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COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Brussels, 5.9.2007
COM(2007) 516 final

2005/0247 (COD)

**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION
TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT**

pursuant to the second subparagraph of Article 251 (2) of the EC Treaty

concerning the

**common position of the Council on the adoption of a Proposal for a Decision of the
European Parliament and of the Council on a paperless environment for customs and
trade**

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1. BACKGROUND

Date of transmission of the proposal to the EP and the Council (document COM(2005)609 final – 2005/247COD): 02/12/2005.

Date of the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee: 13/09/2006.

Date of the opinion of the European Parliament, first reading: 12/12/2006.

Date of adoption of the common position: 23/7/2007.

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE COMMISSION PROPOSAL

The proposed Decision provides for the engagement of Member States and the Commission to develop interoperable electronic customs systems within agreed timeframes. In addition to the deadlines, the Decision sets the objectives, strategy and coordination mechanism for the electronic customs systems, defines Community and national components of the systems and the related responsibilities and tasks. Furthermore, it establishes a monitoring and reporting framework for the e-customs initiative.

3. COMMENTS ON THE COMMON POSITION

The common position introduces, in addition to technical modifications and a specific reference to the protection of personal data, changes concerning the deadlines for the establishment of the individual systems. Regarding some systems it creates a distinction between deadlines for the establishment of functional specifications and for the operation of the system.

Furthermore, it establishes the possibility to extend the deadlines under the comitology procedure (regulatory procedure with scrutiny) and to abolish some projects following a negative evaluation of the functional specifications.

The Commission can accept the common position since it still ensures maintaining deadlines in the proposal in order to create a commitment of the Member States and the Commission.

The deadlines for the different systems revealed to be the most important problem for the adoption of the common position since some Member States feared a commitment to long term projects, of which the feasibility, according to them, still needs to be proven.

4. CONCLUSION

The Commission agrees with the common position.