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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

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Subject: Draft Council Conclusions on Electronic Customs and Single Window
Implementation in the European Union.

Delegations will find attached the above draft Council Conclusions, as agreed by the Customs
Union Working Party, prepared by the Presidency.

Draft Council Conclusions on Electronic Customs and Single Window Implementation in the European Union

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION:

RECALLING:

- the Union Customs Code¹, in particular Articles 6 and 47 on the use of electronic data processing techniques and the cooperation between authorities;
- Article 4 of the e-Customs Decision² calling for the development of single window services in the EU and the Single Window roadmap endorsed by the Heads of Customs Administrations of EU Member States at a meeting of the Customs Policy Group in 2011;
- The priorities set out in Council conclusions on the governance reform of the EU Customs Union³
- The Council conclusions on the EU Strategy and Action Plan on customs risk management: Tackling risks, strengthening supply chain security and facilitating trade.
- The Council conclusions on the 9th World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference, strengthening importance of Article 10 point 4 and Article 8 of Trade Facilitation Agreement to establish common EU Single Window environment enabling traders to submit documentation through a single entry point to relevant border authorities, agencies and offices;

¹ Regulation(EU) No 952/2013 of the European parliament and of the Council of 9 October 2013, OJ L 269 of 10.10.2013, p.1

² Decision No 70/2008/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 January 2008 on a paperless environment for customs and trade, OJ L 23 of 26.1.2008, p.21

³ Doc. 9688/14

UNDERLINING THE IMPORTANCE OF:

- Providing an EU definition of a Single Window environment for customs and laying down its main functions and objectives, as well as the roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders in the Single Window environment for customs at EU and national levels and empowering the authorities responsible for coordinating the implementation and for allocating the appropriate resources;
- Accelerating the harmonisation of data required by different authorities at the EU and national level, building on existing international standards and proceeding with the digitalisation agenda;
- Coordinating initiatives and work plans aimed to define Single Window with Multi-Annual Strategic Plan (MASP) provisions and avoiding solutions which entail additional costs for Member States

ACKNOWLEDGING the need to improve the capacity of Member States and relevant EU institutions, bodies, agencies and offices in implementation of an EU Single Window environment for customs and necessity for financial support for development, implementation and maintenance under Customs2020 or other programme;

STRESSING the customs authorities role in implementation of the EU single window environment and necessity to empower customs authorities as the leading authority for coordination implementation;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the Venice Declaration, agreed on 15 October 2014 by the Heads of Customs Administrations of EU Member States and by the Commission Services, as laid down in the Annex;

ENDORSES the Venice Declaration and CALLS on the Member States and the Commission to undertake all appropriate initiatives to implement it and, in particular, to agree by 2015 on an action plan, in line with the MASP and UCC Work Programme, including a proposal for an EU definition of a Single window environment for customs and a roadmap to enable the effective and efficient implementation of this Single window environment for customs.

AND INVITES THE COMMISSION to present a proposal in view of the revision of the Decision on the paperless environment for customs and trade (e-Customs Decision), on the basis of the outcome of the on-going evaluation and on the basis of a cost and benefit analysis.

**Venice Declaration on Electronic Customs and Single Window Implementation in the
European Union**

**The Heads of Customs Administrations of EU Member States and of the European
Commission meeting on 15 October 2014 in Venice,**

Recalling the need to

Facilitate and develop legitimate trade and strengthen security and protection of citizens;

Harmonise customs procedures applied to the importation and exportation of goods for appropriate uniformity in implementation and a level playing field for economic operators and reduce administrative burdens for traders and national administrations;

Improve effectiveness and efficiency of controls to protect society against threats to health, safety, security and the environment and safeguard EU financial interests, as well as coordination and efficiency in the interaction between customs and other government agencies, and cooperate with trade;

Allocate limited resources in a way to be able to innovate and to do more and better with less;

Noting

Articles 6 and 47 of the Union Customs Code⁴ on using electronic data processing techniques and cooperation between authorities; and Article 4 of the e-Customs Decision⁵ calling for the development of single window services in the EU;

The Single Window roadmap endorsed at the CPG by Member States in 2011;

⁴ Regulation(EU) No 952/2013 of the European parliament and of the Council of 9 October 2013

⁵ Decision No 70/2008/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 January 2008 on a paperless environment for customs and trade

The differences in definition and approach towards the development and implementation of single windows;

The existence of EU databases and information exchange systems for the management of certificates for the protection of health, safety and the environment;

The added value of electronic systems provided by European Commission to those provided at national level for ensuring a level playing field for all administrations and economic operators throughout the EU;

Progress made in existing Single Window systems implementation in Member States with the cooperation of the trade community;

Declare that

There is a need to adapt the e-Customs Decision to the evolutions in global trade, in technology, in risk management requirements and techniques, and in customs control methods and to define the roles of stakeholders involved in e-Customs; this includes the identification of possible gains from collaboration between Member States and required support and coordination by the Commission;

The presence of specific needs in Member States implies that national Single Windows cannot be identical but require coordination and common specifications in the EU to make interfaces possible and maximise benefits in terms of trade facilitation, security and protection of citizens.

Existing and planned EU systems for certificates should be carefully examined for an integration in the EU Single Window environment for customs to achieve a streamlined approach to reduce implementation costs for administration and trade; national Single Windows should be built on legacy systems;

The national Single Windows should interact with EU databases and information exchange systems; Information should be submitted by operators to the authorities only once;

The development in the EU of a Single Window environment for integrated management and control is complex and requires a phased approach.

Priority should be given to:

Providing an EU definition of a Single Window environment for customs and laying down its main functions and objectives, as well as the roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders in the Single Window environment for customs at EU and national levels and empowering the authorities responsible for coordinating implementation and allocating appropriate resources;

Better coordination between departments in the European Commission;

Accelerating the harmonisation of required data by different authorities at the EU and national level, building on existing international standards and proceeding with the digitalisation agenda;

Invite the European Commission and the Member States to consider:

Preparing a work plan in cooperation with the involved stakeholders in accordance with MASP and UCC Work Programme to enable starting soon the progressive implementation of the EU Single Window environment for customs that will cover the scope of the functionalities offered, the content of the information exchanges and the time plan;

As part of the work plan, providing standardised access to EU certificates for national customs administrations, for the management (e.g. application, quantity management, etc.) and their automated acceptance;

Revising the e-Customs Decision on the basis of the outcome of the on-going evaluation and on the basis of costs and benefits analysis, in particular to provide a legal framework for the development of the EU Single Window environment for customs with definition of scope, objectives and roles and responsibilities for the relevant stakeholders and target deadlines.