

## **GACAG URGES U.S. CUSTOMS TO WORK WITH INDUSTRY ON ADVANCED AIR FREIGHT SCREENING PILOT PROGRAMS**

The air cargo industry and national regulatory authorities need to continue working together on pilots to test the feasibility and processes for advance electronic data for air cargo shipments, the Global Air Cargo Advisory Group (GACAG) told Alan D. Bersin, Commissioner of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), at a meeting in Washington DC. Industry and regulatory authorities should also assess whether advance data can help support a risk-based approach to air cargo screening. GACAG representatives also met with senior officials from the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and communicated a similar message.

GACAG further said that pragmatism, flexibility, and joint evaluation of pilot results will be 'critically important' to realizing the goals of the Air Cargo Advanced Screening (ACAS) program. Further, GACAG hopes to support CBP and TSA outreach efforts to international institutions, to help communicate about ACAS, and about lessons learned from the approach taken in the United States.

The CBP and TSA meetings were attended by representatives of the four founding members of GACAG; The International Federation of Freight Forwarders Associations, The Global Shippers' Forum, The International Air transport Association and The International Air Cargo Association, and also addressed broader issues related to automation, harmonization and security. During discussions with Commissioner Bersin and other CBP officials, for example, GACAG members said automation systems should require only those data elements that are legitimately needed to ensure compliance with pertinent regulations, and should be in standardized, harmonized formats. According to GACAG, any newly requested data elements should be checked against the content of the World Customs Organization (WCO) Data Model and incorporated if they do not exist. Thereafter, new data elements should be added to those already within the WCO Safe Framework of Standards to ensure global coverage.

Addressing the ACAS pilot program in the United States, which has been expanded from express operators to include some passenger airlines and forwarders, GACAG said it was ready to work with CBP and the TSA on the initiative and urged continued open dialogue between government and industry to jointly evaluate ACAS at every stage of the process. The Group also called for shippers to be invited to the ACAS discussions.

In a statement, GACAG said: "We understand and support the need for comprehensive risk assessment. A verified secure supply chain is one of the ways this can be accomplished with traders, forwarders, ground handlers and airlines all fulfilling their important roles. The interface and interaction between forwarders and airlines in this regard is paramount. This can only be efficiently accomplished through cooperative

coordination of their respective submissions, particularly when it comes to the provision of advance information under the dual filing procedure.

The Group added: “Many issues must still be resolved through the ACAS pilots. In extending the pilot to passenger airlines, we need to take a pragmatic approach, given the many different ways of doing business in the air cargo sector, and the number of parties involved.”

The discussion with CBP also covered GACAG’s support of a paperless environment for air cargo imports and exports. Ultimately, GACAG said it would like to see the processing and authorization of secured data to be shared between air cargo operators and relevant participating government agencies where the responsible parties transmit a standard set of data once enabling a “one stop shop” practice.

Moving towards a paperless environment will require collaboration and cooperation from customs and other border authorities, GACAG said. It will pursue this objective at the WCO. GACAG wants the WCO to review the need for all existing supporting documents and to replace those deemed necessary with equivalent electronic messages using an internationally standard format.

GACAG believes that, at a minimum, the following should be accomplished through electronic means:

- Export and import goods declarations to customs from exporters, importers and/or their forwarders or customs brokers;
- Export, import and transit cargo declarations to customs from airlines;
- Release into free circulation following completion of the Customs formalities;
- Supporting documents should be provided by exception only (e.g. in case of an examination) and printout of electronic records should be accepted;
  - Air waybill, house waybill and manifest transport documents exchanged between forwarders and airlines and only provided to customs exceptionally – not regularly;
  - All key commercial documents (e.g. commercial invoice, packing list, hazardous materials documentation, certificates of origin) when needed;
- Recordkeeping and archiving for all participating parties (shippers, forwarders, airlines, etc.). There should be no requirement for participating parties to print documents (for example, complete airline manifest and supporting printout for all U.S. departed flights) unless by exceptions (e.g. in case of an audit), and printout of electronic records should be accepted.

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### **About GACAG**

The Global Air Cargo Advisory Group (GACAG) is an industry advisory group formed November 2010 to ensure the air cargo industry has a strong, unified voice in its dealings with worldwide regulatory authorities and other bodies whose decisions directly impact on air cargo. The four founding members of GACAG are the International Federation of Freight Forwarders Associations (FIATA), the International Air Transport Association (IATA), the Global Shippers' Forum (GSF), and The International Air Cargo Association (TIACA). The group has targeted four priority areas: security, e-commerce, customs and trade facilitation, and the sustainability of the global air cargo industry

### **About TIACA**

TIACA is a not for profit trade association for the air cargo industry, pledged to support and assist progressive liberalization of the global market, and easier, enhanced trade between developing and developed economies. It is a worldwide organization that serves a membership which includes all major segments of the air cargo and logistics industry; airlines, forwarders, airports, ground handlers, all-cargo carriers, general sales agents, road carriers, customs brokers, third party logistics companies, integrators, technology and equipment providers, shippers, and educational institutions.

To accomplish its mission and role, TIACA engages in activities that are geared to improve industry cooperation, promote innovation, share knowledge, enhance quality and efficiency, and develop educational programs. TIACA's activities are aimed to inform both the public and its membership about the role and importance of air cargo, industry developments and technical trends. TIACA is committed to representing and advocating the interests of the air cargo industry at meetings of relevant regulatory bodies including the WCO, ICAO, UNCTAD, OECD and others that are open to trade observers.

### **About IATA**

Air transport is one of the most dynamic industries in the world. The International Air Transport Association (IATA) is its global trade organization. Over 60 years, IATA has developed the commercial standards that built a global industry. Today, IATA's mission is to represent, lead and serve the airline industry. Its members comprise some 230 airlines - the world's leading passenger and cargo airlines among them - representing 93 percent of scheduled international air traffic.

IATA seeks to improve understanding of the industry among decision makers and increase awareness of the benefits that aviation brings to national and global economies. It fights for the interests of airlines across the globe, challenging unreasonable rules and charges, holding regulators and governments to account, and striving for sensible regulation.

### **About FIATA**

FIATA, the International Federation of Freight Forwarders Associations, was founded in Vienna, Austria on May 31, 1926. It is a non-governmental organization that today represents an industry covering approximately 40,000 forwarding and logistics firms, employing around 8-10 million people in 150 countries.

FIATA has consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations (inter alia ECE, ESCAP, ESCWA), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and the UN Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL). It is recognized as representing the freight forwarding industry by many other governmental organizations, governmental authorities, private international organizations in the field of transport such as the European Commission (through CLECAT), the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), the International Air Transport Association (IATA), the International Union of Railways (UIC), the International Road Transport Union (IRU), the World Customs Organization (WCO), the World Trade Organization (WTO), etc.

### **About GSF**

The Global Shippers' Forum is the world wide body that represents shippers and transport users internationally. The GSF comprises the major national and regional shippers' organisations in Europe, North America, Asia and Africa representing over 50 countries across the world's major trading regions.

The GSF was established to promote competitive global transport markets and supply chains to further the development of international trade and commerce. In this regard, a prime policy objective of the GSF is to promote efficient and competitive global supply chains.