

Conference: “Brexit: one year of customs procedures, review and outlook”, 27 January 2022

1 January 2021 signalled the full reintroduction of customs procedures and inspections on the European side of the border between the European Union and the United Kingdom. The Ministry for the Economy, Finance and the Recovery will be hosting a ministerial conference entitled “Brexit: one year of customs procedures, review and outlook” to pool feedback from European customs administrations and businesses on the new customs processes introduced to manage the UK’s withdrawal from the single market, and to consider new ways to improve and enhance the current systems.

The introduction by Olivier Dussopt, Minister Delegate, reporting to the Minister for the Economy, Finance and the Recovery, with responsibility for Public Accounts, and Gerassimos Thomas, Director-General for Taxation and Customs Union at the European Commission, will be followed by two roundtables.

These roundtables will be moderated by European public and private sector customs experts and will feature participants from the European Commission, Belgian, French and Dutch customs administrations, the French Directorate General of the Treasury, and representatives from Europe-wide federations and businesses.

1) Review the economic impact from Brexit and the measures introduced by government authorities and economic operators

The first roundtable aims at establishing a joint “customs/businesses” review, a year after the UK’s withdrawal from the single market and the Customs Union, and as the UK is continuing with the gradual reintroduction of procedures and inspections for goods entering its territory.

It will emphasise the joint action of European customs administrations, with support from the European Commission and infrastructure managers (ports, shipping lines, Channel Tunnel), to:

- help businesses address this unprecedented event
- enable streamlined compliance by companies with their regulatory customs obligations
- ensure seamless trade flows using the innovative systems introduced in the Member States. These include the “Smart Border” which French Customs rolled out on the Channel/North Sea seaboard.

2) Shed light on future issues connected with the border between the UK and the EU in view of the requirements of economic operators

The aim of the second roundtable will be to put into perspective the options provided by the EU/UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement of 24 December 2020 in light of companies’ requirements. It will consider how businesses have reacted during the first weeks since the reintroduction of British customs procedures and inspections on 1 January 2022.

The roundtable will also allow private sector stakeholders (importers, exporters, shippers, carriers, declarants, etc.) to talk about their expectations and needs with an eye to the continued optimisation by European customs administrations of use of all services to

facilitate businesses' clearance operations.

The main aim is to diversify the support arrangements available to operators to enable them to continue and expand their trade with the British market.

Citation :

Olivier Dussopt, Minister Delegate for Public Accounts said "Brexit was very carefully prepared for by the customs administrations of the Member States. This brought home the fact that the Customs Union and internal market are central to European construction and guarantee, at the same time, free movement of goods and protection for European consumers.

In 2021, more than 3.6 million lorries crossed the EU's new border between France and the UK using the Smart Border system which helped maintain international trade flows".

Chiffres clés :

- Over 3.6 million lorries crossed the France/UK border using the Smart Border system in 2021
- 54% increase in the number of customs procedures carried out in France in 2021 compared to 2019