



The Secretary General

13.FL-0039E/G.C.

Brussels, 31 January 2013.

Dear Director General,

As part of our relationship with the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the WCO has been working on the Customs issues relating to privately contracted armed security personnel (PCASP) employed to protect ships transiting the High Risk Area<sup>1</sup> affected by Somalia-based piracy.

A questionnaire was sent to all Members in October 2011 to help IMO Members understand the Customs compliance requirements in relation to PCASP. This questionnaire concentrated on two key issues, namely the role of Customs in the control of firearms and ammunition used by PCASP, and the information required by Customs administrations on firearms.

The responses, though limited in number, proved helpful to IMO Members who asked if it would be possible to follow this up with a more targeted yet comprehensive exercise to obtain more information from the Customs administrations which will be most affected.

With that in mind and as agreed by the November 2012 PTC meeting (Document PC0300), this letter is therefore being sent to you as a Member of one of the three WCO regions involved (East and Southern Africa; North of Africa, Near and Middle East; Far East and South East Asia, Australia and the Pacific Islands).

You could be affected either because PCASPs are boarding vessels calling at one of your ports before sailing through the High Risk Area, are on vessels in transit through your territory and through the High Risk Area, or are disembarking at one of your ports after having left the High Risk Area.

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<sup>1</sup> An area bounded by Suez and the Strait of Hormuz to the North, 10°S and 78°E.

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We have already made the point to IMO Members that the issues extend beyond Customs, and that a number of other agencies would also have responsibilities in this area. Though Customs has an important role to play in the control of firearms and security-related equipment carried by PCASPs, we are convinced that a holistic inter-agency approach is required.

I am asking you to look again at the questionnaire sent out in October 2011 (Annex 1), in particular if you were not one of the earlier respondents, as it is important for IMO Members to know what it is you expect them to do to comply with the requirements. If you did respond last time, I would be grateful if you could check the information to ensure it remains comprehensive and up to date. To help you in this process, I attach the earlier responses (Annex 2).

Your replies will be collated and be made available on the WCO website unless you object to publication, and will also be forwarded to the IMO Secretariat. I would be grateful if your Administration's reply could be sent to Mr. Georges Cantone ([georges.cantone@wcoomd.org](mailto:georges.cantone@wcoomd.org)) of the Compliance and Facilitation Directorate by 27 February 2013.

Yours sincerely,



Kunio Mikuriya.