



14th Annual WCO PICARD Conference
CALL FOR PAPERS
Skopje, Republic of North Macedonia
22 - 24 October 2019

The World Customs Organization (WCO), in partnership with the Ministry of Finance and Customs Administration of the Republic of North Macedonia, is pleased to announce that the 14th annual WCO PICARD Conference will take place in Skopje, the Republic of North Macedonia, from 22 to 24 October 2019.

The WCO's theme for 2019 is '**SMART borders for seamless Trade, Travel and Transport**', acknowledging the importance of the swift movement of goods, people and means of transport through borders. Submissions should therefore focus on a variety of topics including, but not limited to: **Big Data Analytics, Coordination and Cooperation at Borders, Cross-border E-commerce, Special Economic Zones, Technology at the Border, Predominance of Protectionism.**

Big Data Analytics could henceforth prove crucial for Customs administrations. The examination and interpretation of large and varied data sets can provide a robust foundation for the core Customs' objectives of revenue collection, border security, collection of trade statistics, trade facilitation and integrity. For some administrations, recent changes in the data sphere have resulted in a complete overhaul of traditional Customs practices such as risk analysis and performance measurement. Administrations that have not yet adapted their practices, or are reluctant to do so, may be swept up in a seemingly unavoidable data revolution. Government agencies such as Customs should better integrate Big Data analytics into their daily operations and develop methodologies in accordance with Big Data sets in order to harness the full potential of the data revolution. The opportunities and potential are manifold, particularly for developing countries that stand to benefit from the incorporation of data practices into their Customs environment, and which could avoid duplication and avail of opportunities to modernize Customs practices by incorporating good data analytics practices from the outset.

Coordination and Cooperation at Borders refers to all forms of interaction and information exchange conducted at borders. Customs coordination and cooperation at the border come in many guises, from the formal (Customs Mutual Assistance Agreements), to the more informal (conferences, workshops). This is an all-encompassing and comprehensive theme, and includes not only Customs-Customs, Customs-Business and Customs-Other government agencies (e.g. tax, trade, policy, quarantine) partnerships, but also interactions between Business-Business, Government-Citizen and Government-NGO.

Special Economic Zones (SEZs), otherwise known as Free Trade Zones (FTZs), are specific types of industrial zones that offer significant benefits, e.g. Customs exemptions, specific and sometimes loose regulations allowing for cheaper and readily-available supplies, infrastructure development, etc.. There are over 4,000 SEZs in over 100 countries and their success rate varies. The security of international trade can be jeopardized through the misuse of 'lax' or loose regulations in such Zones.

Technology at the Border refers to the structural shift of Custom processes at borders brought about by the rapid advent of technology. This topic includes, but is not limited to, technologies governing the efficiency and



security aspect of Customs such as Single Window, Block-chain technology, cloud computing, robotics, drones, 3D printing, Artificial Intelligence, smart devices, etc. The importance of dealing with technology is increasing as the era of 'digital disruption' has changed the Customs environment, and created new opportunities and challenges. Technologies at the border can help to reduce costs and streamline Customs procedures.

Cross-Border E-Commerce is a phenomenon that has quietly gained momentum as customers purchase products from outside their national borders. The growing trade in cross-border electronic commerce (E-Commerce) in physical goods has generated enormous opportunities for the global economy, providing new growth engines, developing new trade modes, driving new consumption trends and creating new jobs. This unprecedented growth has revolutionized the way businesses and consumers market, sell and purchase goods, providing wider choices, advance shipping, payment and delivery options. It has also opened up global economic opportunities to micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in terms of wider access to overseas markets by lowering entry barriers and reducing costs.

Predominance of Protectionism refers to the recent trend observed of a potential return to protectionism in trade and travel. Protective trade practices are more becoming more common, and retaliatory actions through tariff and non-tariff barriers have been observed among the major economies. This topic underlines the economic, political, social and cultural dimensions and implications of a possible return to an era of protectionism.

The Conference in particular welcomes and encourages attendance and submissions from Customs professionals as well as researchers from various academic disciplines, such as anthropology, criminology, economics, geography, history, international relations and international trade, law and political science. The WCO Research Unit is particularly interested in developing an interdisciplinary approach with different perspectives, approaches and methodologies regarding contemporary systems of regulation and control at borders, and strongly welcomes papers co-authored by Customs officials and academics.

As in previous years, applicant submissions can include (1) Presentation Summaries of up to 1,000 words; (2) Papers of up to 9,000 words; or (3) Proposals for Panels. Papers will not have any inherent advantage over Presentation Summaries.

Submissions should be submitted in accordance with following requirements:

- Arial font size 11.
- Submissions should be in English or French.

Ample time will be allowed for discussion and simultaneous interpretation will be provided at the Conference in English and French.

Proposals for Panels should consist of two or three speakers presenting research on one cohesive topic. The WCO would like to encourage Customs and academics to engage in comparative and policy-relevant research on Customs issues: panel proposals are an ideal format for such discussions to take place.

To respond to this Call for Papers, please submit Presentation Summaries, Papers or Panel Proposals with the following details by email to picard2019@wcoomd.org no later than **12 July 2019**:



- Name, title, and biography (maximum 250 words) of researcher or researchers.
- Current position, organization, and country of researcher or researchers.
- Contact email and telephone.
- Proposed title of contribution.
- For papers of more than 1,000 words, an abstract of no more than 300 words is required.

Authors will be notified by 19 July 2019 of selection or non-selection of their paper and/or presentation summaries for presentation at the Conference.

The WCO is particularly grateful for the support from:

- The Ministry of Finance and Customs Administration of the Republic of North Macedonia
- The Korea Customs Service.
- The PICARD Scientific Board Members.

If necessary, the WCO will seek to identify funding for reasonable travel and hotel expenses for a small number of presenters who lack institutional backing and have been selected following this Call for Papers.

If you have any questions or concerns, please email picard2019@wcoomd.org.

Information about the Conference including venue, accommodation, visa requirements and registration will be made available in due course at the following Website address: www.etches.com/picard2019

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