



Permanent Technical Committee

PC0748Ea

-
243rd/244th Sessions

-
23-26 April 2024

Brussels, 28 Feb 2024.

Customs-Port Cooperation

Revision of the Guidelines on Cooperation between Customs and Port Authorities

(Item XII on the Agenda)

SUMMARY

Purpose of document

In April 2023, the Permanent Technical Committee (PTC) endorsed the draft Guidelines on Cooperation between Customs and Port Authorities. The PTC asked that the Secretariat engage in dialogue and work with the World Shipping Council (WSC) and other interested stakeholders to incorporate their perspective and input into the Guidelines for the PTC's consideration at its next meeting. A Mini Group of interested WCO and IAPH Members and observers convened during the intersessional period to discuss the revision proposals submitted by the WSC and other interested stakeholders. The PTC will be invited to discuss and provide guidance on the revised text of the Guidelines attached as the Annex to this document.

Action required of the Permanent Technical Committee

The Permanent Technical Committee is invited to discuss and provide guidance on the revised text of the Guidelines.

*

*

*

I. Introduction

1. At its meeting in October 2021, the PTC discussed and approved a proposal by the International Association of Ports and Harbors (IAPH) to develop a set of Guidelines on Cooperation between Customs and Port Authorities to strengthen trade facilitation and supply chain security and to accelerate the digitalization agenda. The objective was to

address a number of challenges in establishing cooperation and help Members to establish a better working relationship with Port Authorities.

2. On 20 December 2021, the WCO and IAPH Secretariats sent a letter to WCO and IAPH Members inviting them to attend a kick-off meeting for a Mini Group of interested Members on 20 January 2022. They were also invited to contribute to developing the planned Guidelines based on their national practices. The Mini Group met regularly and succeeded in finalizing the draft Guidelines as planned.
3. At its meeting in April 2023, the PTC examined and endorsed the Guidelines on Cooperation between Customs and Port Authorities in their current format, including the input from Germany and other delegates, and asked that the Secretariat engage in dialogue and work with the World Shipping Council (WSC) and other interested stakeholders to incorporate their perspective and input into the Guidelines for the PTC's consideration at its next meeting.
4. Subsequently, the Council approved the Guidelines at its June 2023 sessions. The Guidelines are available for WCO Members as [Annex VI](#) to the Summary Report on the 239th/240th PTC Meeting. The Guidelines were officially launched by the WCO and the IAPH at the World Port Conference in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, from 31 October to 2 November 2023. The WCO was represented at the launch by the Deputy Secretary General, Ricardo Treviño Chapa.
5. At its meeting in October 2023, an outline of the proposed revisions to the Guidelines were presented to the PTC, whereupon the PTC discussed and took note of the proposals submitted during the intersession for potential incorporation into the Guidelines on Cooperation between Customs and Port Authorities, highlighting the importance of addressing the risk surrounding Undeclared Abandoned Containers.

II. Draft revised Guidelines

6. The Secretariat received a draft of the revised Guidelines from the WSC in the intersession and reconvened the Mini Group. The draft revision is attached as the Annex to this document. The members of the Mini Group broadly welcomed the proposal and expressed their views, which included the following:
 - the input provided by the WSC was considered to be relatively extensive and had the potential to change the direction and scope of the Guidelines, which had originally focused on co-operation between Customs and Port Authorities, with the objective of bringing port authorities and Customs administrations closer together by adopting a common agenda, with a solid, sustainable governance structure in place, to exchange “single truth” data so as to ensure supply chain security, thus improving trade facilitation in their respective countries. The target audience of the Guidelines was Customs and Port Authorities. Such significant changes might fit into a comprehensive review process. However, it was deemed too early to be carrying out a comprehensive review, considering the Guidelines had only been launched in October 2023;
 - in order to maintain the current scope of the Guidelines without losing the WSC's perspective, it was suggested that the WSC input be concentrated in a specific section of the Guidelines (or in a specific “box”) in the form of a case study on cooperation between container shipping lines and Customs and port authorities. It was also suggested that some inputs, such as the WSC's inputs on supply

chain security, should be considered as a new output separate to the Guidelines on Cooperation between Customs and Port Authorities;

- the Guidelines had derived knowledge and a set of principles from existing instruments and tools. To this end, some of the inputs that were already covered by existing instruments and tools could be made more concise by referring to them. This point was particularly relevant in the case of the proposed input on the Single Window, where all of the information was available in the Single Window Compendium, the WCO Coordinated Border Management Compendium, the IAPH World Bank report “Port Community System: Lessons From Global Experience”, the World Bank- IAPH report “Accelerating Digitalization Across the Maritime Supply Chain”, the IAPH Cybersecurity Guidelines for Ports and Port Facilities, the IAPH Risk and Resilience Guidelines for Ports, and the IAPH White Paper: “The mindset shift towards innovation”;
 - however, the WSC considered that for a document such as the Guidelines that would be used to implement port and Customs cooperation, it was necessary to elaborate some of the information in the maritime context. It was of the opinion that this should be possible without being deemed redundant given the existing instruments and tools.
7. The Mini Group, in particular the IAPH and WCO Secretariats, and the WSC will continue the work to refine the input provided by the WSC.

III. Action required of the PTC

8. The Permanent Technical Committee is invited to discuss and provide guidance on the revised text of the Guidelines.
-