to the budget, the programme would be financed by the Community and the Member States. The Commission should inform the EP of the measures implemented and finance the organisation of seminars provided for in the programme which involved the least expense; - the Commission should submit a final report on the implementation of this programme by 30 June 1999 at the latest and an interim report by 30 June 1998.