Customs 2013: action programme for customs in the Community

2006/0075(COD) - 17/05/2006 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: the establishment of an action programme (**Customs 2013**).

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

CONTENT: on 31 December 2007 the current Customs action programme, “Customs 2007” will expire. The proposed Decision being presented by the Commission is for the establishment of Customs 2013. It is being submitted together with the Fiscalis 2013 programme. Both programmes will last from 1 January 2008 to 30 December 2013.

A Community action programme offers a number of advantages, not least its ability to co-ordinate, organise and simplify customs’ administration in a way which the 25 Member States, acting on their own, would find challenging to do. It also has the additional advantage of giving priority to anti-fraud activities, reducing costs for businesses, ensuring the efficient management of the control of goods at the external borders as well as offering security for the international supply chain.

The overall objective of Customs 2013 will be to ensure that the EU’s customs activities match the needs of the internal market and offer supply chain security. Its other objectives are to ensure equivalence of controls at every point of the Community’s customs territory and to encourage the concept that customs administrations work as “one administration”; to protect the financial interests of the Community; to strengthen security and safety for the EU’s citizens and to prepare customs administration for enlargement in the countries concerned.

The proposed Decision lists a set of more specific objectives as well which include, inter alia, the following: a reduction of the administrative burden on economic operators by standardising customs controls; to apply best working practices; to prevent any irregularities; to support the creation of a pan-European electronic customs environment through inter-operable communication and information systems; and to develop and reinforce common training.

Participants to the Customs 2013 programme will be the EU Member States but it will also be open to candidate countries benefiting from a pre-accession strategy; potential candidate countries and partner countries of the European Neighbourhood policy whose legislation has approximated that of the EU’s.

Emphasis will be put on safety and security; boosting the competitiveness of EU companies and strengthening the internal market. The programme will also support the creation of an electronic paperless customs. The impact of the Customs programme on day-to-day working is considerable. The existing IT system provides, daily, information to some 100 000 customs officials and acts as a critical tool in the fight against counterfeiting.

For further information concerning the financial implications of this measure, please refer to the financial statement.