



# EU customs: Council agrees position on key features for a more modern, efficient and secure framework

The Council today agreed on a partial negotiating mandate on a fundamental reform of the EU customs framework. The overhaul will **give customs authorities across the EU a more modern toolbox** to deal with trends such as huge increases in trade volumes, especially in e-commerce, a fast-growing number of EU standards that must be checked at the border and shifting geopolitical realities and crises.

Overall, this reform is expected to give the EU the adequate means to stop non-compliant, dangerous or unsafe goods from entering the EU, collect customs duties more efficiently, and carry out adequate controls without putting excessive burden on authorities and traders.

Today's agreement will allow interinstitutional negotiations with the European Parliament to begin on the **core aspects of the reform**, such as:

- establishment of a new decentralised agency for customs – **the EU customs authority** – which will support and help coordinate the risk management work of national customs authorities, and manage the EU customs data hub
- creation of a single EU-wide online environment – **the EU customs data hub** – one central IT platform for interacting with customs and strengthening data integrity, traceability and customs controls

- introduction of enhanced **customs simplifications for the most trusted traders**, saving them time and money
- development of a **more modern approach to e-commerce**, adapted to the realities of a rapidly evolving landscape

“ In the face of growing challenges and global trends, EU customs urgently need modern tools to protect our Single Market. Today’s agreement is a key step toward a future-proof framework that allows our authorities to act as one.



Andrzej Domański, Polish minister for finance

## The EU customs authority

The new framework **establishes a decentralised EU agency for customs** - the EU customs authority – which will coordinate governance of the EU customs union in a number of areas. In particular, the EU customs authority will allow for **EU-level risk management** supporting the work of national customs authorities, using the constantly updated import and export data in the new EU customs data hub. The EU customs authority will also **coordinate EU-level crisis management** in the area of customs.

## The EU customs data hub

The EU customs data hub will be a **single online environment** designed to collect and analyse data and deal with risk management.

In order to fulfil their customs obligations for trade consignments, **businesses will submit their customs information only once to this single portal**, rather than to individual customs authorities. They will also be able to enter the same information to cover multiple consignments, saving them time and money.

National customs authorities will gain a **full overview of trade flows and supply chains**. With the support of the EU customs authority, Member States will therefore have access to the same real-time data and will be able to pool information to respond to risks more quickly, consistently and effectively.

## Trust and check traders

The updated legislation creates a **new category of the most transparent businesses** – trust and check traders. Under this scheme, businesses that provide maximum information on their activities and that fulfil other strict criteria will benefit from simplified customs obligations and, in some cases, be able to **release their goods into circulation in the EU without any active customs intervention** at all.

## Council amendments

The Council's partial negotiating mandate makes a number of amendments to the original Commission proposal. For example, the text **clarifies in more detail certain customs processes**, making them easier to implement by EU customs authorities and officials on the ground.

In relation to trusted traders, the Council's mandate **retains the existing authorised economic operators (AEO) scheme** already used by thousands of SMEs to simplify their customs obligations. It provides for tailored measures to support SMEs' compliance with the new rules.

Finally, the text introduces the new concept of **a handling fee** to be collected by customs authorities on small consignments entering the EU through distance selling.

## Next steps

Following today's adoption of the Council's partial negotiating mandate, the presidency will start negotiations with the European Parliament on the file.

Discussions on certain aspects of the overall reform, such as in relation to the seat of the EU Customs Authority, on a simplified tariff system and the exact design of the handling fee, will take place at a later stage.

## Background

Established in 1968, the EU Customs Union has been a cornerstone of European economic integration. It facilitates trade, protects citizens, fosters innovation and helps the EU maintain its global economic leadership.

**All EU Member States** are part of the EU Customs Union. This means that:

- they apply the **same rates or import tariffs to goods** entering their territory from the rest of the world. Customs duties are based on the type of product and the country of origin
- they **do not impose customs duties internally** on goods traded between them. Once goods have passed customs, they can circulate freely within the EU, without additional tariffs or border checks

The Customs Union also safeguards **the EU's Single Market**, controlling external borders to allow goods to circulate freely within. Without it, the free movement of


goods within the EU would be impossible. At the same time, customs controls at the EU's external borders protect consumers from goods that could be dangerous or harmful to their health. They help safeguard animals and the environment by tackling the illegal trade in endangered species and preventing the spread of plant and animal diseases. The EU's customs offices also work closely with law enforcement to combat organised crime and terrorism, as well as with migration authorities.


### [The EU customs union \(background information\)](#)

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