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OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From: General Secretariat of the Council
On: 25 July 2017
To: Customs Cooperation Working Party (Experts)
Subject: Customs Cooperation Working Party

1. Adoption of the agenda

The CCWP adopted the agenda of the meeting as set out in CM 3626/2/17 REV 2 with the addition of an information point by the FR delegation under AOB.

2. Presentation of the Presidency priorities

The CCWP took note of the presentation by the Chair of the general Presidency priorities and priorities for the CCWP, such as the preparation of the Council Conclusions on the fight against illegal tobacco trade, the implementation of the 8th CCWP Action Plan and the drafting of the 9th Action Plan as well as tackling excise fraud.

3. Information from the Presidency

The CCWP took note of the information by the Presidency about documents, past and upcoming meetings relevant to the work of the CCWP, as set out in WK 8035/1/17 REV 1.

4. Reporting on the implementation of the 8th Action Plan of the CCWP

4.1. Action 8.4: Business cases for JCPO “ARMSTRONG IV” and JCP Pilot “COLUMBUS”

The CCWP took note of the presentations of the business cases for joint operation ARMSTRONG IV and joint pilot COLUMBUS, as set out in 11447/17 and 11448/17 respectively, prepared on the basis of 10499/17, by the leader of Action 8.4 - the PT delegation. It was underlined that these operations are linked to two Operational Actions in the framework of the EU Policy Cycle.

A few delegations indicated their willingness to take part and support the proposed operations. A brief discussion took place regarding the choice of communication channels for the operations and a reference to other operations with a similar focus was made. The Presidency committed to provide an overview of upcoming operations in the future meetings. Two Member States asked for additional time to study the documents. Therefore, delegations were invited to send their written comments, if any, on both business cases by 15 August 2017. They would be revised on the basis of written comments, if necessary, and would be submitted to the CCWP plenary meeting on 13 September 2017 for approval.

4.2. Action 8.6: Draft final report of JCO Warehouse III for approval

The CCWP approved the final report of JCO Warehouse III as set out in 11321/17, presented by the FI delegation, which organised the operation together with OLAF.

An exchange of views on the limited operational results and on the need to organise such operations in the future took place. The Chair explained that this could be further discussed in the context of the preparation of the 9th CCWP Action Plan.

5. Preparations to draft Council Conclusions on the Progress report on the implementation of the Commission Communication „Stepping up the fight against cigarette smuggling and other forms of illicit trade in tobacco products – a comprehensive EU strategy“: discussion

The CCWP took note of the detailed presentation by the Presidency regarding the feedback by the Member States to the Presidency note 11005/17 and the proposed themes to be covered in the Council Conclusions on the fight against illegal tobacco trade, to be prepared following the Progress report on the implementation of the Commission Communication on a comprehensive EU strategy in relation to the fight against cigarette smuggling and other forms of illicit trade in tobacco products.

An exchange of views on the possible scope of the Council Conclusions and the impact thereof on the Member States' costs took place. The Chair invited delegations to submit further written comments by 1 August 2017, and concluded that on the basis of Member States comments the draft Council Conclusions would be prepared and submitted to the CCWP plenary meeting on 13 September 2017.

6. Preparations to draft a 9th Action Plan: overview of priorities, action leaders, co-leaders and participants (based on the outcome of the questionnaire set out in CM 3546/17): discussion

The CCWP took note of the presentation by the Presidency of the outcome of the questionnaire CM 3546/17, aimed to prepare the 9th CCWP Action Plan, to which 25 Member States had contributed. Some delegations clarified their intentions to lead, co-lead or participate in certain Actions. A few delegations underlined the need to reduce the number of Actions.

The Chair encouraged Member States to consider leading actions where no delegations had so far volunteered, as Actions without lead delegations would not be included in the Action Plan. Europol mentioned a possibility of financing certain Actions related to the EU crime priorities in the framework of the EU Policy Cycle.

7. Overview of narcotics seizures in containers destined for the European market in the framework of the UNODC-WCO Container Control Programme

The CCWP took note of the presentation by the WCO providing an overview of narcotics seizures in containers destined for the European market from 1 January 2012 to 10 July 2017 in the framework of the UNODC-WCO Container Control Programme, as set out in WK 8361/17. In addition to the operational results preventing the flow of drugs and illicit goods to the European market, the presentation focused also on the use of risk indicators, the training approach and the communication system used.

8. Joint Action Day “DUAL”: scope and objectives

The CCWP took note of the presentation by Frontex about the upcoming Joint Action Day (JAD) “DUAL” in the framework of the EU Policy Cycle, to be led by Frontex and co-led by AT and DE. The results of recent JADs were also briefly presented.

9. Any other business

The CCWP took note of the information by the FR delegation about its preparatory work and the possible involvement of customs authorities in the Operational Action Plan (OAP) related to the EU crime priority on criminal finances, to be led by FR in 2018-2019.
