



TRADE OBSERVER

The official Customs Bridge monthly update

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Europe, at the heart of customs

**REDUCTION OF POST BREXIT
CUSTOMS CONTROLS**

**THE TIR CONVENTION IS BEING
MODERNIZED**

**EU PROPOSES SINGLE CUSTOMS
WINDOW TO REVITALIZE CUSTOMS
PROCEDURES**

Reduction of post Brexit customs controls

The EU is proposing to ease customs controls on certain products to reduce tensions in Northern Ireland. The measure would reduce controls by about 80% and customs formalities by 50%.

Northern Ireland has always been a thorny issue for London and Brussels. The British government is fuming and threatening to unilaterally suspend the provisions of the post-Brexit Northern Ireland Protocol. Indeed, the British want to renegotiate this treaty but have been refused several times by the EU. The threat that the British brandish is Article 16 of the protocol, which allows to suspend certain provisions unilaterally. A real sword of Damocles for the EU.

This text is also strongly contested in Northern Ireland, particularly by the unionists, who accuse it of disrupting supplies to the territory. The European Union proposed to the United Kingdom on Wednesday, October 13, to ease controls on certain goods destined for Northern Ireland. These proposals are a "sincere response to the concerns" in Northern Ireland, said Commission vice-president Maros Sefcovic at a press conference in Brussels.



This measure would cover a wide range of goods originating in Great Britain and consumed in Northern Ireland. It would reduce controls by about 80% and customs formalities by 50%, creating a kind of "fast track" for these products, the Commissioner said.

In exchange, to protect the integrity of the European internal market and ensure that these products do not enter it, London would have to provide guarantees. These would include a label indicating that these products are intended to be sold "only" in the United Kingdom, or a "rapid reaction" mechanism to identify and resolve problems, failing which Brussels would take unilateral action, also returning to Article 16 of the new Northern Ireland Protocol. The Commission is ready to engage in intensive discussions with the British government in order to reach a lasting and joint solution as soon as possible, says the statement of the European executive. A delegation from the Commission visited London on Wednesday to present the European offer.

The desire to facilitate trade with Northern Ireland is clear, and the EU's priority to do so is to relax customs controls so that goods can move more quickly. Customs formalities are necessary but can be time consuming and sensitive. This problem, Customs Bridge has made its mission: simplify customs. More info on **www.customsbridge.fr**

The TIR convention is being modernized

If there was an intriguing inscription to talk about on the trucks we overtake, it is this blue rectangle where it is written "TIR". What does it mean, and why do only some of them have it?

This plate applied on a truck means that the goods are subject to the TIR regime. This is a customs fiscal regime that allows trucks to cross several customs without having to perform customs clearance operations at each border crossing. In Europe, thanks to the customs union and the common transit regime which also includes Switzerland, Iceland, Norway, Turkey, Serbia, Northern Macedonia and the United Kingdom, the TIR carnet is not necessary. It is enough to go through a system called NCTS (New Computerised Transit System).

If you see a truck with a TIR plate, it means that it comes from or is bound for a country outside the list mentioned, most often the Maghreb, or Eastern countries such as Russia, Belarus or Ukraine, or that it has transited through a third country (e.g. Albania) even though it is coming from and bound for the EU. This also means that they are under seal, so the container or truck is most likely sealed. To date, the TIR Convention has been ratified by more than 75 countries and will undergo a major evolution very soon: Digitization. Indeed, on May 25, at the international level, the legal provisions were taken and on September 20 the EU included these modifications in its official journal under the number L 331/1.



Although the technical details are not yet known, it is already known that this new system will be hosted by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and that the EU has already planned to interconnect its NCTS. This new "eTIR" system is still in its infancy, but perhaps it will see the disappearance of those enigmatic "TIR" inscriptions?

For more information, please contact AFTRI, the organization in charge of the TIR System in France

EU proposes single customs window to revitalize customs procedures

There are many European projects to simplify trade between countries, one of them is the single window for customs.

In 2015, the project to create a single window for customs was launched with nine EU member states and met with great success. The EU therefore wanted to extend this project to all member states. The Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO) sought to provide a centralized solution and a single entry point for customs declarations in order to reduce the administrative burden.

The Customs Union, while an essential part of a well-functioning internal market, generates approximately 39.7 million Customs declarations each year. As a result, this represents a heavy workload for traders who have to provide additional documents on top of the basic customs declaration.



The objective of this project is to establish a centralized digital solution for the exchange of electronic information between customs, other government authorities and economic operators. This regulation would provide a legal basis for a modern and electronic customs environment, ensuring security and safety and reducing the existing administrative burden. It would promote cooperation between EU Member States and the European Commission, and ensure equal treatment of all economic operators in the fight against fraudulent activities.

In its proposal, the European Commission has provided for working groups composed of representatives of the Commission and the national coordinators of the Member States. These working groups should serve as a forum to discuss progress in the advancement of the project at the country level. Meetings should be led by the European Commission and held regularly, at least twice a year.

This effort to centralize Customs procedures on the part of the EU is in keeping with the spirit of Customs Bridge's mission to simplify Customs, more info at **www.customsbridge.fr**