

EU customs: Council and Parliament agree on landmark reform

The Council and the Parliament today agreed to **overhaul the EU customs framework**, giving the Union 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 challenging geopolitical realities.

The reform establishes **innovative new instruments** to facilitate global trade, **collect customs duties** more efficiently and to **tighten controls on non-compliant, dangerous or unsafe goods**. Overall, the new system will allow for more robust controls without excessive burden for authorities and traders.



Today's agreement marks the greatest reform since the creation of the Customs Union in 1968. The new Union customs code will allow us to deal with the multiple challenges prompted by the new geopolitical realities, while ensuring economic security. Once adopted, this modern toolbox will facilitate trade and ensure the proper collection of duties, in a simplified manner, and with the required legal certainty.



Makis Keravnos, Minister of Finance of the Republic of Cyprus

The co-legislators have agreed on legislation to:

- create a single, state-of-the-art **EU customs data hub**: one central platform for importers and exporters to interact with customs in the EU, strengthening data integrity, traceability and customs controls
- introduce enhanced **customs simplifications for the most trusted traders**, saving them time and money
- implement a new **EU-wide handling fee** for items contained in small parcels entering the EU
- establish a new decentralised agency for customs – **the EU customs authority** – which will oversee the EU customs data hub while supporting the risk management work of national customs authorities.

The EU customs authority

The new **decentralised EU agency for customs** will coordinate governance of the EU customs union in certain areas.

To support the work of national offices, the EU customs authority will analyse the constantly updated import and export data contained in the new EU customs data hub, helping to identify the riskiest cargo entering the EU which should be prioritised for inspection.

The authority will also help establish **priority control areas and risk criteria**. Finally, it will **coordinate EU-level crisis management** in the area of customs.

The customs authority will be located in Lille, France. It will be established on the day that the overarching regulation enters into force.

The EU customs data hub

The EU customs data hub will be the **single online environment** designed to collect and analyse customs data to ensure the smooth flow of goods in and out of the EU. It will also support the EU-wide risk management carried out by the EU customs

authority.

To fulfil their customs obligations, **businesses importing to and exporting from the EU will only need to submit customs information once to this single portal**, rather than to up to 27 individual customs authorities. They can enter the same information to cover multiple consignments, saving 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 have access to the same real-time data and will be able to pool information to respond to risks more quickly, consistently and effectively.

Under the terms of the agreement, the data hub will become operational for e-commerce goods on 1 July 2028. A phased rollout will bring all movements of goods into its scope by 1 March 2034.

Trust and check traders

The updated legislation creates a new category of the most transparent businesses – **trust and check traders**.

Under this scheme, companies providing comprehensive information on the movement and compliance of goods, along with other stringent criteria, will enjoy **more streamlined customs obligations**, such as simplified procedures for temporary storage and transit.

The most reliable companies will be able to **release their goods into circulation in the EU without any active customs intervention** at all.

Other companies will still be able to enjoy the **already existing simplifications** available to trusted traders under the current authorised economic operator scheme.

Managing the influx of small parcels

To help cover rising costs from monitoring the growing number of small parcels entering the EU via e-commerce, the agreed text introduces a **new handling fee** to be collected by customs authorities on small consignments sold through distance selling.

The level of the fee will be decided by Commission delegated act before it starts being applied by EU member states no later than 1 November 2026.

The new rules also clarify that **platforms** and those selling into the EU by distance sale, e.g. via e-commerce, are **considered the goods' importer** and responsible for ensuring that all customs formalities and payments are taken care of, rather than the final EU consumer.

Finally, the legislation will include a new system of financial penalties for e-commerce operators that systematically fail to comply with their customs obligations.

Next steps

The Council and the European Parliament will continue work to finalise the technical elements of the package before final adoption by the co-legislators. The new customs legislation will come into full application 12 months following publication in the EU's official journal.

Background

For over 50 years, the EU customs union has been operating efficiently across national borders, managed by national customs offices working together. As one of the world's largest trading blocs, the EU customs union manages trade worth over **€4.3 trillion**, **accounting for around 14% of global trade**.

In 2024, 2,140 customs offices, working 24 hours a day and 365 days a year, collected almost **€27 billion** as customs duties and handled the import, export and transit of more than **1,370 million items**. In the same year, EU customs authorities detected 64,000 cases of goods presenting a risk for consumers in terms of health and detained 112 million counterfeit items.

- [EU customs: Council agrees position on key features for a more modern, efficient and secure framework \(press release, 27 June 2025\)](#)
- [Lille to host the new EU customs authority \(press release, 25 March 2026\)](#)
- [Customs: Council takes action to tackle the influx of small parcels \(press release, 13 November 2025\)](#)
- [EU customs reform \(background information\)](#)
- [The EU customs union \(background information\)](#)
- [Customs reform on the EU law tracker](#)

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