

Conclusions 1st EU AEO Workshop

1. General:

- *155 representatives of customs administrations, the private sector and international organisations met in Senec, Slovakia, from 29 November to 1 December 2016, to exchange views and experiences about the EU AEO programme under the Union Customs Code (UCC), cooperation with other governmental authorities the Mutual Recognition of AEOs, and the role of Customs regarding security. The workshop was hosted by the Slovakian Customs administration and jointly organised with the EU Commission.*
- *Participants exchanged first experiences on the new rules regarding the AEO of the UCC, in particular the strengthened link with customs simplifications.*
- *Participants shared experiences on the cooperation with other government authorities at EU and international level and called for new areas where further synergies could be explored.*
- *Participants discussed challenges and benefits regarding mutual recognition of AEOs, stressed the importance of efficient and effective implementation and explored future perspectives such as the inclusion of customs compliance elements.*
- *Participants had an open discussion about the role of Customs regarding security and identified the need to consolidate existing instruments and to deepen the WCO SAFE Framework of Standards to Secure and Facilitate Global Trade in order to strengthen the security aspect of the AEO programme and to effectively address current and future security challenges.*
- *During the breakout sessions, participants discussed the EU AEO programme's criteria and benefits, the two types of authorisations (AEOC and AEOS), the involvement of SMEs, the AEO concept within the different international instruments, cooperation with other government authorities as well as mutual recognition of AEO programmes from a trader's point of view and MRA partners point of view.*
- *Participants identified key elements for an effective, efficient and harmonised implementation of the AEO programme at EU and international level.*

2. We recommend:

[At EU AEO Programme level]

- **Raising awareness and better communication** between all partners involved (customs authorities, other government authorities and economic operators) regarding the AEO programme and its practical use, including of MRAs;
- **Ensuring the reliability and credibility of the EU AEO Programme**, including improving public perception, through robust implementation, enforcement and communication;

- **Clarifying and further elaborating benefits of AEO and Mutual Recognition and ensuring their practical implementation** by the EU Member States;
- **Improving the cooperation with other government authorities**, including those areas currently not yet covered by trusted trader programmes;

[At global level]

- **Enhancing the harmonised implementation** of the AEO concept and MRA worldwide.
- **Further streamlining WCO SAFE AEO concept** with other international instruments relating to security, facilitation and trade partnership programmes.
- **Enhancing benefits of AEO programmes in the WCO SAFE Framework of Standards and its Annexes.**
- **Deepening and elaborating the third pillar of WCO SAFE "cooperation with other government authorities".**

3. **Actions:**

- **COM DG TAXUD together with EU Member States will produce a "Fact sheet" and an "Open letter" to be sent by the authorising authorities to newly authorised AEOs to communicate the main elements of the AEO programme, including practical guidance on how to access to AEO and MRA benefits.**
- **EU Member States together with COM DG TAXUD: SME Helpdesk; SME priority treatment; implementation of the fast lane concept for AEO.**
- **ALL (Regulators and Industry Stakeholders): Insert compliance benefits into the WCO SAFE Framework of Standards and into MRAs.**
- **ALL (Regulators and Industry Stakeholders): Continue an open dialogue.**
- **ALL Regulators: Speak with other Authorities to reduce administrative burden, and consider actions beyond trusted trader programmes [e.g. specific industry sector observing strictest compliance levels].**