

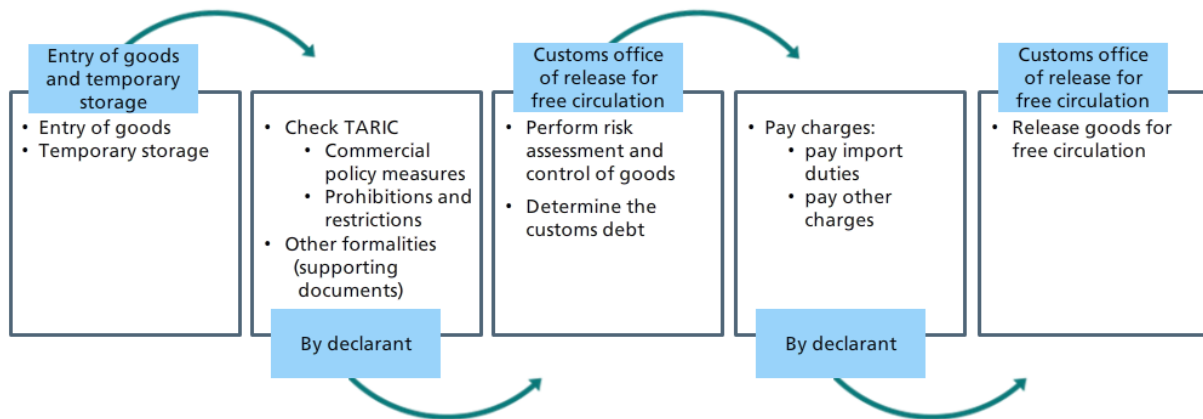
This is a quick and handy **info fiche** on:

- the different ways in which goods can be brought into the customs territory of the Union;
- the concept of free circulation;
- the standard process for free circulation;
- the cases in which goods released for free circulation are granted relief from import duty.

1 Free circulation of goods

- Non-Union goods intended to be put on the Union market or intended for private use or consumption within the customs territory of the Union should be placed under the release for free circulation procedure.
- When the customs duties and other applicable charges have been paid or are covered by an adequate guarantee, the goods are released for free circulation and the get the status of Union goods.
- Release for free circulation entails as appropriate:
 - the collection of import duty;
 - the collection of other charges;
 - the application of commercial policy measures;
 - the application of prohibitions and restrictions;
 - the completion of other formalities (such as the customs declaration).

2 The standard process



- Above scheme represents the consecutive step to release goods for free circulation.
- The entry of goods and temporary storage is dealt with in a separate dedicated course.
- All customs simplifications do apply to the customs declaration for release for free circulation, and is also dealt with in a separate dedicated course.
- In preparation of the release for free circulation of the goods, the economic operator consults TARIC. TARIC incorporates all EU customs tariffs, commercial policy measures and prohibitions and restrictions.
- The economic operator lodges then a customs declaration for the release of free circulation and presents the goods to customs. All supporting documents, such as invoices, certificate of origin and import licence, must be available on request by the Customs Authority.
- The Customs Authority will perform a risk analysis and customs controls and decides whether the goods can be released or not.
- If the goods can be released, the Customs Authority will check if a tariff quota is applicable to the goods and manages the customs debt. Managing customs debt comprises the determination of customs duties, the guarantee management, the entering into accounts and extinguishment of the customs debt.
- The goods will not be released for free circulation until duties have been paid or are covered by an adequate guarantee. Duties comprises in addition to the customs duties, VAT, excise duties and other levies such as anti-dumping duty and agricultural levies.

3 Relief from import duty

3.1 Returned goods

- Returned goods are non-Union goods, which have originally been exported as Union goods from the custom territory of the Union and are:
 - returned to the customs territory of the Union;
 - within a period of three years and declared for release for free circulation;
 - in the state in which they were exported;
 - even if they represented only a part of the goods previously exported.
- Returned goods are granted relief from import duty only if they have not been benefiting from measures laid down under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) at the time of their export.

3.2 Returned goods after inward processing

- If the returned goods are processed products that were originally re-exported from the customs territory of the Union subsequent an inward processing procedure the provisions apply as follows:
 - The date of acceptance of the re-export declaration is regarded as the date of release for free circulation.
 - Import duty will apply on the Non-Union goods which were originally imported under the inward processing procedures, but not on the added-value produce from the inward processing.

3.3 Products of sea-fishing

- Following goods are granted relief form import duty since they are considered to be Union goods:
 - Products of sea-fishing caught by a Union fishing vessel outside the territorial waters of a third country.
 - Goods obtained from the above products, processed on board of that vessel or a Union factory ship.

For more information on this topic, download (free of charge) the eLearning module: [UCC Level 2 – Release for free circulation](#).

See also the legislation related in the [Europa website](#).

Remember, this is a quick and handy summary of the most relevant information related to this topic. Only the European Union legislation published in the Official Journal of the European Union is deemed

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