

Looking back at a successful 2016...

On behalf of world business, the ICC Commission on Customs and Trade Facilitation has developed recommendations on:

Authorized Economic Operators While there is a significant increase in the number of Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) programmes, their benefits for companies are often not self-evident and their application processes burdensome. To this end, ICC released recommendations to promote global harmonization and secure the maximum benefit of successful AEOs programmes. The recommendations were launched at the World Customs Organization's (WCO) 3rd Global AEO Conference in Cancun, Mexico, in May 2016. [See news release.](#)

Rules of origin in Preferential Trade Agreements With limited progress being made in the World Trade Organization (WTO) Doha Round of multilateral trade negotiations, countries are increasingly concluding bilateral and regional Preferential Trade Agreements (PTAs). In this light, and in absence of a multilateral rules of origin agreement, the Commission prepared a statement with recommendations calling for parties to PTA negotiations to streamline certification procedures. The statement will be released in early 2017.

Customs clearance of return-refill containers and packaging As production processes are increasingly divided into smaller sections, intermediate goods are being sent across sites using returnable and re-usable transport packages as means of transportation. However, Customs processes dealing with returned empty pallets, boxes or specific containers are cumbersome and vary greatly. ICC calls for the harmonization of Customs clearance formalities relating to return-refill systems and their tracking and tracing systems. The Commission will launch its statement in early 2017.

In other news...



ICC appointed co-chair of WCO e-commerce sub-working group on revenue collection

At the 1st meeting of the WCO e-commerce working group, ICC was appointed the business co-chair of the working group on revenue collection alongside the French Customs Administration. [Read more.](#)



ICC co-hosts bi-annual forum of GFP in Shanghai

As a core member of the Global Facilitation Partnership for Transportation and Trade (GFP), the forum brought together ICC members from more than 25 countries and the key trade facilitation leads from the WCO, World Bank, ITC, and other United Nations agencies to discuss the role of the private sector in the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA). [Read more.](#)



WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement & Global Alliance

The Commission and wider ICC Membership have played a key role in advocating the benefits of the TFA, and our hard work has paid off. Only 2 more countries are needed for the Agreement to match the 110 milestone for the Agreement to enter into force. The Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation – of which ICC is a host organization – was launched at the WTO Ministerial in Nairobi in December 2015 as a public-private initiative for trade-led growth. The Alliance will continue to push for business engagement to ensure effective TFA implementation and to hold governments accountable. Furthermore, in the Alliance has also co-published the 2016 [Enabling Trade Report](#) with the World Economic Forum and began in-country work in 4 countries (Colombia, Ghana, Kenya and Viet Nam). [Read more.](#)



Looking ahead...

Spring 2017 Commission meeting:

The next Commission meeting will take place in Dubai on Wednesday 17 May (afternoon) and Thursday 18 May (full day). The meeting will be held back-to-back with a Customs and Trade Facilitation Forum, co-organized by the Dubai Chamber and Industry, ICC UAE and ICC on the morning of 17 May 2017. Furthermore a tour of the Jebel Ali Free Trade Zone will be organized on Tuesday 16 May.

Preliminary Commission priorities for 2017- 2018:

- Support the ratification and implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement – feeding into the work of the [Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation](#) of which ICC is a host organisation.
- Provide input into the work of the WTO and WCO on customs valuation, classification, trade facilitation and rules of origin.
- Further develop ICC recommendations on enabling customs and trade facilitation frameworks for e-commerce and feed business insights into the work of the WCO Working Group on E-Commerce.
- Release and promote the ICC recommendations on rules of origin in trade in preferential trade agreements and the ICC recommendations to facilitate the use of return-refill container systems in cross-border trade.
- Promote the ICC recommendations on [Authorized Economic Operators \(AEOs\)](#) and work on further guidance on mutual recognition of AEOs, centred around the core principle of “one application for multiple use”, similar to a passport.
- Develop an ICC policy statement on customs treatment of humanitarian relief shipments in humanitarian emergencies.
- Prepare, together with the ICC Commission on Taxation, recommendations on VAT/GST in the context of customs valuation and transfer pricing building on the [2015 ICC policy statement on Customs Valuation and Transfer Pricing](#).
- In cooperation with the ICC Commission on Commercial Law and Practice, develop guidance for traders on the incorporation of the transfer of risk during transport in contracts of carriage.
- Develop ICC recommendations on supply chain connectivity in the context of the digitalisation of transport and logistical processes.
- Develop a position on the use of bonds as a means to facilitate the separation of release of goods and payment of Customs duties.

Commission priorities are always dynamic and able to adjust to the realities that businesses face. Members are therefore very much invited to suggest areas of work to address opportunities and/or challenges that arise. Taking into account the focus should be i) on customs and trade facilitation and transport and logistics from a global, multi-modal and multi-sectorial perspective and ii) that there is widespread interest among Members to contribute and drive the work forward.