COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION

Brussels, 21 March 2014
(OR. en)

7876/14

LIMITE

ENFOCUSTOM 40
COSI 25
ENFOPOL 88
ENV 288

NOTE

From:	Presidency
To:	Customs Cooperation Working Party (Experts meeting)
No. prev. doc.:	doc. 5808/14 ENFOCUSTOM 11 COSI 9 ENFOPOL 19 ENV 75
Subject:	Action 7.10 "To identify the field for customs law enforcement cooperation such as joint operations, in the fight against environmental crime (e.g. hazardous waste, ozone, CITES, links to organized groups" - Report on the questionnaire for the identification of authorities and national strategy

DOCUMENT PARTIALLY ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC (26.06.2014)

Background

In the framework of the 7th Action Plan, CCWP Plenary assigned the CCWP Experts with the mandate for action 7.10 "To identify the field for customs law enforcement cooperation such as joint operations, in the fight against environmental crime (e.g. hazardous waste, ozone, CITES, links to organized groups)."

In the CCWP Experts meeting on 11/02/2014, the Presidency presented methodology based on three-step approach to achieve the outcomes of Action 7.10 (doc. 5808/14 ENFOCUSTOM 11 COSI 9 ENFOPOL 19 ENV 75).

The first step concerned identification of authorities and national strategies in the environmental crime area. The Presidency addressed a questionnaire to the MS in order to record the state of play in all MS and produce a report as basis for further discussion and consideration by the CCWP Experts.

Questionnaire on identification of authorities and national strategy.

The questionnaire prepared by the Presidency included four questions. The first question aimed at identifying the national authorities, which have competence for environmental crime. Questions two and three focused on description of the methods of cooperation and information exchange between the competent authorities. Finally, question four asked for a definition of national customs priorities concerning environmental crime.

26 MS provided answers to the questionnaire.

Analysis of answers

Q1: Which are the competent authorities in your MS for environmental crime?

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Q2: Describe cooperation between customs and other competent authorities in your MS.

According to the answers provided, the following methods are used by MS customs in order to cooperate with other competent authorities:

1. **Standard cooperation:** used by **22 MS**
2. **Case by case cooperation:** used by **24 MS**
3. **Cooperation via designated contact points:** used by **19 MS**
4. **Joint meetings:** used by **22 MS**
5. **Joint actions:** used by **23 MS**
6. **Exchange of information on seizures:** used by **22 MS**
7. **Exchange of information on persons involved:** used by **17 MS**
8. **Exchange of information on risk profiles, trends and modus operandi:** used by **20 MS**

Other methods of cooperation were also described by some MS, such as trainings, exchange of information on companies, training and joint inspections.

Q3: Describe methods used for the exchange of information.

According to MS, information is exchanged:

In standard format by **15 MS**

Via e-mail by **25 MS**

Via secure network by **8 MS**

Other methods of exchanging information were also indicated by some MS, including regular mail, telephone, meetings, personal contacts and workshops.

Q4 Does your national customs action plan provides specifically for environmental crime ?

12 MS indicated that they have a national strategy for environmental crime and **14 MS** answered negatively.

Conclusions

Based on the answers provided we can draw the following conclusions:

1. **DELETED**;
2. **DELETED**;

3. Customs, in the majority of MS, have already established cooperation with other competent authorities concerning cases, actions and exchange of information;
4. E-mail communication is the most common way of exchanging information among competent authorities;
5. Although environmental crime is an emerging threat, less than half of the MS have national customs action plans providing specifically for environmental crime.

Way forward

The above report reflects the national state of play concerning competent authorities, cooperation and strategy. It may now serve as basis for the next step of Action 7.10, which provides for examining ways to promote better cooperation, effective communication and operational activities.

Under this step, delegations are invited during the CCWP (Expert meeting)

- **to discuss and share best practices from operational activities undertaken in their own MS to combat environmental crime, especially in cases linked to organized crime groups and other illegal activities;**
- **to discuss on experience gained by their participation in joint operations organized regionally or by non EU international organizations.**