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PROPOSAL

From:	Secretary-General of the European Commission, signed by Ms Martine DEPREZ, Director
date of receipt:	25 June 2026
To:	Ms Thérèse BLANCHET, Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union
No. Cion doc.:	COM(2026) 297 annex
Subject:	ANNEX to the Proposal for a Council Decision on the position to be taken on behalf of the European Union in the Committee on Customs established under the Free Trade Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Singapore as regards the adoption of the decision concerning the mutual recognition of the Secure Trade Partnership Plus Programme of Singapore and the Authorised Economic Operator Programme of the European Union

Delegations will find attached document COM(2026) 297 annex.

Encl.: COM(2026) 297 annex

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Brussels, 25.6.2026
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ANNEX

ANNEX

to the

Proposal for a Council Decision

on the position to be taken on behalf of the European Union in the Committee on Customs established under the Free Trade Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Singapore as regards the adoption of the decision concerning the mutual recognition of the Secure Trade Partnership Plus Programme of Singapore and the Authorised Economic Operator Programme of the European Union

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ANNEX

DECISION No 2/2026 OF THE EUROPEAN UNION – SINGAPORE COMMITTEE ON CUSTOMS

of …

concerning the mutual recognition of the Secure Trade Partnership Plus Programme of Singapore and the Authorised Economic Operator Programme of the European Union

THE COMMITTEE ON CUSTOMS,

Having regard to the Free Trade Agreement between the European Union, hereinafter referred to as 'the Union', and the Republic of Singapore, hereinafter referred to as 'Singapore', and in particular, Chapter Six on Customs and Trade Facilitation and Understanding 4 on the Mutual Recognition of Authorised Economic Operator Programmes thereof,

Whereas,

(1) The Free Trade Agreement between the Union and Singapore, hereinafter referred to as 'the Agreement', entered into force on 21 November 2019.

(2) Article 6.3 of the Agreement provides for the commitment of the Parties to the Agreement to establish, where appropriate, mutual recognition of trade partnership programmes, including aspects such as data transmission and mutually agreed benefits.

(3) Understanding 4 of the Agreement on the Mutual Recognition of Authorised Economic Operator Programmes provides, amongst others, that the Parties to the Agreement shall agree, by a decision of the Committee on Customs established pursuant to Article 16.2 (Specialised Committees), on the mutual recognition of their respective Authorised Economic Operator, hereinafter referred to as 'AEO', programmes.

(4) Article 6.17 of the Agreement establishes that the Committee on Customs may adopt decisions on mutual recognition of trade partnership programmes, including aspects such as data transmission and mutually agreed benefits.

(5) Security and safety, and the facilitation of the international trade supply chain, can be significantly enhanced through mutual recognition of the respective trade partnership programmes, namely, the Secure Trade Partnership Plus Programme, hereinafter referred to as 'STP Plus', in Singapore and the AEO programme in the Union.

(6) The STP Plus and AEO programmes are based on internationally recognised security standards advocated by the Framework of Standards to Secure and Facilitate Global Trade, hereinafter referred to as 'SAFE Framework', of the World Customs Organisation.

(7) Mutual recognition allows the Union and Singapore to provide facilitative benefits to economic operators who have invested in supply chain security and have been authorised under their respective trade partnership programmes.

(8) Site visits and a joint evaluation of the AEO programme in the Union and the STP Plus programme in Singapore revealed that the qualification standards for security and safety purposes for their respective trade partnership programmes are compatible and lead to equivalent results.

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HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1

Definitions

For the purposes of this decision,

"Customs Authority" means in the Union the competent services of the European Commission and the customs authorities of the Member States and in Singapore, Singapore Customs, hereinafter referred to collectively as "Customs Authorities" and individually as "Customs Authority".

"Economic operator" means a person involved in the international movement of goods.

"Personal data" means any information relating to an identified or identifiable individual.

"Programme" means:

(a) in the Union: Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) status (security and safety) granted according to point (b) of Article 38(2) of Regulation (EU) No 952/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council[1];

(b) in Singapore: Secure Trade Partnership Plus Programme, granted according to Section 143(1)(*hb*) of the Customs Act 1960.

"Programme Members" means economic operators holding AEO status in the Union and STP Plus membership status in Singapore as described in the definition of "Programme" when referred to collectively.

Article 2

Mutual Recognition and Implementation of the Decision

1. The Programmes of the Union and Singapore are hereby mutually recognised to be compatible and equivalent and Programme Members shall be treated in a manner consistent with Article 4.

2. The Union and Singapore shall implement this Decision through their respective Customs Authorities.

Article 3

Compatibility

1. The Customs Authorities shall cooperate to maintain the compatibility and equivalence between their Programmes, in particular with respect to the following matters:

(a) the application process for granting the AEO status and membership;

(b) the assessment of applications;

(c) the granting of the status and membership; and

[1] Regulation (EU) No 952/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 October 2013 laying down the Union Customs Code (recast) (OJ L 269, 10.10.2013, p. 1)

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(d) the managing, monitoring, suspension and re-assessment, and revocation of the status and membership.

2. This Decision, as it relates to compatibility and equivalence, reflects the current structure and scope of the trade partnership programmes in the Union and Singapore. This Decision does not take into consideration future modifications to each programme. The Customs Authorities understand that any such future programme modifications may necessitate the successful completion of additional joint validations by both Customs Authorities to their satisfaction.

3. The Union and Singapore shall ensure that their trade partnership programmes operate within the relevant standards of the SAFE Framework.

Article 4

Benefits

1. Each Customs Authority shall provide benefits to Programme Members of the other Customs Authority that are comparable to the benefits that it provides to its Programme Members.

2. The benefits referred to in paragraph 1 shall include:

(a) fewer security and safety related controls: each Customs Authority takes the status of a Programme Member granted by the other Customs Authority favourably into account in its risk assessment to reduce inspections or controls and in other security and safety-related measures;

(b) recognition of business partners during the application process: each Customs Authority takes the status of a Programme Member of the other Customs Authority favourably into account when assessing the business partners' requirements for applicants under its own Programme;

(c) priority treatment at customs clearance: each Customs Authority takes the status of a Programme Member granted by the other Customs Authority into account in ensuring trade facilitation where the Programme Members are involved;

(d) business continuity mechanism: Customs Authorities endeavour to establish a business continuity mechanism to respond to disruptions in trade flows due to increases in security alert levels, border closures and/or natural disasters, hazardous emergencies or other major incidents by which priority cargos related to Programme Members should be facilitated and expedited to the extent possible by the Customs Authorities; and

(e) giving priority, whenever practical, to the inspection of consignments covered by exit or entry summary declarations lodged by a Programme Member, if the Customs Authority decides to proceed with an inspection.

3. Following the review process referred to in Article 7(3), each Customs Authority may provide, in cooperation with other government authorities in its territory, further facilitation benefits, which may include streamlining processes and increasing the predictability of movement at the border, to the extent possible.

4. Each Customs Authority:

(a) may suspend the benefits provided to Programme Members of the other Customs Authority under this Decision;

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(b) shall, within a reasonable time, communicate such suspension described under subparagraph (a) and the reasons for the suspension to the other Customs Authority; and

(c) may only suspend the benefits provided to Programme Members of the other Customs Party pursuant to subparagraph (a) for reasons equivalent to those for which it would suspend the Programme Members from its Programme.

5. Each Customs Authority shall, when it deems appropriate, report irregularities involving Programme Members of the other Customs Authority's Programme to that Customs Authority.

6. Upon receipt of such reports, that other Customs Authority will immediately review the appropriateness of the benefits and status granted to the reported Programme Member.

7. For greater certainty, this Decision does not limit the Union or Singapore or Customs Authorities from requesting information pursuant to the Understanding 3 on the Additional Customs-Related Provisions of the Agreement or other applicable instrument between the Union and Singapore, or between the Customs Authorities.

Article 5

Exchange of Information and Communication

1. The Customs Authorities shall enhance their communication in order to implement this Decision effectively by:

(a) providing each other with the details on their Programme Members as per paragraph 3 of this article;

(b) providing each other with timely updates on operability and development of their Programmes;

(c) exchanging information regarding supply chain security policy and trends; and

(d) ensuring effective communication through the competent services of the European Commission and Singapore Customs to enhance risk management practices with respect to supply chain security.

2. The exchange of information and communication in the framework of this Decision shall occur between the competent services of the European Commission and Singapore Customs.

3. Upon receiving consent from its Programme Member, each Customs Authority shall send to the other Customs Authority strictly the following details about that Programme Member:

(a) name;

(b) address;

(c) membership status, namely authorised, suspended, revoked or cancelled;

(d) validation or authorisation date when available;

(e) unique identification number (for example: STP Plus, EORI or AEO numbers); and

(f) other details that may be mutually determined between the Customs Authorities, subject, when applicable, to any necessary safeguards.

For greater certainty, details in subparagraph (c) do not include the reasons for suspension, revocation or cancellation of that Programme Members' membership status.

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4. The Customs Authorities shall exchange the information referred to in paragraph 3 in a systematic manner by electronic means.

Article 6

Treatment of information

1. Each Customs Authority shall:

(a) unless otherwise provided in this Decision, use any information, including any personal data, received under this Decision for the sole purpose of its implementation, including its monitoring; and

(b) notwithstanding subparagraph (a), obtain the prior written approval from the Customs Authority that sent the information to use the information for other purposes. Such use is then subject to any restrictions laid down by the Customs Authority that sent the information.

2. Each Customs Authority shall:

(a) treat information received under this Decision as confidential; and

(b) provide at least the same level of protection to information received under this Decision as it provides to information received from Programme Members of its Programme.

3. Notwithstanding paragraph 1(a), a Customs Authority may use the information received under this Decision in any judicial or administrative proceedings instituted for failure to comply with its customs law, including in its records of evidence, reports and testimonies. The Customs Authority that has received the information shall notify the Customs Authority that has sent that information prior to such use.

4. Each Customs Authority shall:

(a) only disclose information received under this Decision for the purpose for which it was received; and

(b) notwithstanding subparagraph (a), when a Customs Authority is required to disclose information in judicial or administrative proceedings, inform in writing and in advance of such disclosure the Customs Authority that has sent that information.

5. Each Customs Authority shall:

(a) ensure that the information it sends is accurate and up to date;

(b) adopt or maintain appropriate deletion procedures;

(c) promptly notify the other Customs Authority if it determines that information it has sent to the other Customs Authority is inaccurate, incomplete, unreliable, or if its receipt or further use contravenes this Decision;

(d) take all measures it deems appropriate, including supplementation, deletion, or correction of information referred to in subparagraph (c), to safeguard against erroneous reliance on such information; and

(e) only retain information received under this Decision as long as necessary for the purposes of implementing this Decision or for the purposes of judicial or administrative proceedings.

6. Further to paragraphs 4 and 5, each Customs Authority shall ensure that:

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(a) security safeguards are in place (including electronic safeguards) to control, on a need-to-know basis, access to information received from the other Customs Authority under this Decision;

(b) information received from the other Customs Authority under this Decision is protected from unauthorised access, dissemination, alteration, deletion or destruction;

(c) information received from the other Customs Authority under this Decision is not disclosed to any private person or legal person, any State or international body that is not a Party to the Agreement, or to any other public authority of the Union or Singapore, except when required in judicial or administrative proceedings; and

(d) information received from the other Customs Authority under this Decision is stored at all times in secure electronic or paper storage systems, and that logs or documentation are kept on all access, disclosure and use of information received from the other Customs Authority.

7. Each Customs Authority shall:

(a) ensure the personal data of a Programme Member of the other Customs Authority, as it relates to its access to, correction and timing thereof, or temporary suspension of use, or deletion is treated in a manner at least equivalent to the treatment of the personal data of its Programme Member; and

(b) publish information to inform its Programme Members about the applicable process for requesting access, correction, temporary suspension of use, or deletion regarding their personal data.

8. Each Customs Authority shall provide that Programme Members have access, as it relates to their personal data, to administrative redress or judicial review regardless of their nationality or country of residence.

9. The Customs Authorities shall publish information to inform Programme Members of their options of seeking administrative redress or judicial review.

10. Compliance with the provisions in Article 6 by each Customs Authority is subject to review by their respective relevant authority, which shall ensure that complaints or incidents relating to non-compliance in the treatment of information are received, investigated, responded to, and appropriately redressed. These authorities are:

(a) in the Union: the European Data Protection Supervisor or its successor, and the Member States' data protection authorities; and

(b) in Singapore: the Singapore Customs and the Government Incident Reporting and Operations Centre.

Article 7

Consultation, monitoring and review

1. The Customs Authorities shall resolve any issues related to the interpretation and implementation of this Decision through consultations under the auspices of the Committee on Customs.

2. The Customs Authorities shall cooperate closely regarding the implementation of this Decision and shall monitor this regularly, including by on-site joint monitoring visits, to identify possible strengths and weaknesses in the Programmes of the Union and Singapore.

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3. The Committee on Customs shall review the implementation of this Decision regularly. This review process may include, in particular:

(a) exchanges of views on details exchanged and AEO benefits referred to in Article 4 granted to Programme Members, including any future details or AEO benefits referred to in Article 4;

(b) exchanges of views on security provisions such as protocols to be followed during and after a serious security incident (business resumption) or when conditions merit suspension of mutual recognition;

(c) examination of the suspension of the benefits referred to in Article 4; and

(d) review of the implementation of Article 6.

Article 8

Final Dispositions

1. The cooperation under this Decision shall take effect upon its adoption by the Committee on Customs.

2. The Committee on Customs may amend this Decision. The amendment shall enter into force in accordance with the procedure described in paragraph 1.

3. A Customs Authority may suspend cooperation under this Decision at any time by providing the other Customs Authority with thirty (30) days' written notice prior to the date of suspension. Such notice shall be provided to the competent services of the European Commission and Singapore Customs, respectively. Notwithstanding the suspension of the cooperation under this Decision, the Customs Authorities shall continue to comply with Articles 6 to ensure the protection of information received from the other Customs Authority via this Decision.

4. The Union and Singapore may terminate this Decision at any time by notifying the other Party to the Agreement through diplomatic channels. This Decision shall be terminated thirty (30) days after the date of receipt of the written notification by the other Party to the Agreement. Notwithstanding the termination of this Decision, the Customs Authorities shall continue to comply with Articles 6 to ensure the protection of information received from the other Customs Authority via this Decision.

Done at [PLACE], [DATE].

By the EU – Singapore Committee on Customs

For the European Union

For the Republic of Singapore

(The Co-Chairs of the Committee on Customs)

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