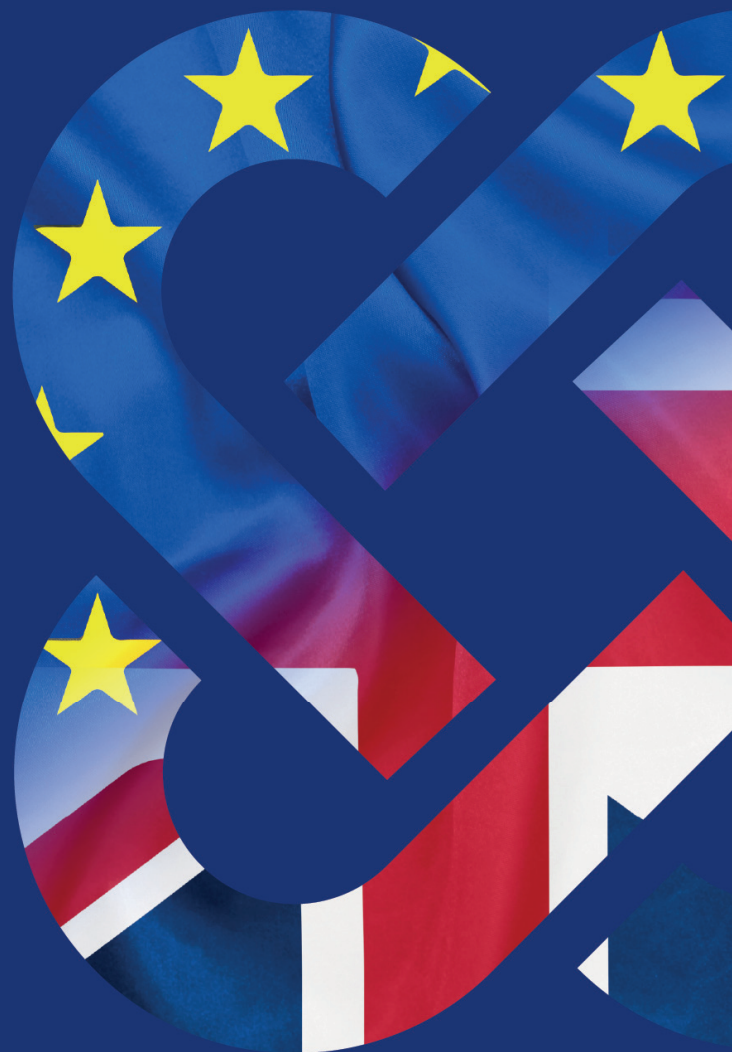


The EU Customs Code Reform

Position Paper



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1. Introduction

The reform to the European Union Customs Code (UCC) plays a pivotal role in facilitating trade across the EU and beyond. As an integral part of the European Single Market, Belgium, like many EU Member States, relies heavily on smooth and efficient customs procedures. These help to sustain its economic growth, competitiveness, and international trade relations. The British Chamber of Commerce | EU & Belgium recognises the significance of the EU Customs Code Reform and advocates for its effective adoption, implementation, and continuous improvement to support businesses operating in the EU and the UK.

2. Key points

01. Streamlining Trade Procedures

The EU Customs Code Reform aims to modernise and streamline customs procedures across EU Member States. By harmonising customs rules and regulations, it simplifies administrative processes for businesses engaged in cross-border trade. This simplification reduces bureaucratic barriers, enhances predictability, and fosters a more competitive business environment.

02. Enhancing Customs Compliance

Compliance with customs regulations is crucial for businesses to avoid penalties and disruptions to their operations. The EU Customs Code Reform introduces standardised procedures and requirements, promoting greater transparency and consistency in customs compliance practices. This clarity enables businesses in the EU to navigate customs procedures with confidence while minimising the risk of errors or delays which can prove costly.

03. Enabling Trade Facilitation Measures

Trade facilitation measures embedded in the EU Customs Code Reform contribute to reducing the time and cost of international trade transactions. Belgium, as a key gateway to Europe, benefits from simplified customs procedures, such as centralised clearance and self-assessment, which expedite the movement of goods across borders. These measures bolster Belgium's position as a strategic logistics hub and attract foreign direct investment, driving economic growth and employment opportunities.

04. Promoting Security and Safety

The EU Customs Code Reform prioritises security and safety standards to protect the EU's borders and citizens. Through advanced risk management systems and cooperation with relevant authorities, EU Member States strengthen their capacity to detect and prevent illicit trade activities, including smuggling and terrorism financing. The UCC reform eliminates the de minimis clause, contributing to this shield objective while providing a simplified option to process e-commerce operations. This proactive approach not only safeguards national security but also upholds the integrity of Belgium's trading relationships within the EU and globally.

05. Adapting to evolving Trade Dynamics

In a digitalised economy, the EU Customs Code Reform provides a framework for adapting to evolving trade dynamics and emerging challenges. By incorporating provisions for electronic customs declarations, automated processes, and data exchange systems, Belgium and the rest of EU Member States can harness the benefits of digitalisation to enhance the efficiency of its customs infrastructure. Embracing technological innovations ensures that Belgium remains at the forefront of international trade facilitation and maintains its competitive edge globally.

3. Recommendations

01. Continuous Dialogue and Collaboration

The British Chamber of Commerce | EU & Belgium encourages ongoing dialogue and collaboration between business, customs authorities, and policymakers to speed up the adoption process, address implementation challenges and enhance the effectiveness of the EU Customs Code Reform. Regular stakeholder consultations and feedback mechanisms are essential for identifying areas for improvement and optimising customs procedures to meet the evolving needs of businesses in the EU and the UK.

02. Investment in Training and Capacity Building

To fully leverage the benefits of the reform to the UCC, the EU must invest in training programmes and capacity building initiatives for customs officials and industry professionals. Equipping stakeholders with the necessary skills and knowledge enhances their ability to navigate complex customs regulations, leverage digital tools, and ensure compliance with evolving standards.

03. Promotion of Digital Solutions

Embracing digital solutions and interoperable systems is crucial for maximising the efficiency of customs processes in the EU. The British Chamber | EU & Belgium advocates for the promotion of digital customs platforms, such as electronic data interchange systems and single window interfaces, to streamline documentation, facilitate data sharing, and expedite customs clearance procedures.

04. Advocacy for Customs Cooperation and Safety

Promoting cooperation on customs within the EU is key to harmonising criteria, which will favour strengthening the functioning of the Single Market. Improved customs controls to enhance security and compliance with regulations (including the de minimis clause elimination) must be implemented so that processes are streamlined and simplified trade prevails in compliance with WTO Agreements.

4. Conclusion

The EU Customs Code Reform represents a cornerstone of the EU's trade policy framework, underpinning the EU Member States' economic prosperity and competitiveness in the global marketplace. As the British Chamber of Commerce | EU & Belgium, we are committed to supporting the adoption, effective implementation, and continuous improvement of the EU Customs Code Reform to ensure that business in Belgium, the EU and the UK can thrive in an increasingly interconnected and dynamic trading environment. By fostering collaboration, embracing innovation, and promoting trade-facilitating measures while improving inspections' effectiveness, the EU can harness the full potential of the EU Customs Code Reform.



Leading the conversation on trade in Europe



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