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OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
On:	3 March 2015
To:	Customs Cooperation Working Party (Experts meeting)
Subject:	Summary of discussions

1. Adoption of the Agenda

The agenda set out in document **CM 1591/15** was adopted, with the addition of a point from NL.

2. Information from the Presidency

The Presidency briefed the delegates about the recently held meetings, events and initiatives relevant for Customs. The seminar on project ITOM, announced in a previous CCWP meeting and aimed at combatting illegal trade on hidden online marketplaces, was also mentioned.

3. Priorities of the Presidency

The Presidency described its priorities for the CCWP, both at strategic (revision of strategic objectives, raising awareness of Customs as leading authority for the fight against illegal trade in goods, ensuring coordination with the EU Policy Cycle) and at operational level (monitoring the implementation of the 7th AP, next steps for Action 7.5, evaluation of the results of JCOs).

4. FRAN 2014 situational overview

Frontex gave a presentation regarding the situation at the EU external borders in 2014. The speaker highlighted the fact that, due to the deteriorating international situation during the past year, there was a sharp increase in the number of illegal border-crossings. Routes, nationalities and other indicators, as well as the perspectives for 2015, were also detailed.

5. JCOs and other Customs operations: Uncovering an illegal cigarette factory near Budapest

HU briefed the delegates on the way Operation Golden Coast was conducted and on its results: 22 tons of tobacco and 2,3 million cigarettes were seized, amounting to a value of more than 3,3 million EUR. The speaker also highlighted the support offered by Europol, through FP SMOKE.

6. JCOs and other Customs operations: proposal of JCO SASHA

FR put forward a proposal for the organisation of a JCO (SASHA) aimed at detecting illicit trafficking of chemicals used as precursors for synthetic drugs. The Business Case was discussed within OLAF and MS were invited to provide comments. A revised version of the Business Case would be presented during a future CCWP Experts meeting.

7. JCOs and other Customs operations : Final report of Athena IV

LV presented for adoption the final report of JCO Athena IV, as set out in document 6512/15 ENFOCUSTOM 14 + ADD 1 RESTREINT UE. The operation was aimed at detecting undeclared cash in excess of EUR 10 000 and at preventing money laundering within the EU. The speaker underlined the very good cooperation with OLAF and Europol during all the phases of the operation. Several of the recommendations focused on the data processing during such an operation and on the exchange of information via AFIS V-OCU. A deadline for comments was given for 20 March. A revised version of the report would be issued and adopted through written procedure.

8. Threat assessment on Illegal movement of money

Europol's presentation focused on physical cash movements by criminal groups as a facilitator for money laundering. The speaker detailed the methods and routes used for such acts and explained the way Europol supports investigations and operations targeted against them. Operations Athena IV, Driver and Sunday were given as examples.

9. SIENA, state of play

Europol's presentation explained, with concrete examples, the way SIENA works and its relevance for Customs. It also briefed the delegates on the UMF - Universal Message Format Project and the current and envisaged advantages of its integration into SIENA.

10. Schengen information system - SIS II

COM (DG Home) gave a presentation, with many concrete examples, regarding the way Schengen Information System works in the context of Customs controls, as a tool for compensating the absence of internal border controls, preserving internal security in the EU and the Schengen Area and protecting the external Schengen border.

11. SPECIFIC Project

LV briefed the delegates on the SPECIFICS Project - the first regional forum on strategic and proactive efficient financial investigation of cigarette smuggling. The project involved representatives of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania and Hungary and consisted of three regional workshops. A manual on a common investigation model for the participating countries was presented after the final meeting. The agenda included, among others, the following items: legal aspects on the confiscation of assets of an offender and the differences around Member States as regards law stipulation and implementation, description of smuggling of cigarettes and the connections with organised crime, corruption and the way it affects cigarettes smuggling, financial investigations techniques used in different EU countries etc.

12. Revision of the Guide for Joint Customs Operations

The Presidency presented document DS 1125/15, urging the delegates to send their comments and observations by 27 March.

13. AOB

Under this item, NL informed the delegates that the ITOM conference (dark web) organised in The Hague in January was successful and a second edition was envisaged. NL also reminded the delegates about the proposal to organise a JCO aimed at detecting hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment under Action 7.10.
