



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
TAXATION AND CUSTOMS UNION

The Director-General

Brussels, 28 April 2020
TAXUD/SQ/AN/mb(2020) 2390219

Mr Damian Viccars
World Shipping Council
Brussels Representative
Avenue des Gaulois 34
B-1040 Brussels
E-mail: dviccars@worldshipping.org

Subject: COVID-19 Response

Dear Mr Viccars,

Thank you for your letter of 14 April on behalf of several associations of trade operators involved in customs-related activities.

I am very much aware of the unprecedented challenges and sudden burden that the management of the crisis has generated for customs authorities and for importers, exporters, and transport and logistics providers. It is our responsibility to respond to it in a fast and responsible manner to ensure the good functioning of the flow of goods necessary for our citizens and our medical corps in the Member States, by addressing the social, financial and operational pressure that the COVID-19 pandemic applied to our Union.

I appreciated the views expressed and the feedback regarding the actions taken so far by my services in addressing the COVID-19 crisis in the field of customs. Customs authorities contacted DG TAXUD at the beginning of this crisis in order to receive instructions and recommendations on how to act in an efficient and coordinated way for tackling the problems emerged in the current difficult context and to address the concerns raised by both authorities and economic operators.

Let me reassure them that in addition to the guidance that was shared to the Trade Contact Group, my services issued specific notes addressed to Member States with additional recommendations on issues related to the proper functioning of customs procedures and compliance with specific deadlines in the accomplishment of customs formalities. The aim is to ensure the harmonised implementation of the rules, including the facilitations.

At this stage, my services considered necessary to offer rapid and practical solutions to the economic operators within the current legal framework, in order to facilitate the handling of customs procedures and application of UCC rules. However, we stand ready to act differently if the situation evolved rapidly requiring further action to be developed in coordination with the Commission services involved.

Concerning the suggestions expressed in your letter on the communication strategy conducted by DG TAXUD on the solutions for trade in the current crisis, we are glad to inform you that DG TAXUD website will be modified so as to make the taxation and customs guidance for the economic operators more visible once connected to the homepage (https://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/index_en).

I am fully committed to listening to the views of the TCG. To this effect, we are organising an extraordinary COVID crisis TCG meeting on 29 April 2020.

Yours sincerely,

(e-signed)
Stephen Quest

