



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 14 March 2012

7667/12

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NOTE

from: General Secretariat
to: Working Party on Customs Union

Subject: World Customs Organization (WCO) – Working Group on the Review of the
Composition of the Policy Commission, 6 March 2012 - Debriefing

Delegations will find attached the above mentioned document, transmitted by the Commission services.

WCO WORKING GROUP

COMPOSITION OF THE POLICY COMMISSION

6 MARCH 2012

Debriefing

At the 2011 Council Sessions, it was agreed, on the recommendation of the Policy Commission, to continue the current interim solution for the composition of the Commission for one more year, during which a Working Group would put forward a recommendation on this subject for the Policy Commission and Council Sessions in June 2012. The Working Group was mandated to review the current composition (interim solution) of the Policy Commission and consider whether it is functioning satisfactory.

The Working Group met on 6 March 2012 and was chaired by Ms Wachira, Kenya. The meeting was represented by the EU, the Netherlands and Norway from the Europe region.

The Secretariat made a presentation on the historical evolution regarding the composition of the Policy Commission since its establishment in 1979. It is recalled that pursuant to Council Decision 284 of 1995; one seat is allocated for every seven Members in a region. Moreover, two additional seats were allocated to each of the three regions which made particular significant financial and other contributions to the WCO, namely the Americas, Asia/Pacific and Europe regions, which resulted in the allocation of eight seats to the Europe region.

Brazil presented a proposal to replace the 1995 criteria, based on four principles and a total of 27 seats on the Policy Commission. The proposal comprised the following principles:

- Council Chairperson;
- The six Vice chairs of the Council;
- One seat for every ten Members in a region, with a minimum of two seats per region, appointed for a period of two years;
- one additional seat for regions with "high financial contributions". This being defined as any region with a total contribution to the WCO budget of 10% or more.

The Brazilian proposal would result in a decrease of the number of seats allocated to the Europe region from the current nine (interim solution) to seven.

Following a brief discussion, it became evident that the vast majority of the Working Group was unable to support the Brazilian proposal. In order to secure an equitable distribution of seats on the Policy Commission with only a small increase in its size, the Working Group, on the proposal of the US, agreed to recommend to the Policy Commission that with effect from 1 July 2012 the 1995 criteria's be applied to the current membership (177 Members), subject to the addition of a new criterion that every region should have at least three seats on the Policy Commission, including the Vice chair. For the Europe region the proposal would result in a status quo compared to the current interim solution (nine seats)

The situation as regards the non-regional seats on the Policy Commission (Council Chairperson, specified observers and where appropriate, former chairpersons) would remain as at present.

Brazil insisted on the inclusion of an avenue enabling regions (currently the three African regions) not currently eligible for two additional seats to progress to that level in future (one additional seat for regions with "high financial contributions". This being defined as any region with a total contribution to the WCO budget of 10% or more). In this regard the Working Group agreed that prior to any further discussion of such principle, there was a need to clearly define what a "particular significant" contribution would be and the Secretariat was requested to look into this matter.

The concluded recommendations will be presented to the June 2012 policy Commission.