

Electronic customs and trade: a paperless environment for customs and trade, implementing the Single Window and One-Stop Shop

2005/0247(COD) - 30/11/2005 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: proposal containing actions and deadlines for the implementation of accessible and interoperable electronic customs systems, describing the responsibilities of the Member States and the Community and establishing a governance framework.

PROPOSED ACT: Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council.

CONTENT: the Decision promoting electronic customs is an instrument for the implementation of interoperable and accessible automated customs systems, both under the current and the future modernized Customs Code, and for coordinated processes and services. It is intended to create the necessary commitment, with regard to border agencies other than customs, to implementing the 'Single Window' and 'One-Stop Shop' concepts. Its main purpose is to determine the action to be taken and deadlines met by all stakeholders in order to achieve the objective of a simple and paperless environment for customs and trade by the time the modernized Customs Code enters into force.

All stakeholders will commit themselves to setting up and operating secure, interoperable and accessible electronic customs systems that improve and facilitate supply chain logistics and customs processes. Customs clearance will become more efficient, administrative burdens will be reduced, trade will be facilitated, the safety of goods and security of international trade will be increased and environmental and consumer protection will be enhanced through better targeted customs controls based on electronic risk management systems.

The Commission points out that Member States have already invested significantly in the development of automated customs systems. However, the difference between existing systems, sets of rules and data used offsets the advantages of any harmonization achieved in this field so far, primarily because of the lack of interoperability between these systems. It is essential that customs systems are able to exchange electronic information and are provided with a range of interfaces with the trade, based on commonly used technology.

The draft decision states that the Commission and the Member States aim to deliver pan-European e-Government services through interoperable and accessible electronic customs systems. This will facilitate supply chain logistics and customs processes for the movement of goods into and out of the European Community and reduce the risk of threats to the safety and security of citizens. Based on this premise, the proposal lays down the main objectives of electronic customs systems. It requires that the customs systems operated by the customs administrations and by the Commission are to be accessible to economic operators and to be interoperable, both with each other and with systems operated by other authorities involved in the international movement of goods.

The provisions contain a list of systems and databases related to the electronic customs initiative, in order of their implementation deadlines (starting from the publication of this Decision in the Official Journal of the European Union):

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within three years: interoperable automated customs clearance systems; an interoperable system of registration for economic operators; common customs information portals;

- within five years: a framework for single access points; an integrated tariff environment corresponding to Community standards;
- within six years: single window services.

Stakeholders consultation on the electronic customs initiative and the modernized Customs Code took place during seminars in Toledo (2003), Vuokatti (2003), Budapest (2005), Wroclaw (2005), Vilnius (2005) and Helsinki (2005). Furthermore, the modernized Customs Code and electronic customs were regularly discussed in the Customs Code Committee, the Customs Policy Group, the Customs 2007 Electronic Customs Group, and the Trade Contact Group. The proposal gives details of the impact assessment. The results of this impact assessment coincide with the opinion expressed by most traders and administrations, namely that pan-European electronic customs systems should be implemented as soon as possible.

For more details concerning the financial implications of this proposal, please refer to the financial statement.