



Contribution of the European Sea Ports Organisation to the public consultation on the proposal for a regulation establishing the EU Single Window Environment for Customs

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The European Sea Ports Organisation welcomes the Commission's proposal for a regulation establishing a Customs Single Window environment (COM2020 673). About 75% of Europe's trade with the rest of the world is shipped through its seaports. Given their location, European ports function as border crossing points, where border authorities perform controls on the vast amount of goods entering the EU.

Certain goods require, besides the customs declaration, a number of additional regulatory formalities (sanitary, veterinary, phytosanitary, agricultural, fisheries, etc.) to obtain customs clearance. Today, those additional requirements need to be submitted through different portals in Member States. The Commission's proposal aims to enable businesses to complete border formalities through one single portal in a given Member State, as well as to enable more efficient sharing of electronic data between different authorities involved in goods clearance at the border.

ESPO believes that the proposed Customs Single Window environment could lead to further trade facilitation, reducing the administrative burden for businesses and increasing the efficiency of goods clearance, while also contributing to the ongoing digitalisation of the logistics chain.

At the same time, ESPO would like to draw the Commission's attention to the following points:

1. More clarity is needed on the relationship between the Maritime and Customs Single Window environments

The relationship – in particular the interdependence - between the European Maritime Single Window environment (2019/1239) and the proposed Customs Single Window environment is not clear. The European Maritime Single Window environment (EMSWe), which is currently being implemented, also facilitates the submission of declarations for customs. In case businesses can fulfill customs formalities through both the Maritime and Customs Single Window environments, ESPO believes that there should be a relation between both.

The proposal does not refer to the EMSWe facilities for customs, nor does it elaborate on how both single window environments interact for businesses. ESPO therefore calls on the Commission to provide more clarity on the relationship between the maritime and customs single window

environments, in order to secure the investments made in ports to connect to the EMSWe and in order to adapt the business processes for reporting to customs.

2. Providing a clear implementation timeline for economic operators

Over the last years, economic operators have been confronted with a fast-changing EU regulatory landscape for customs (e.g. the new rules laid down by the Union Customs Code). It will therefore be important that businesses and economic operators are provided with a clear implementation timeline setting out which steps will be taken and when, in order to achieve a well-functioning single window environment for customs.

The European Sea Ports Organisation (ESPO) represents the port authorities, port associations and port administrations of the seaports of 22 Member States of the European Union and Norway at political level. ESPO has also observer members in Iceland, the United Kingdom, Ukraine and Israel. ESPO is the principal interface between the European seaport authorities and the European institutions. In addition to representing the interests of European ports, ESPO is a knowledge network which brings together professionals from the port sector and national port organizations. ESPO was created in 1993.