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COSI 26

OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Customs Cooperation Working Party
Subject: Summary of discussions

Joint CCWP/COSI-SUPPORT GROUP

1. Adoption of the agenda

The Agenda was adopted as set out in CM 1473/2/16.

2. Presentation of the 8th Action Plan (2016-2017)

The Presidency presented the 8th Action Plan of the Customs Cooperation Working Party (13749/3/15), by underlining the Plan's second guiding principle for basing it on customs enforcement priorities and, where appropriate and where synergies exist, aligning it with actions and priorities in other documents, such as the EU Policy Cycle and the related Operational Action Plans (OAPs). The need was confirmed to strengthen synergies with the priorities set by these fora and with the actions of other law enforcement agencies, as well as with the area of risk management in the context of the Customs Union. The pivotal role that customs could play both for JHA and Customs Union cooperation had been highlighted.

3. Interactions between the EU Policy Cycle Operational Action Plans and the CCWP 8th Action Plan

The Presidency presented the interactions and potential links between the EU Policy Cycle Operational Action Plans and the CCWP 8th Action Plan, as set out in 6015/16, and suggested the pursuit of new opportunities for coordination and synergies between the 2016 OAPs and the CCWP AP through a multidisciplinary and multiagency approach, while avoiding possible overlapping and duplication of efforts. A REV 1 of the document, including a matrix of potential links for ease of reference would be presented at COSI, as well as more detailed information would be provided for the CCWP on 14 April 2016.

4. Renewed European Union Internal Security Strategy Implementation Paper - customs priorities

The Presidency presented the customs priorities in the Renewed European Union Internal Security Strategy Implementation Paper (5298/1/16), namely: 1) Finalise the 7th Action Plan (2014-2015); 2) Adopt the 8th Action Plan (2016 – 2017) and reinforce the link between it and the EMPACT Operational Action Plans; (3) Terrorism financing, illicit trade in cultural goods and illicit cash movements (4) Wildlife trafficking; (5) Strengthening the EU's' capacity for the detection of illicit trade in goods at the external border

5. AOB

1. Adoption of the Agenda

The Agenda was adopted as set out in CM 1473/2/16.

2. Information from the Presidency

The Presidency informed the Working Party of the main forthcoming meetings in the field of customs, amongst which the High Level Seminar on cooperation between customs and other authorities in the fight against the infringements of Intellectual Property Rights, the Conference on wildlife trafficking, the COSI meeting and the meetings of the Enforcement and the Permanent Technical Committees of the WCO. The Presidency noted also the Commission Action plan for strengthening the fight against terrorist financing, presented on 2 February 2016, the Council Conclusions from 12 February 2016 on the fight against financing of terrorism, the published timeline for the EU policy Cycle activities in 2016 (5300/16) and the expected Commission Communication on the EU action plan against wildlife trafficking.

3. 7th Action Plan (2014-2015) of the Customs Cooperation Working Party

The Action Leaders for Actions 7.3 and 7.8 presented the Interim Reports for the Actions, with a view to their transferring to the 8th Action Plan. Germany presented the Interim Report for 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 specialised units dealing with those crimes and to ensure follow-up to Action 5.2". Finland presented the Interim Report for Action 7.8 "To improve the exchange of information and intelligence between Central Coordinating Units as well as the practical implementation of mutual assistance and cooperation", as set out in 5968/16.

Delegates were requested to provide written comments by 15 March 2016 with a view to discussing the revised reports during the next CCWP plenary on 14 April 2016.

4. 8th Action Plan (2016-2017) of the Customs Cooperation Working Party

The Presidency presented an overview of the actions, action leaders and participating Member States/EU bodies in the 8th Action Plan as set out in 1098/16. The Action Leaders for Actions 8.3 "cash movements" and 8.6.2 "regional occurrence of excise fraud (mineral oils)" presented the draft mandates for the actions (6095/16 and 6389/16 respectively). Delegates were requested to provide written comments by 15 March 2016 with a view to discussing the revised mandates during the next CCWP plenary on 14 April 2016.

5. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on an Action Plan for strengthening the fight against terrorist financing + Annex

The Commission presented its Communication from February 2016 on Action Plan for strengthening the fight against terrorist financing as set out in 5782/16 and 5782/16 ADD 1, outlining the two main objectives of the Plan: 1) prevention of the movement of funds and 2) identification of terrorist funding and disruption of the sources of revenue for terrorist organisations. For that purpose, the Commission Communication proposes a new EU legislation against illicit cash movements, as well as the adoption of measures to tackle terrorist financing sources such as the illicit trade in goods, cultural goods and wildlife.

6. Revision of the Strategic Objectives of Joint Customs Operations (JCOs)

The Presidency informed the Working Party of the revision of the long term strategic objectives for the JCOs for the period 2017-2018 which it has initiated with the aim to combat organised crime and cross-border smuggling. The revised strategic objectives are part of the annual revision of the Guide for Joint Customs Operations and after their adoption by the CCWP Plenary they would be included in the final document revising the Guide. Delegates were asked to provide written comments by 2 March 2016.

7. Update of the monitoring file of implementation of the Project Groups' recommendations

The Presidency informed the Working Party of the proposed way forward for updating the monitoring file of implementation of the Project Groups' recommendations as set out in 6096/16, and asked for delegates' comments by 15 March 2016, with a view to coming up with a proposal on the way forward for the non-implemented recommendations.

8. Interim Report on the progress of the implementation of Council Conclusions on stepping up the fight against cigarette smuggling and other forms of illicit trade in tobacco products in the EU

OLAF presented the main performed and ongoing actions for implementing the Council Conclusions on stepping up the fight against cigarette smuggling and other forms of illicit trade in tobacco products in the EU, by noting in particular the Protocol to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control; the Tobacco Laboratory; the Eurobarometer on public perception of illicit tobacco; the Study on legal sanctions; statistics; Joint Custom Operations; Progress report on the implementation of the 2013 Strategy, Action Plan and related Council Conclusions from December 2013. OLAF informed the Working Party of the Interim Report that it planned to produce by the end of the year on the progress achieved in implementing the Council Conclusions.

9. Update on the joint initiative of DG TAXUD and OLAF to reduce multiple reporting of customs seizures

OLAF and DG TAXUD informed the Working Party on the state of play of their joint initiative for reducing the multiple reporting of customs seizures. A survey with the Member States has been undertaken with a main focus on the Customs Risk Management System and Risk Information Form.

10. Possible use of experts groups in the framework of the CCWP

The Presidency informed the Working Party of the discussion paper that it has prepared on the possible use of experts groups in the framework of the CCWP (6097/16). The objective of this paper was to enable a more in-depth discussion during the CCWP Experts meeting on 3 March 2016 on the need for such groups and the conditions for establishing them.

11. AOB

The WCO presented the content and main actions of its 14 modules training Project " Compendium of Customs Operational Practices for Enforcement and Seizures", whose main objectives were to promote customs integrity, ensure security and safety of customs personnel, raise awareness of the vital role of mastering seizures and collection of evidence procedures for achieving the objectives of Customs on enforcement and safety.

The Presidency informed the delegates that the next Plenary meeting of the Customs Cooperation Working Party would take place on 14 April 2016.
