



Permanent Technical Committee

PC0753Eb

-
243rd/244th Sessions
-
23 – 26 April 2024

Brussels, 03 April 2024

Strengthening Customs-Industry Resilience

(Item XVI. on the Agenda)

SUMMARY

Purpose of document

The purpose of this document is to continue discussion around the draft Concept Note on Strengthening Customs-Industry Resilience, prepared by the WCO Asia/Pacific region and the Asia/Pacific Regional Private Sector Group. To ensure continued progress with the resilience efforts outlined in the Concept Note and extend their scope to all WCO Members, following the guidance provided by the Policy Commission, the PTC will be invited to discuss the draft Concept Note and potentially endorse a draft WCO Resolution on Resilience.

Action required of the Permanent Technical Committee

The Permanent Technical Committee is invited to discuss and endorse a draft Resolution of the Customs Co-operation Council on Strengthening Customs-Industry Resilience.

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I. Introduction

1. The WCO Vice-Chair for the Asia/Pacific (A/P) region presented the draft [Concept Note on: Strengthening Customs-Industry Resilience](#) (hereafter “the Concept Note”) for WCO A/P Members’ awareness at the 24th WCO A/P RHCA Conference in Perth, Australia, in May 2023. The paper was supported by RHCA and supported by the WCO Secretary General.
2. Later on, the draft Concept Note was also introduced and discussed at the Dialogue session between the Policy Commission (PC) and the PSCG, as well as at the PC session in June 2023.

II. Scope of the draft Concept Note

3. The draft Concept Note consists of the Project Vision, Scope, Proposed targets and outcomes, Format, Background and context, and three Annexes.
4. The draft Concept Note recognizes that Customs was a critical first responder during COVID-19, with uncertainty caused by the rapid closure of borders and the suspension of travel. During this time, Customs resources were redirected to continue the facilitation of cross-border trade, while ensuring supply chains remained resilient to new and targeted modus operandi being used by threat actors.
5. The Concept Note suggests that a standard definition of resilience be applicable to Customs, industry and the operators within a connected border environment.
6. The role of Authorized Economic Operators (AEOs) is highlighted within the Concept Note, emphasizing their contribution to risk assessment. In addition, the Concept Note proposes principles of what AEO 2.0 could consist of in the future.
7. Furthermore, the document elaborates on the symbiotic relationship between Customs and industry. Both entities aim to streamline the movement of goods, with industry focusing on compliance with relevant processes and regulations, and efficient engagement with Customs. The document suggests leveraging existing tools and guidelines set by the WCO, such as the principles of the Revised Kyoto Convention and the World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement.
8. The draft Concept Note also references two papers presented by the PSCG at the Dialogue session between the PC and the PSCG in June 2023. These two papers, titled “Ensuring Business Continuity in the Face of Trade Disruptions” and “What does facilitation mean to the PSCG?”, have also been added as Annexes to the draft Concept Note, noting that the respective efforts from the WCO Members and the PSCG will progress in parallel, highlighting how each group can contribute to formulating strategies aimed at enhancing supply chain resilience.

III. The progress of the draft Concept Note

9. At the 241st/242nd Sessions of the PTC, held from 24 to 26 October 2023, the WCO Vice-Chair for the A/P region - Australia - presented the draft Concept Note for discussion within the PTC. The PTC expressed its general support for the draft Concept Note and endorsed a standard definition of “resilience” for inclusion in the WCO Glossary of Customs Terms. Additionally, the PTC provided guidance on the way forward, stressing the importance of digitalization and of close partnership between Customs and the private sector.
10. The draft Concept Note was then discussed further, and welcomed, during the 29th Meeting of the SAFE Working Group (SWG), held from 15 to 17 November 2023.
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11. At the 89th Session of the PC, held from 5 to 7 December 2023, the draft Concept Note was presented again. The WCO Vice-Chair for the A/P region cited a recent cyber security incident involving DP World Australia as an example of the importance of government-industry collaboration in safeguarding critical infrastructure. Anticipating an increase in global trade, the delegate underlined the importance of co-designing solutions with industry, sharing knowledge and preparing for potential threats. It was announced that a WCO Resolution on Resilience would potentially be drafted by Australia in early 2024, for the April 2024 PTC sessions, to ensure the continued progress of the resilience efforts outlined in the Concept Note and extend their scope to all WCO Members.
12. While acknowledging the robust support that the draft Concept Note had garnered from the PC, the PC Chairperson recommended that further discussions be held on this topic during the April 2024 PTC sessions. The PC Chairperson pointed out that resilience-building was relevant not only in response to pandemics, but also to address a broader range of threats.
13. Based on guidance provided by the PC, under the leadership of Australia, a draft Resolution of the Customs Co-operation Council on Strengthening Customs-Industry Resilience (PC0753EAE1a) has been prepared for consideration by the 243rd/244th PTC sessions. Additionally, the PTC may wish to give consideration to the resource implications that implementation of the Resolution could require.

IV. Action required

14. The Permanent Technical Committee is invited to discuss and endorse a draft Resolution of the Customs Co-operation Council on Strengthening Customs-Industry Resilience.

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