

The Future of Customs in the EU 2040

Fabiana Scapolo

Competence Centre on Foresight,
Joint Research Centre

WCO, Permanent Technical Committee
Brussels, October 30, 2019



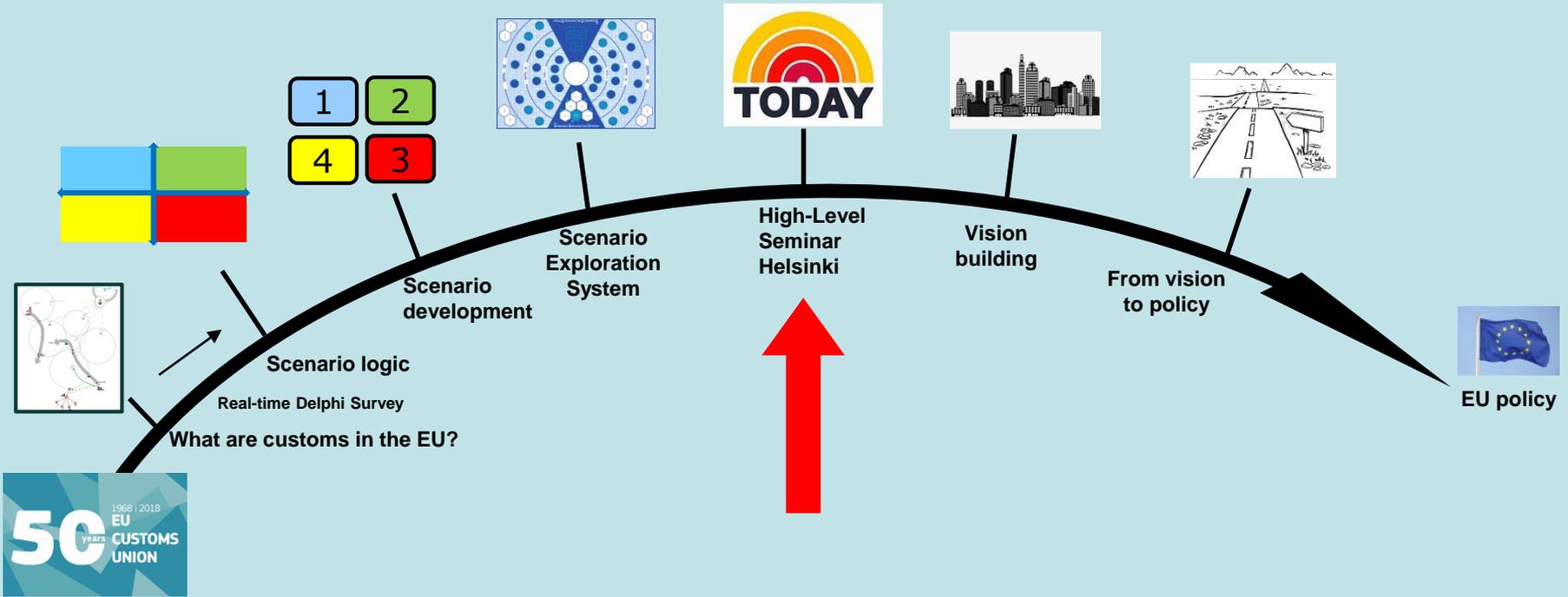
European
Commission

OBJECTIVES

- **To better understand trends and drivers impacting the EU customs system**
- Better understand paths for **how this system could develop by 2040**, through scenarios
- Empower policymakers and stakeholders **to engage in strategic reflection**
- **Generate a tool** to help relevant actors and stakeholders of EU customs engage with foresight scenarios
- To support an action-oriented reflection on what the outcomes of the foresight process **could mean for decision-making today**



The foresight journey about the future of customs



REAL-TIME DELPHI SURVEY ON FUTURE OF CUSTOMS

Asking experts to react upon 16 statements and indicate:

- Likelihood of happening
- Timeframe by when this might occur
- Influential domains of EU action
- Suggestions for EU action

332 participants (response rate 44%)

EXAMPLES OF RESULTS

"The roles of EU customs, border control and migration management have been combined into a single new powerful body."

A majority think it will happen but opinions on timing range from 2025 to 2040+.

"The economy has become circular and the global value chain has shifted closer to the places of consumption. As a result, border infrastructure for trade in goods has lost a lot of importance."

Strong majority think it is unlikely to happen.

"As artificial Intelligence and robot-performed controls have replaced all manual controls, the customs workforce has decreased by 50%"

Opinions in equal balance between likely and unlikely, but for the long-term.

Future of customs in the EU 2040

Scenario 1 - CUSTOMS FOR SOCIETY

Standards Facilitation & Simplification 100% compliance

Tech for sustainability

Executive Central Body International cooperation

Harmonization High EU standard of living

Circular economy Strong EU institutions

Customs for welfare and sustainability

APPEASED WORLD

DYNAMIC EU ECONOMY

Scenario 2 - PROTECTED UNION

Customs diplomacy EU Customs Control and Border Agency

Weak international bodies Surveillance and security Selective trade

Support for EU project Strong border controls Compulsory AEO regime

High R&D investments Resource efficient EU Strong global EU

EU strategic autonomy

Customs for security

CONFLICTUAL WORLD

Scenario 4 - 'NO-STOP-SHOP'

Full data pull Single EU Customs agency Green taxation

Frugal EU economy Efficiency and automation

Cautious policy making Trade facilitation Free and green trade

Real-time risk assessment Optimisation of existing customs systems

EU rule taker EU for a collaborative international scene

Scenario 3 - CUSTOMS UNDER STRAIN

Strong global competition

Trade facilitation decreasing Social unrest Strained customs budget

Increased customs crime

National agendas prevail EU Customs Risk Analysis Agency

Instability Polarisation

Bi-lateral agreements Selective international alliances

Weak international bodies Increased data requirements for customs

SLOW EU ECONOMY

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- By using scenarios as a strategic reflection space for the future of EU customs, **develop a shared vision for the future of customs in the EU**
- Use outcomes to **identify priorities for Customs Union development** and **review the Customs Union strategy**