

## Priorities - Customs and Trade Facilitation

### Implement the Union's Customs Code to enable an effective free movement of goods

#### ISSUE

The EU aims for customs authorities to protect the safety and security of its citizens, ensuring an effective collection of taxes and combating fraud in order to legitimise trade. The tool to achieve these objectives is Regulation (EU) No 952/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council, 9 October 2013, laying down the Union Customs Code (UCC) and its implementing provisions. The objective of this Directive was to implement all new processes and IT systems before 31 December 2020. However, due to the complexity of the changes and budgetary constraints the implementation of the UCC will not be achieved before 2025.

Although the EU operates in a customs union and constitutes a single market, the free movement of goods faces considerable obstacles and needs further harmonisation. Importing into the EU requires the submission of customs declarations in different Member States, using local languages, and complying with different rules and using different Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) standards. Moreover, although duties can be declared and paid centrally, VAT declarations need to be issued in the country of consumption, creating additional fragmentation and complexity.

#### RECOMMENDATION

The new legislative term (2019-2024) provides us with the opportunity to build on the work of the previous Commission and continue working towards simplified customs procedures that work better for economic operators, customs authorities and citizens alike. In order to streamline the free movement of goods, EU institutions should:

- **Create one European Customs Agency**, instead of having 27 different customs authorities;
- **Further harmonise customs rules and procedures** to create a level playing field across Member States;
- Allow economic operators to **file their customs declaration with the European Customs Agency** at any customs office in the EU;
- Allow economic operators to **use any EU official language** to submit customs declaration and other data;
- Establish **one Single Electronic Window** ensuring all releases and clearance for customs and other government agencies;
- **Amend the VAT Directive (2006/112/EC)** to set up an EU wide *one stop shop* accounting for VAT on importations in a centralised location replacing 27 different VAT regimes.