



F... EU?

The new European customs code became effective and applicable to all EU member states as of Sunday, May 1st. It is a technical standard, but it does regulate a substantial share of trade and therefore does affect the everyday lives of the population. It is also and perhaps above all, a marker that is indicative of what the European Union really is, given the fact that customs rules are the most integrated policies of the European Union.

This new code is presented as a major evolution. It is organized around the principle of paperless formalities and the central role played by the authorized economic operator. Obtaining this certification means fewer controls. The level of controls should then automatically fall even more but nobody will admit it for fear of frightening people who could then become reluctant. It should be remembered here that the level of controls over most trade flows is below 0.5% (and around 0% concerning the export).

Trade facilitation is the driving force of that reform. Its key measure is the implementation of centralised clearance which formalizes the disconnect between physical reality of trade flows and the declarative aspects.

Basically, a container can arrive in Lisbon while the customs declaration could well be in Copenhagen. Means of communication have improved, but as seasoned professionals, we can guess that it will probably not make controls more effective, quite the contrary, especially with national administrations that have lost lots of material and human resources these past decades.

This process, only implemented on national territory in the first place, will apply by 2020 throughout EU territory as it forms a customs territorial entity.

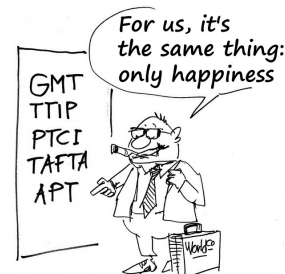
Furthermore, it should be noted that these new measures can first be seen as **only relevant for major companies at first glance.**

Smaller companies won't notice any change in their daily routine, but according to many well-informed observers, even multinational corporations don't show much interest for the simple reason that they already have established procedures and, as a matter of fact, customs formalities and controls have little impact on their activities.

We still can see **national authorities bow to economic operators** to ingratiate themselves with them ('clear your goods through my customs, please!'), and the French customs administration is far from being the last one.

These measures will contribute to accelerating the flows of dumped products which means a dumbing down of customs procedures, a competition between administrations to attract

customs clearance operations to their territories.



Thus the EU keeps following its logic of free trade promotion as is the case for the planned free trade agreement with the United States ('TAFTA')¹ that it tries to finalize at all costs, even though it is increasingly rejected by the peoples who understand that such economic dumping only means loss of democratic sovereignty.

Such Europe means social dumping and people don't accept that. Such Europe organizes competition between countries, destroys customs protection, opens up its market to American products (Genetically Modified Organisms, growth hormones, chlorine washing, are you tempted?) and makes a shameful deal of repatriation of refugees to Mr Erdogan Turkey (not exactly a shining example of democracy).

You said 'Desire for Europe'?

Paris, May 3, 2016

¹ About this topic, see our press release: <http://www.solidaires-douanes.org/Demain-l-Atlantide>