



Frequently Asked Questions

European Customs Information Portal

Why has the Commission created a new web portal on customs?

Traders importing goods into and exporting goods from the European Union are subject to a number of important rules and regulations with regard to customs. In order to help them to understand and properly follow these procedures, the Commission decided to create an online portal, with all the relevant and practical information concerning importing goods into and exporting from the EU.

Who is the target audience for the portal?

The portal is designed for any trader who has to pass through customs as part of their business, such as haulage or shipping companies, importers and exporters.

What kind of information does the European portal provide?

The European Customs Information Portal focuses on provisions of the Safety and Security Amendment to the Community Customs Code, which entered into force on 1 July 2009. There are 3 main categories of information:

- Animated “customs scenarios”, which guide the users through the different procedures of export, import and transit step-by-step. These scenarios explain each stage of the procedures, listing relevant documents that have to be lodged at each stage to which authority. Each scenario is accompanied by a detailed glossary that provides links to relevant documents, databases and legislation.
- The legal framework of the EU Customs Union on import, export and transit procedures;
- Information and links from the Commission’s and Member States’ customs sites, such as databases, procedures and assistance services, as well as relevant policy information contained on various Commission websites. The portal also contains an extensive “FAQ” section, and information on contact points in the Member States.

What is the Safety and Security Amendment to the Customs Code that this first phase of the Portal focuses on?

The “Safety and Security Amendment” to the Community Customs Code is the cornerstone of customs security at EU level in both legislative and practical terms. The Amendment aims to ensure a uniform high level of protection through customs controls for all goods brought into or out of the EU’s customs territory.

The amendment covers four major changes to the Customs Code:

- Requiring traders to provide customs authorities with information on goods prior to arrival to or departure from the European Union;
- Providing reliable traders with trade facilitation measures;
- Introducing uniform Community risk-selection criteria for controls, supported by computerised systems for goods brought into or out of the EU customs territory;
- Introducing a Community database allowing the consultation of all EU registration numbers from economic operators.

The aim of these measures is to ensure that consignments are not delayed unnecessarily pending the results of the risk analysis and customs controls.



What follow up will there be to this first phase of the portal?

The current first phase of the ECIP website is a forerunner to a comprehensive customs information portal foreseen at a later stage. It is a project to test how well the portal approach works for customs in combining information from European Commission and Member State sources. The European Commission plans to further develop the portal on the basis of experience gained and feedback received. Its coverage and in depth information on customs procedures are scheduled to be extended over time.

Who has been involved in developing the European Customs Information Portal?

The European Customs Information Portal was developed jointly by the European Commission, Member States representatives and members of the Trade Contact Group (a platform created by the Directorate General for Taxation and Customs Union for consultation of trade representatives on customs developments). A Commission-led project group was set up, comprised of the above-mentioned parties, providing a substantive input into the project and feedback on the portal's content. Engaging a broad spectrum of interested groups has ensured that this portal really responds to the information needs of its users.

Is national information provided through the European Customs Information Portal?

The portal uses information feeds (RSS) to pull national customs-related information into the portal, such as customs-related news, contact information, and links to national tools, websites and databases. An economic operator, for example, looking for the latest customs-related news will find it on the European Customs Information Portal. It is a single point of access for traders to European and national customs information.

How is the European Customs Information Portal linked to the Market Access Database and the Export Helpdesk for developing countries?

The European Customs Information Portal is complementary to the Market Access Database and the Export Helpdesk as it focuses on customs procedures. In addition to the information contained on the two other portals the European Customs Information Portal uses customs scenarios to clearly and simply illustrate each step of the import, export and transit procedures.

Where can I find the portal?

The link to the site is <http://ec.europa.eu/ecip>.

Market Access Database

<http://mkaccdb.eu.int>

Export Helpdesk for Developing Countries

<http://exporthelp.europa.eu>

Contact us

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