

World Customs Organisation Conference

"What future for 100% scanning?"

Brussels, 10-11 June 2008

Key note speech by Robert Massey, Chief Executive Officer Cotecna

Mr Secretary General of the World Customs Organization,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to have the opportunity to take part in the conference entitled "What future for 100% scanning?" being held here at the headquarters of the World Customs Organization.

The subject that brings us together for these two days is the inspection of goods by scanner, particularly in the context of the discussions now in progress concerning the implementation of the law voted by the American Congress in July 2007 concerning the 100% inspection of freight by scanner.

As a private company active in the inspection industry, Cotecna has been well placed in the field of non-intrusive inspection for over ten years, having pioneered the use of high-energy scanners within the framework of mandates granted by the Customs administrations of various countries.

However, I should like to begin with a few words about the environment of our inspection and control industry, which has undergone such profound changes over the last ten years.

The volume of international trade has increased considerably, with more than 300 million containers now being moved around the world every year by road, rail and sea. This growth in volume has to be matched by a corresponding increase in the capacity and speed provided for container processing. For our part, we have succeeded during these years in coping with the difficulties inherent in the increased volume of container traffic by introducing tools such as scanners, combined with automated risk-assessment systems.

Since the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, the inspection business has had to concentrate on problems connected with safety and security. In the United States, where the threat of nuclear or chemical weapons of mass destruction is a matter of particular concern, a law has been passed requiring 100% scanning of maritime freight containers heading for US territory. This necessitates sophisticated tools and a high level of training. It is here that we believe our industry can play a key role in taking up this new challenge. Whatever the modalities for the application of this law, the task of implementation represents a major difficulty, given the worldwide scale of the problem.

This American initiative will generate huge quantities of raw data from all over the world – particularly in the form of images – and these will need to be processed rapidly by the

competent authorities responsible for security. The main objective of the authorities will be not only to identify high-risk containers but also to set in place solutions all along the supply chain so as to avoid slowing down the free flow of trade. The private sector can provide the processes and technologies needed to meet these objectives.

We are ready to place in the service of the public institutions the skills and experience that we have acquired both in the use of scanners and in the field of risk analysis.

We are ready to act as a "trusted third party agent", the English term used to designate an independent and reliable partner, fully recognised by the public authorities. This could be done within the framework of Public-Private Partnerships, which have already proved their added value. We firmly believe that the challenges connected with security can be overcome by cooperation of this kind.

As a company specializing in inspection and control, we are ready to contribute actively to the debate so that progress can be made pragmatically in the security of international trade, an issue of the highest importance.

The debate has begun and I am certain that the discussions taking place in and around this conference will prove both lively and productive.

Mr Secretary General,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I should like to thank you for your attention and I wish you a good conference.

Robert Massey