The Future of Customs in the EU 2040

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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

Scenario development

Scenario Exploration System

High-Level Seminar Helsinki

Vision building

From vision to policy

EU policy

Scenario logic

Real-time Delphi Survey

What are customs in the EU?

1 2 4 3

The foresight journey about the future of customs

What are customs in the EU?
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%)
“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+.

“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.

“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.
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Scenario 1 - CUSTOMS FOR SOCIETY
- Standards
- Facilitation & Simplification
- Tech for sustainability
- International cooperation
- High EU standard of living
- Strong EU institutions
- Customs for welfare and sustainability
- Green taxation

Scenario 2 - PROTECTED UNION
- Customs diplomacy
- EU Customs Control and Border Agency
- Weak international bodies
- Surveillance and security
- Selective trade
- Strong border controls
- Compulsory AEO regime
- High R&D investments
- Resource efficient EU
- Strong global EU
- EU strategic autonomy
- Customs for security

Scenario 3 - CUSTOMS UNDER STRAIN
- Strong global competition
- Trade facilitation decreasing
- Social unrest
-Strained customs budget
- Increased customs crime
- National agendas prevail
- Instability
- EU Customs Risk Analysis Agency
- Polarisation
- Selective international alliances
- Bi-lateral agreements
- Increased data requirements for customs

Scenario 4 - ‘NO-STOP-SHOP’
- Full data pull
- Single EU Customs agency
- Frugal EU economy
- Efficieny and automation
- Cautious policy making
- Trade facilitation
- Free and green trade
- Real-time risk assessment
- Optimisation of existing customs systems
- EU for a collaborative international scene
- EU rule taker

APPEASED WORLD

DYNAMIC EU ECONOMY

CONFLICTUAL WORLD

SLOW EU ECONOMY
Customs version of Scenario Exploration System
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**