

EU customs: Council greenlights landmark reform

The Council today gave its final approval for an **ambitious overhaul of the EU customs framework** – the most comprehensive reform of its kind in decades.

The updated legislation gives the Union a more modern toolbox and innovative new instruments to better **facilitate global trade**, especially in e-commerce, **collect customs duties** more efficiently and **tighten controls on non-compliant, dangerous or unsafe goods**.

Managing the rise of e-commerce

The updated union customs code clarifies that non-EU **e-commerce platforms will be considered the goods' importer** when selling into the EU and are therefore responsible for ensuring that all customs formalities and duty payments are handled, rather than the final EU consumer.

The legislation also features a **new system of penalties for e-commerce operators** that fail to fulfil their customs obligations, such as making sure that EU standards are upheld and appropriate duty paid. The most serious cases of non-compliance may incur fines of up to 6% of the company's annual import value of goods in the preceding year, the removal of certain customs privileges and even access restrictions to online platforms.

Finally, to help cover rising costs from monitoring the growing number of small parcels entering the EU via e-commerce, **an EU-wide handling fee on small parcels** will be introduced by 1 November 2026. The Commission will set the level of the fee before it starts being applied by EU member states.

The handling fee is separate from the earlier Council decision to remove the historical customs duty exemption for imports valued at less than €150.

The EU customs authority

The text establishes a new **decentralised EU agency for customs** to coordinate governance of the customs union.

Specifically, the **EU customs authority** will analyse the constantly updated import and export data contained in a new, state-of-the-art, **EU customs data hub** - one central platform for importers and exporters to interact with customs in the EU. This will help member states to identify the riskiest cargo that should be prioritised for inspection.

The authority will also help establish **priority control areas and risk criteria**, and **coordinate EU-level crisis management** for customs. It will be located in Lille, France and begin operations in 2027.

Support for the most reliable traders

The new legislation creates a new category of the most transparent businesses – **trust and check traders**.

Under this scheme, companies providing comprehensive information on the movement and compliance of their goods, along with other stringent criteria, will enjoy simplified customs procedures, saving them time and money.

The most reliable companies will be able to **release their goods into circulation in the EU without any active customs intervention** at all.

Next steps

The European Parliament is expected to approve the final text later in September, ahead of its signature and publication in the EU's official journal. Use of the new data hub to record imports to and exports from the EU will become mandatory for e-commerce businesses on 1 July 2028 and for all traders from 1 March 2034.

Background

For over 50 years, the EU customs union has been operating efficiently across national borders, managed by national customs offices working together. As one of the world's largest trading blocs, the EU customs union manages trade worth over **€4.3 trillion**, **accounting for around 14% of global trade**.

In 2025, 2,200 customs offices and 84,000 customs officials collected almost **€31 billion** in customs duties and managed the import, export and transit of **around 6 billion e-commerce parcels** and more than **1.5 billion items in traditional trade**. Over 90% of e-commerce parcels arrived in the EU from China.

- [Position of the Council at first reading on the UCC and the EU Customs Authority](#)
- [EU customs: Council and Parliament agree on landmark reform \(press release, 26 March 2026\)](#)
- [Lille to host the new EU customs authority \(press release, 25 March 2026\)](#)
- [Customs: Council takes action to tackle the influx of small parcels \(press release, 13 November 2025\)](#)
- [EU customs reform \(background information\)](#)
- [The EU customs union \(background information\)](#)
- [Customs reform on the EU law tracker](#)

Press office - General Secretariat of the Council of the EU

Rue de la Loi 175 - B-1048 BRUSSELS - Tel.: +32 (0)2 281 6319

press@consilium.europa.eu - www.consilium.europa.eu/press