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OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
On:	9 July 2015
To:	Customs Cooperation Working Party
Subject:	Summary of discussions

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted as set out in CM 3120/1/15 REV 1, two interventions (FR and SE) being added under AOB.

2. Information from the Presidency

No information was presented under this item. A written contribution on this item will be sent to delegates.

3. Priorities of the Luxembourg Presidency

The Presidency presented its priorities for the CCWP: finalisation of the implementation of the 7th Action Plan, preparation of the 8th Action Plan (to be implemented by the incoming Trio NL-SK-MT), dissemination and promotion of best practices in order to combat cross-border and organised crime involving customs and other law enforcement authorities and evaluation of results of joint operations. Two thematic experts meeting were announced: one on Internet crime and one on non-proliferation regimes of weapons of mass destruction. The Presidency also stated its support for JCO Sasha - French joint customs operation on chemical precursors for synthetic drugs.

4. The Seventh Action Plan: progress reports and state of play

– State of play of the 7th Action Plan

The Presidency briefed the delegates on the state of play of each of the actions of the 7th Action Plan and on the steps forward.

– Action 7.3 "To examine the working/investigative techniques applied by customs and other law enforcement authorities to combat customs related crime, including organized crime, through the Internet, and to explore the current situation regarding the existence of customs specialized units dealing with those crimes and to ensure follow-up to Action 5.2"

Germany gave a very detailed presentation of the state of play of Action 7.3 and of the activities undertaken in this framework: sharing experience and exchanging best practices, improving cooperation between existing specialized customs cybercrime units, staying in contact with international organisations and their respective internet crime divisions to avoid duplication of work, assisting Member States which plan to set up a structure to combat Internet crime, implementing the Internet crime network. The speaker informed the delegates that the project group would suggest the organisation of a JCO (Postbox) targeted at combating the smuggling of goods (narcotics and counterfeit goods) via Internet, with the use of mail and express-courier service. The speaker also suggested that the work of the project group continues with an extension of the current mandate, as a permanent structure within the CCWP or as a new action in the framework of the next Action Plan. Member States will decide on the most appropriate choice. A brief questionnaire (10618/15) was also be distributed to delegates in view of the finalisation of this action. The final report on Action 7.3 will be presented by the end of 2015.

5. “Update on the UNODC-WCO Container Control Program with a specific focus on illicit trade towards the EU”

The speaker (World Customs Organisation) briefed the delegates on the Container Control Program (CCP) designed by the UNODC and the WCO. Its aim is to assist Governments in establishing effective container selections and controls to prevent drug trafficking and other illicit cross-border activities. The program is based on the creation of inter-agency Port Control Units (PCUs), consisting of risk analysts and physical inspection teams from different law enforcement agencies (e.g. customs, police and other law enforcement agencies). The members of these teams are trained and equipped in the framework of the CCP to work together in order to systematically target high-risk containers for scrutiny, using risk analysis and other proactive techniques. This allows only minimum disruptions of the free flow of legitimate trade. The exchange of information and intelligence among the PCUs established worldwide is done using a secure communication system.

6. Preparation of the 8th Action Plan

– Exchange of views (proposals for the next AP on the basis of the threats and challenges identified in the situational awareness paper)

On the basis of 9396/1/15, the Presidency held an exchange of view in order to prioritise the threats and challenges that should be taken into account in view of the drafting of the next Action Plan. Twenty delegates took the floor. Firearms and use of information technology and Internet for criminal activities were among the most frequently mentioned. Several Member States also indicated the fraud related to excise duties and VAT as aspects that should be taken into account. Fewer actions, the need to avoid duplications with activities taking place in other fora, the need of a better articulation with other Working Parties and stakeholders were also underlined by numerous delegates. Several Member States stated that some of the threats and challenges outlined in 9396/1/15 REV 1 could be addressed via other means in the framework of the CCWP (e.g. exchange of best practices). Some delegates also suggested the possibility of a "regionalisation" of actions as certain threats might be relevant only for Member States in a certain region. Written comments and suggestions should be sent by 7 September 2015. In order to avoid duplication with OAPs/EMPACT, DS 1321/15 RESTREINT UE should also be taken into account.

7. AOB

Under AOB, FR briefly informed the delegates about the steps ahead regarding JCO Sasha. SE, supported by twelve other Member States, requested that, for the future, the use of the written procedure for the adoption of documents within the CCWP (e.g. final reports) is limited to exceptional cases.
