



**Regional Office for Capacity Building  
for the World Customs Organization Europe Region**

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**Regional Office for Capacity Building  
for the World Customs Organization Europe Region**

**ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT  
2020/2021**

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## **FOREWORD**

One fact that everyone would agree upon is that the Covid-19 (Corona Virus Disease 2019) has changed the globe severely and affected all walks of life. Customs community is no exception to that. However, since international trade has not stopped, customs needed to adopt to the new situation and act accordingly in a fast manner. This does not mean that trade continued smoothly on its path. On the contrary, many difficulties and setbacks were on the way throughout the process until new normal has substantially been settled.

As the pandemic erupted, it took some time for organizations to adopt to the new normal and find ways to work in the new setting. That fact unwillingly affected the number of activities. We are aiming and hoping that support for capacity building delivery will be high in number in the following period.

As one of the most important developments realized in recent times, the ROCB Europe is now fully integrated into the WCO capacity building delivery process with a view to producing more effective and overarching outcomes for the Member Administrations in the Region. The unfortunate occurrence of Covid-19 pandemic made the process paused for a while inevitably. Still, we are not only intending but also planning to continue our core service by providing capacity building events for the Member Administrations.

In addition to the events that we organized and capacity building delivery that we supported which are explained in the respective sections, at a short glance to the reporting period, we completed brand new projects such as ROCB Europe Analytics and E-Training, engaged in new engagements with stakeholders such as SELEC (The Southeast European Law Enforcement Center) and CARICC (Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre).

Furthermore, we completed the revision of the document on the Role of Capacity Building National Contact Points and the review with the Member Administrations, continued our work on the revised Terms of Reference for the ROCB Europe, added new review articles on our web site, progressively used social media and realized many other points which are available in detail throughout this report.

As we transitioned to a Work Plan for the ROCB Europe on the basis of a results-based approach last year which gives a much better and detailed guidance, we continue to perform our work in the same way as we strive for providing increasing effectiveness from the Office.

I am glad to submit this report to the Member Administrations of the WCO Europe Region.

**Eser ÇENGEL**  
**Director**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The ROCB Europe is the beacon for the work of customs capacity building activities in the WCO Europe Region. It exclusively aims at enhancing capacities of Customs Administrations in paving the way for more secure and simplified customs processes and international trade operations.

The Regional Office for Capacity Building for the World Customs Organization Europe Region (ROCB Europe) has been functioning in Baku, Azerbaijan, since 17 October 2011 based on the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the WCO and the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan signed on 11 November 2009.

Technical staff of the ROCB Europe are seconded by Member Administrations of the WCO Europe Region as a common procedure. Currently, there are three technical staff seconded by the Customs Administrations of the Republic of Turkey (Director) and the Republic of Azerbaijan (Executive Officers).

The ROCB Europe is functioning in the context of its Strategic Framework which is also in line with the WCO's Strategic Plan as well as its regionalization approach. The Strategic Framework of the ROCB Europe includes, among others, mission and vision statements, values and strategic goals.

The ROCB Europe works for increased capacity building assistance in the WCO Europe Region. Capacity building needs that could be addressed with WCO support in 2021-2022 identified by the Member Administrations in the WCO Europe Region were, as done periodically, collected in close cooperation with the WCO Secretariat.

In the reporting period, the ROCB Europe involved in 14 events and financially supported eight of them that provided capacity building support, information exchange and cooperation in the region.

The ROCB Europe reacted soon after the outbreak of the Covid-19 disease by providing an all-in-one gateway **Coronavirus Bulletin** for colleagues and Member Administrations. The Bulletin, which is available at [rocb-europe.org/corona](http://rocb-europe.org/corona), stands as a hub for being updated and reaching information sources from one access point.

The Office established an **e-Training Section** on its web site. This newly added section includes WCO materials in a variety of topics both in English and Russian languages as well as visual trainings from the ROCB Europe or its partners.

As a new initiative, the ROCB Europe has started to publish **review articles** on its web site.

**Regional Experts Database (RED)** is being maintained in order to provide more efficient and inclusive capacity building delivery and collaborative activity planning in the region. The **List**

**of Contact Points** is available on the ROCB Europe web site member section and updated regularly. The ROCB Europe reinitiated the work and began to provide **Newsletters** quarterly.

The Office has developed and designed **ROCB Europe Analytics**, a database which includes substantial information about customs, trade and economy as well as indices encompassing all the Members in the WCO Europe Region.

In order for the ROCB Europe to function in a more structured way with regard to its objectives, a **Terms of Reference for the ROCB Europe** was drafted. The process is yet to be completed.

As it was done last year, with the aim of achieving the objectives in the frame of the Strategic Framework and the Execution Program, activities depicted in the Work Plan for the 2021/2022 period is projected to be implemented by the Regional Office for Capacity Building for the World Customs Organization Europe Region. The said Work Plan is constructed in a way to achieving the goals on the basis of results-based management approach which is focused on performance and achievement of outputs, outcomes and impacts.

The ROCB Europe also gathered the reports Regional Training Centers for the reporting period in a standardized way. Additionally, an initiative for having RTCs as excellence centers on certain customs field(s) has started. It was agreed in the last regional meeting that the ROCB Europe would request mentioned possible topics as well as information on experts, and necessary equipment, if needed. The matter was forwarded to the RTCs with an official letter together with a form for becoming a center of excellence.

As another initiative by the ROCB Europe targeted in the Annual Work Plan and put in place followingly in the reporting period, all documents and official letters, outgoing and incoming, since the establishment of the Office in 2011, were digitalized, indexed and stored in the ROCB Europe server. Official letters that are sent to the Region by the ROCB Europe is also being uploaded to the web site of the ROCB Europe members section for ease of reachability and convenience for the Member Administrations.

As for funding, current mechanism provides adequate resources for maintaining short-term operational capacity. It should also be noted that the host administration, the State Customs Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan, supports the ROCB Europe to a great extent, by bearing the running costs primarily in operational and administrative aspects.

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## **A. INTRODUCTION**

### **1. General Information**

The Regional Office for Capacity Building for the World Customs Organization Europe Region (ROCB Europe) has been functioning in Baku, Azerbaijan, since 17 October 2011 based on the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the WCO and the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan signed on 11 November 2009.

The ROCB Europe is the beacon for the work of customs capacity building activities in the WCO Europe Region. It exclusively aims at enhancing capacities of Customs Administrations in paving the way for more secure and simplified customs processes and international trade operations.

One of the main goals of the ROCB Europe is to promote World Customs Organization tools and instruments also by complementing WCO customs capacity building delivery in the WCO Europe Region. In the meantime, it works toward fulfillment of regional needs and priorities in the field of customs that await attention.

The reporting period of the present report is from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021. Typically, the ROCB Europe presents its report to the Heads of Customs Conference for the WCO Europe Region annually as well.

### **2. Staff**

Technical staff of the ROCB Europe are seconded by the Member Administrations of the WCO Europe Region. Currently, there are three technical staff seconded by the Member Administrations of the Republic of Turkey (Director) and the Republic of Azerbaijan (Executive Officers).

Mr. Eser ÇENGEL was elected as the head of office upon the decision of the Heads of Customs Conference for the WCO Europe Region which was held on 24-25 April 2019 in Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation. He had been performing his duty as an executive officer at the ROCB Europe since 7 September 2017 before starting his new post as the director on 1 June 2019 at which time he was the only technical staff at the ROCB Europe.

The State Customs Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan assigned two staff to the ROCB Europe in November 2019 and February 2020 respectively, Mr. Mirhasan SEYIDZADE and Mr. Haji HAJIYEV, making the total number of technical staff three including the head of office.

The Office is ensured with administrative personnel including Office Manager Ms. Rubaba MAMMADOVA and support staff as well as guardsmen assigned by the State Customs Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the host administration.

### **3. Assets**

#### ***i) Facilities***

ROCB Europe operates in its own building, which includes the following alongside spacious offices for staff:

- Fully equipped conference hall;
- Computer lab with working stations;
- 2 well-equipped training classes;
- Cafeteria as well as fully equipped kitchen;
- Parking garage.

#### ***ii) Cargo and Container Training Center***

The Cargo and Container Training Center is located at the ROCB Europe premises and intended for providing training for frontline customs officers on cargo and container control matters both theoretically and practically. The ROCB Europe hosts cargo and container trainings ex officio at the center upon receiving requests from Member Administrations.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For more information about the Center, please visit <https://rocb-europe.org/cargo-and-container-training-center>.

## **B. STRATEGY AND ROAD MAP**

The ROCB Europe is functioning in the context of its Strategic Framework submitted to the Heads of Customs Administrations of the WCO Europe Region in 2018 which is also in line with the WCO's Strategic Plan as well as its regionalization approach.

In terms of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats; the following summarized points merit consideration with regard to future work of the ROCB Europe.

There is an extensive ongoing support to the ROCB Europe from the host administration, the State Customs Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The ROCB Europe has its own premises with spacious offices and well-furnished large meeting hall and training sections.

The coverage of the ROCB Europe with respect to geographical size of the Member Administrations is the largest in comparison to other WCO Regions and it is comprised of Member Administrations some of which are substantially advanced in customs. The location of the ROCB Europe is highly practical and it is virtually in the center of the WCO Europe Region in geographical means, which makes it easily reachable from any country in the WCO Europe Region.

However, the ROCB Europe traditionally suffers from under employment of technical staff and lack of full financial support from the Member Administrations which in turn causes the ROCB Europe to underperform stemming from these unpredictable factors. The level of low backing seems to be dramatic considering the large coverage of the WCO Europe Region. In the meantime, absence of a strategy for the WCO Europe Region has been preventing the ROCB Europe from performing in a fulfilling way in line with regional guidance and needs. Still, as mentioned above, ROCB Europe performs its work in line with its Strategy.

Nevertheless, the ROCB Europe has the potential to play a role in regional capacity building activities as well as customs related projects to a much greater extent as opposed to the current situation. The ROCB Europe may act and, to a certain extent, is already acting as a coordination hub for the region and Regional Training Centers, RILOs and Vice-Chairmanship as well as WCO Europe Region Heads of Administration Conference.

The ROCB Europe web site has been used for accessing working documents and announcements for regional meetings and events through public or member only sections, as the case may be. Within the framework of a long-term regional strategy, the ROCB Europe can use its potential for a stable and sustainable work program.

Regardless of the bottlenecks, the ROCB Europe has strived and put much effort to be in effectively service of the Member Administrations and increase its visibility through various initiatives during the reporting period.

The Strategic Framework of the ROCB Europe includes, among others, mission and vision statements, values and strategic goals summarized as follows:



**Mission statement:**

*ROCB Europe is the beacon for the work of customs capacity building activities in the WCO Europe Region. It exclusively aims at enhancing capacities of Customs Administrations in paving the way for more secure and simplified customs processes and international trade operations.*

**Vision statement:**

*ROCB Europe's vision is to realize sustainable capacity building activities with concrete outcomes that favorably benefit Customs Administrations.*

**Values:**

*Excellence, Cooperation, Inclusiveness, and Continuous Improvement.*

The ROCB Europe performs its work in line with its four keystone strategic goals and three strategies on organizational management and communication.

**Keystone Strategic Goals:**

- Promote the work on customs capacity building and WCO instruments.
- Foster customs reform and modernization process of Member Administrations.
- Strengthen regional cooperation among Member Administrations.
- Enhance collaboration with stakeholders, development partners and donors.

**Strategic Goals on Organizational Management:**

- Strengthen office management and improve institutional functionality.
- Secure adequate funding and financial sustainability.

**Strategic Goal on Communication:**

- Address a broad audience and raise awareness on customs capacity building and development.

An Execution Program details the deliverables of the Strategic Goals. It is supplemented by the Work Plan which includes planned activities and updated annually. As a continuation, Progress Report is presented annually which indicates the actual activities carried out in

comparison to the Work Plan in an effort to evaluate the performance. The full text of the ROCB Europe Strategic Framework is attached as Annex I.

Taking into account needs as well as priorities of the WCO Europe Region Member Administrations and the incremental emphasis made on the regionalization in the context of WCO Capacity Building Strategy, the ROCB Europe has committed to work intensively toward fulfillment of regional necessities.

In an effort to practically apply the strategic framework into process and approach the objectives in a more straightforward way especially with respect to capacity building delivery for the region, the ROCB Europe has continued performing its work in the overall direction of the below Road Map:

- ***Supporting and complementing WCO Capacity Building activities, better integrating the ROCB Europe in the needs assessment and delivery process;***
- ***Closing the capacity gaps and fulfilling the needs of Member Administrations falling out of the scope of WCO planning;***
- ***Working toward regional priorities and common areas of interest of the Members;***
- ***Providing a communication & knowledge platform for the Region.***

This practical approach gave way for clearer sub-tasks for the ROCB Europe in attaining its goals in the frame of its Strategy, Execution Program and corresponding Work Plan. In that context, preparatory consultations and work had been done for better integrating the ROCB Europe into the WCO needs assessment process and subsequently complementing the WCO capacity building delivery in the WCO Europe Region. It is also considered possible that the ROCB Europe would benefit from its flexible approach and also from its Regional Experts Database for fulfilling emerging requests or other demands communicated outside the needs assessment process.

At this juncture, the ROCB Europe expressed its readiness to act as organizer and financial sponsor of events based on the capacity building needs received from the Member Administrations that could not be included in the WCO Annual Delivery Plan.

The consultations with the WCO Secretariat (Capacity Building Directorate) landed on a constructive conclusion that this kind of an initiative would be highly useful in terms of boosting capacity building activities in the WCO Europe Region.

In that context, the role of the ROCB Europe is to take over the organizational matters such as planning, travel arrangements, logistical issues and other related matters necessary for the organization of the mentioned events in liaison with beneficiary administrations and experts

responsible for delivery, together with financial aspects (principally, online platform, travel expenses, per diem and other logistical matters if deemed necessary).

The working method for ROCB Europe capacity building delivery in supporting the WCO annual planning essentially includes using ROCB Europe resources to carry out missions that could not be provided by the WCO due to lack of funding from donors. The ROCB Europe takes over organizational and financial matters fully or partially, depending on the arrangement of a certain event, as WCO Secretariat's very important support would be formulated as providing expertise in the first place; namely, assigning experts / officials with respect to delivery of the said missions.

The outline of chronological steps to be taken in that regard are suggested as follows:

- Official letter is sent to member administrations by the WCO Secretariat requesting needs for the upcoming year (January);
- Needs assessment forms are received by the WCO Secretariat as well as by the ROCB Europe (February / March);
- Collected needs assessment forms are compiled, the ROCB Europe forwards its proposal for preferred missions (April / May);
- Once the Corporate Plan is drafted by WCO Secretariat, remaining Members' needs that are not foreseen to be delivered due to lack of funding are shared with the ROCB Europe (mid-summer);
- The ROCB Europe analyses the activities and determines its own list for the missions that would be organized and sponsored by itself (August);
- The WCO Secretariat (Capacity Building Directorate) initiates the work on determining experts / officials for delivery of the missions listed by the ROCB Europe (August / September);
- As the experts / officials are determined by the WCO Secretariat, the ROCB Europe launches mission preparations and communicates with the experts as well as individual Member for preferred time periods for the delivery, work program and related logistical matters;
- Expenses related to the experts' / officials' travel and subsistence allowance on the basis of the WCO Staff Manual rules or online platform if it is a virtual event are borne by the ROCB Europe;
- Additional elements for supporting these missions (such as interpretation, venue renting, etc.) would be borne by the ROCB Europe, if seen necessary;
- The experts / officials delivering a mission are expected to report back after the mission.



As for working toward priorities and common areas of interest of the Members in the WCO Europe Region, concentration on the topic was dispersed given the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic. Even the annual regional Heads of Customs Conference could not be held due to the pandemic on time.

The ROCB Europe assumed its role by itself since it is crucial to stay updated and work upon well-established communication channels especially in pandemic times. In that regard, the ROCB Europe reacted soon after the outbreak of the disease by providing an all-in-one gateway “Coronavirus Bulletin” for colleagues and Member Administrations. The Bulletin, which is available at [rocb-europe.org/corona](http://rocb-europe.org/corona), stands as a hub for being updated and reaching information sources from one access point.

In the meantime, much effort was put into upgrading and keeping updated the web site of the ROCB Europe for easy and effective use by the Member Administrations. In that sense, information was regularly added and documents were uploaded for convenient access through one gateway on the web site. The Official Documents Gateway in the Members’ Section of the ROCB Europe web site stands quite useful in that sense.

The ROCB Europe continues keeping the web site updated and provide the Member Administrations with useful information and necessary documents through its web site, correspondence and social media channels.

## C. REPORT OF ACTIVITIES

The progress made and the report of activities corresponding to the Strategic Goals and Work Plan 2020/2021 of the ROCB Europe in the reporting period is as follows:

### GOAL 1:

#### Promote the work on customs capacity building and WCO instruments

##### 1.1 Maintain and promote sustainable mechanism for collection of capacity building needs of Member Administrations

- As the ROCB Europe is now integrated to the WCO Annual Needs Assessment Process, **Capacity building needs** that could be addressed with WCO support in 2021-2022 identified by the Member Administrations in the WCO Europe Region were, as done periodically, collected in close cooperation with the WCO Secretariat. The needs were then categorized by the ROCB Europe. This year there were seven requesting administrations.
- Following, the compact list which details requested capacity building assistance by the Member Administrations was forwarded to the WCO Secretariat. As done last year, the WCO Secretariat and the ROCB Europe will define which of the activities will be supported by the ROCB Europe within the frame of the next WCO Annual Plan 2021/2022.

√ *Orchestrated approach with the WCO Secretariat for customs capacity building assistance is being ensured.*

##### 1.2 Support WCO Capacity Building efforts in compliance with the WCO Annual Delivery Plan

- As one of the assuring tasks of the ROCB Europe in contributing to the **capacity building delivery** in the WCO Europe Region, planning was made with the WCO Secretariat for the Capacity Building Delivery events that would be sponsored and/or coordinated by the ROCB Europe. In the reporting period, the ROCB Europe supported **four capacity building delivery events** for the WCO Europe Region. Those events were as follows:
  - Revised Kyoto Convention National Workshop for Uzbekistan
  - Authorized Economic Operator National Workshop for Moldova
  - National Workshop on Combating Counterfeiting and Piracy for Bosnia and Herzegovina
  - Virtual National Workshop on Post Clearance Audit for Moldova

Detailed information about these activities is presented in the Events section below.

- The support for capacity building delivery is expected to be high in number in the following reporting period as the effects of pandemic diminishes and new methods for delivery is ensured.
- √ Optimized and expanded servicing for fulfilling capacity building needs of Member Administrations has been provided.*

### **1.3 Initiate, design and implement work for promotion of WCO tools and training materials**

- In the reporting period, upcoming or carried out events, news, newly published documents or instruments and developments from the WCO such as CLIKC! platform or WCO Global Webinar Series on Improving Awareness on COVID-19 Vaccines were promoted through ROCB Europe web site as well as its social media channels.
  - Promotion of WCO tools and training materials were also made during relevant meetings.
  - Training materials from the WCO with their Russian translated versions which were done through the ROCB Europe project were uploaded in the newly launched E-Training module in the ROCB Europe web site for benefiting by the customs officials in the region.
- √ Widened audience and increased frequency for promotion of WCO tools and training materials have been secured.*

### **1.4 Track WCO developments and align the work of the ROCB Europe accordingly**

- The ROCB Europe kept track of WCO developments and initiatives during the reporting period as well. The Office attended relevant meetings and events of the WCO together with jointly organized events and meetings for consultation. Newly emerged issues or outcomes were taken into consideration for work of the Office.
- The meetings attended by the ROCB Europe in the reporting period in this scope are:
  - WCO Informal Meeting of Heads of Regional Offices for Capacity Building (3 June 2020)
  - 16th Meeting of the Global Meeting of WCO Regional Structures (18-19 February 2021)
  - 12th Session of the Capacity Building Committee (22-24 February 2021)



- 20th Session of the Integrity Sub-Committee (25-26 February 2021)

√ *The Office has been kept informed and up-to-date of WCO developments and its work has been accommodated in the same direction.*

## **GOAL 2: Foster customs reform and modernization process of Member Administrations**

### **2.1 Upon request, support Member Administrations' efforts in Customs Capacity Building**

- No additional requests were received by the ROCB Europe from the Member Administrations for customs capacity building outside the scope of WCO Needs Analysis and Capacity Building Delivery process. Nonetheless, the work done for the benefit of the Member Administrations is mentioned in 1.1 and 1.2 above and 3.3 below.

√ *Elevated level of Capacity Building at Member Administrations has been supported.*

### **2.2 Upon request, assist Member Administrations with a view to promoting WCO e-learning platforms**

- Various questions and requests from the Member Administrations were responded by the ROCB Europe with respect to WCO e-learning programs and CLIKC! Platform. Where needed, these matters were forwarded or shared with the WCO Secretariat.
- A crosslink on the ROCB Europe website to the WCO web platform CLIKC! is also being maintained and relevant promotion on WCO training tools and materials was made through the ROCB Europe web site or its social media channels.

√ *Contribution has been made in an effort to maintain heightened use and awareness of WCO e-learning platforms.*

### **2.3 Motivate developed Member Administrations to provide contribution in regional Capacity Building activities**

- During the Virtual Meeting of the WCO Europe Region National Contact Points for Capacity Building held on 2 June 2020, it was once again underlined that the ways

for having developed countries in the region on board should be looked into and necessary efforts should be made.

- The ROCB Europe strived for reaching out advanced Member Administrations in every possible occasion to invite these Administrations to consider the possibility of releasing experts for trainings in the region through the events organized by the ROCB Europe. The feedback had been positive from the Member Administrations contacted which stands for a positive progress for the regional capacity building delivery.

√ *Increased involvement of developed Administrations in regional capacity building processes has been urged.*

## 2.4 Provide informative and training materials for Member Administrations

- As Covid-19 pandemic brought hardships with respect to in-place and practical trainings on customs knowledge, virtual tools have become even more important. In that sense, ROCB Europe established an **e-Training Section** on the its web site. This newly added section which could be visited at <https://rocb-europe.org/e-training> includes WCO materials in a variety of topics both in English and Russian languages as well as visual trainings by the ROCB Europe that will be scaled up in time. As user credentials are needed to access e-Training, ROCB Europe registers customs officials whose name, title and contact information is received through the respective Contact Point for Capacity Building of WCO Europe Member Administrations.
- As a new initiative, the ROCB Europe has started to publish **review articles** on its web site. A call for review articles was made to the Member Administrations through contact points and it was reiterated at several other occasions. However, no article submission was received from the Member Administrations during the reporting period.

√ *Expanded availability of resources for empowering customs knowledge has been ensured.*

## 2.5 Publish the materials translated into Russian on the ROCB Europe web site

- Translated WCO materials into Russian language on customs training and customs knowledge were upload to the web site E-Training Section, see above 2.4. Therefore, this sub-task is considered as accomplished.

√ *Broadened coverage of customs personnel for benefiting from informative sources has been attained.*



## 2.6 Maintain the Regional Experts Database (RED)

- As an initiative started by the ROCB Europe in 2019, **Regional Experts Database (RED)** is being maintained in order to provide more efficient and inclusive capacity building delivery and collaborative activity planning in the region. The list is to include experts with comprehensive knowledge from the Member Administrations, whether or not WCO accredited, that are assessed as proficient in their specialized topics as to deliver training or give detailed information. The disclosure of the information about the experts on the WCO web site is restricted by the Member Administrations and the ROCBs are not allowed to access the list according to the information obtained from the WCO Secretariat. The disclosure of the information might be granted by the Member Administrations for the ROCB Europe to access or obtain the list of experts. The main motivation for the ROCB Europe is to have regional experts' information in an effort to gain more flexibility and spectrum for delivering tailor-made capacity building assistance for the requesting Member Administrations. Establishing a pool of regional experts is a task given to the ROCBs according to the main WCO documents such as regional structures or revised capacity building strategy.

√ *Sustained and up-to-date resource of expertise for providing technical assistance has been kept available.*

## GOAL 3: Strengthen regional cooperation among Member Administrations

### 3.1 Collect and disseminate information on current trends or best practices in the region

- The ROCB Europe reinitiated the work and began to provide **Newsletters** quarterly. The newsletters include information about the recent developments within the context of the WCO, the ROCB Europe, Member Administrations in the region as well as important issues on customs and international trade. They are circulated through e-mail as well as made available on the ROCB Europe web site.
- **News section** of the ROCB Europe web site kept up-to-date with current events, emerging issues and newly launched projects. These matters are also shared through social media channels.
- The ROCB Europe has developed and designed **ROCB Europe Analytics**, a database which includes substantial information about customs, trade and economy as well as indices encompassing all the Members in the WCO Europe Region. The platform includes data compiled from publicly available resources from the WCO, the World Bank and World Economic Forum.

- ROCB Europe Analytics presents two tabs, namely 'Dashboard' and 'Figures & Indicators' which then breaks down to sub-tabs including data on 'Customs', 'Trade & Economy' and 'Indexes'. The platform, which is available for reviewing on a test page at <http://173.212.249.94:8000/>, is presented to consideration of the Member Administrations and received positive feedback. It is projected to be launched online by integrating into ROCB Europe web site in the following reporting period.
  - As Covid-19 pandemic has made its mark in 2020, it has become much crucial to stay updated and work upon well-established communication channels especially in recent times. The ROCB Europe reacted soon after the outbreak of the disease by providing an all-in-one gateway "**Coronavirus Bulletin**" for colleagues and Member Administrations. The Bulletin, which is available at [rocb-europe.org/corona](http://rocb-europe.org/corona), stands as a hub for being updated and reaching information sources from one access point includes current news with regard to pandemic on customs and trade, guideline documents by international organizations, a live map of Covid-19 information, live feeds from the World Health Organization, and direct links to Covid-19 dedicated pages of the prominent international organizations, primarily the World Customs Organization.
- √ *Improvement in knowledge among Member Administrations has been well supported.*

### 3.2 Provide Members with an effective platform for communication using innovative technology

- Besides the progress made on providing an effective platform for communication which is explained in 3.1 above and 7.1 below, the ROCB Europe's newest project is to establish a portal that would enable all stakeholders to communicate and share files. This new project is expected to be concluded in the next reporting period.
- √ *Enhancement of communication means among Member Administrations has been well maintained.*

### 3.3 Organize events for cooperation and information sharing

- In the reporting period, following events were organized for cooperation and information sharing for the Member Administrations:
  - Virtual Intersessional Meeting of the WCO Europe Region National Contact Points for Capacity Building (2 June 2020)
  - Virtual (10<sup>th</sup>) Meeting of the Regional Structures of the World Customs Organization Europe Region (2 December 2020)
  - Webinar on Priorities for Strengthening International Cooperation in the Fight Against Smuggling (16 March 2021)

Detailed information about these events is available in Events section.

✓ *Collaboration and information sharing among the Member Administrations have been ensured.*

### **3.4 Request Member Administrations to second executive staff to the ROCB Europe**

- Members are urged during the meetings as well as with official letters, progress report and presentations made to second executive staff at the ROCB Europe. As it is mentioned in the Strategy section, the ROCB Europe traditionally suffers from under employment of technical staff.

✓ *Strengthened capability of the Office thereby better cooperation among Member Administrations has been urged.*

### **3.5 Maintain and update the National Contact Points database**

- Update on national contact points information was requested from the Member Administrations taking advantage of several occasions. The **List of Contact Points** is available on the ROCB Europe web site member section and updated regularly as information received Member Administrations.
- In the reporting period, the contact point update was once again asked through official letter circulated to the Member Administrations No: 2021/2 dated 15 January 2021.

✓ *Sustained and up-to-date contact information of Member Administrations has been sustained.*

## **GOAL 4: Enhance collaboration with stakeholders, development partners and donors**

### **4.1 Build or strengthen partnerships that enable cooperation, information-sharing and mutual understanding**

- The ROCB Europe established new engagements with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Southeast European Law Enforcement Center (SELEC) and Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre (CARICC) and continued its collaboration with Russian Customs Academy (RCA). Activities carried out within the frame of these partnerships are specified in 4.2 below.
- A closer partnership between the ROCB Europe and regional organizations considered as a step for further deepening the efforts on upholding the quality of customs services in our region.

✓ *Wider cooperation possibilities and more effective collaboration has been progressively provided.*

### **4.2 Promote and/or carry out coordinated or joint activities with partners**

- As a result of the initiative taken for building and strengthening partnerships by the ROCB Europe, a virtual meeting took place among the ROCB Europe, the Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre (CARICC) and UNODC-CARICC Project Office on 24 September 2020. As a result of the informative and provisional consultations after being acquainted with the fundamental aspects of organizations, it was decided to build cooperation on possible joint activities, establishment and enhancing ties and communication between the organizations. For details, see Events section of this report.
- Following the further collaboration efforts and initiative by the ROCB Europe, a webinar was held on Priorities for Strengthening International Cooperation in the Fight Against Smuggling on 16 March 2021 in partnership with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Southeast European Law Enforcement Center (SELEC) and Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre (CARICC). For details, see Events section of this report.
- Accordingly, the ROCB Europe established renewed engagement with the Russian Customs Academy (RCA). Upon the kind invitation of the Russian Customs Academy, the ROCB Europe attended the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Session of the Moscow International Model on 24 March 2021 which replicates the WCO environment and related procedures. For details, see Events section of this report.

√ *Improvement has been attained on strengthened collaboration and reinforced customs capacity building servicing.*

#### 4.3 Function as a bridge in the WCO Europe Region for improved coordination and information sharing

- The ROCB Europe continued to maintain its role as a bridge in the WCO Europe Region through its work and outreach activities.
- In addition, with regard to the decision taken during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the World Customs Organization Europe Region National Contact Points for Capacity Building in 2019, the work on the revision of the document on the Role of Capacity Building Contact Points was done by the ROCB Europe. The document covers the role and tasks of a Capacity Building Contact Point which covers matters with respect to cooperation with the WCO Secretariat and the ROCB Europe, promoting and coordinating Capacity Building efforts, monitoring and evaluating the modernization process and expert mobilization and support to Capacity Building Delivery. It was agreed during the said meeting that the draft document would be circulated among Member Administrations following the addition of matters that would comprise roles for contact points from all Member Administrations regardless of the level of development in customs and accordingly submitted to the next Heads of Customs Conference for endorsement. The ***Revised Role of Capacity Building Contact Points*** is attached as Annex II. Russian version of the document is available on the ROCB Europe web site member's section. ***As a result, there were no objections to the final documents from the region. Therefore, the document could be considered as approved.***

√ *Increased interoperability and informational status in the region have been upheld.*

#### 4.4 Coordinate activities of the Regional Training Centers and further strengthen cooperation among regional structures

- One of the responsibilities of the ROCB Europe is to coordinate capacity building activities in the WCO Europe Region. In this sense, cooperation between the ROCB Europe and Regional Training Centers (RTCs) are of vital importance. In this context, as annually done, RTC annual reports were asked from the RTCs in an effort to submit them to the Member Administrations through the present report. Starting from last year, the reports were asked by providing a standardized template which included:
  - General information about the RTC including contact person(s);
  - List of events organized or hosted by the RTC;

- Future events already planned or foreseen, if any;
  - Progress made by the RTC in terms of capacity building;
  - Additional remarks, if any.
- There was another new change by the ROCB Europe with respect RTCs' reporting as a **survey** was also included in the report template. According to the results of the short survey:
- All the RTCs have its own building including adequate rooms/space for trainings, meetings etc.
  - Most of the RTCs are performing their work on the basis a strategy document action plan or similar.
  - Three out of seven of the RTCs have accommodation facilities.
  - None of the RTCs have their own budget separate from the Customs Administration.
  - Only one RTC receives support coming from other than their Customs Administration. However, this support is not financial.
  - Five out of seven of the RTCs consider the number of staff at the RTC is adequate for the workload allocated to the RTC.
  - Five out of seven of the RTCs are willing to specialize on certain topic(s) with already determined fields.
- Annual reports submitted by the RTCs in the WCO Europe Region also gathered by the ROCB Europe. Additional information about the matter is available in Section F: Activities of Regional Training Centers.
- In the meantime, RTCs were invited to continue sharing planning and future activities as well as news and developments in order for the ROCB Europe to have the regional outlook in terms of customs capacity building and related initiatives in the frame of RTCs, with a view to also publishing those on the ROCB Europe web site.
- Its ROCB Europe's intended aim to have each of the RTCs to become excellence centers on certain customs field(s).
- ROCB Europe web site maintains dedicated pages for Regional Training Centers on which the RTCs can publish their information as well as news and updates.
- Virtual (10<sup>th</sup>) Meeting of the Regional Structures of the World Customs Organization Europe Region was held on 2 December 2020.

During the meeting, there were inquiries from the RTCs on online trainings for improving the knowledge of customs officials in pandemic times, method for a more frequent communication, and access to pool of experts. ROCB Europe explained that for trainings, there is already a mechanism for requests made through WCO Annual Capacity Building Needs process. In that way, Member Administrations could

forward their requests for technical assistance. In the meantime, emerging needs that could arise outside of that process would be communicated to the ROCB Europe so that trainings would be carried out provided that necessary resources were secured. With regard to communication among RTCs, it was stated that the ROCB Europe is in the process of establishing a communication portal in the near future which would enable virtual groups among other features. Lastly, accessing to pool of experts was not possible since Member Administrations should show consent for this kind of a permission, according to information from the WCO Secretariat stated in various past meetings.

In addition, the matter of specialization by the RTCs was also evaluated. WCO Europe Region has a robust resource on customs expertise. Concentrating specific expertise on the basis of individual Regional Training Centers would be beneficial with respect to resource mobilization. Some of the RTCs have already intense expertise on a specific topic. In this context, each RTC in the WCO Europe Region might become a center of excellence for a certain topic in customs. The delegates were invited to share their opinions and consider a possible regional initiative in that regard.

According to the RTCs survey, five out of seven RTCs are willing to specialize on certain customs topics. It was agreed that the ROCB Europe would request mentioned possible topics as well as information on experts, and necessary equipment, if needed. The matter was forwarded to the RTCs with an official letter together with a form for becoming a center of excellence.

√ *Enhanced effectiveness on Capacity Building in the region has been bolstered.*

## **GOAL 5: Strengthen Office Management and Improve Institutional Functionality**

### **5.1 Ensure proper conditions for the Office and its staff**

- The facilities of the office are well maintained. Host administration has been supporting the ROCB in terms of facilities as well. The ROCB Europe has its own building and the conditions are quite proper for effective functioning of the staff and organizing meetings and events. However, the ROCB Europe faces underemployment as it is explained in the section below about staff (see the sub-section 'Staff' in Introduction above).
- In order for the ROCB Europe to function in a more structured way with regard to its objectives, a ***Terms of Reference for the ROCB Europe*** was drafted. In the drafting phase by the ROCB Europe, a number of documents were taken into consideration,



namely, WCO Europe Region 2011 CB Think-Tank: Capacity Building Strategy, WCO Europe Region 2011 CB Think-Tank: Concept Paper for the ROCB in Baku / Azerbaijan, MoU establishing ROCB Europe, ROCB Europe Strategy, Terms of Reference of the WCO Council, Capacity Building Structures (Annex IV to Doc. SC0090E1a), Status of Regional Bodies (SP0605E1a) and draft revised WCO Capacity Building Strategy. The draft document was evaluated during the 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the WCO Europe Region National Contact Points for Capacity Building which was held from 27 to 29 January 2020 at the ROCB Europe premises in Baku, Azerbaijan. As a result, the participants had a consensus on the draft document and decided that the mentioned document would be circulated among the Member Administrations and accordingly submitted to the next WCO Europe Region Heads of Customs Conference for endorsement.

The draft document was received positive feedback from the region together with comments regarding additions from Italy and the European Commission. The comments were welcomed and reflected in the draft document. The draft document is available on the ROCB Europe web site members-only section also with its track-changes version as well as attached as Annex III to the present report.

In this context, the only outstanding point about the revised ToR is the provision with respect to budget (Section V. Resources, point 4. Budget, paragraph 1). The comment from the European Commission reads as the matter should be 'completed following discussion and decision by the Heads of Customs for the Europe Region'. However, in the face of limited time in the Virtual Conference of the World Customs Organization Europe Region Heads of Customs Administration that was held on 20 November 2020, this issue could not be evaluated by the Heads.

***The Heads of Customs are expected to evaluate and take a decision on the Revised Terms of Reference for the ROCB Europe.***

√ *Effective functioning of the Office and the staff has been maintained and worked on.*

## **5.2 Update the Strategic Framework as well as Work Plan on the basis of feedback from the Member Administrations and maintain a reporting mechanism**

- Strategic Framework for the ROCB Europe (summarized in Section B above) was drafted and presented to the Heads of Customs Conference in 2018. Since then, the ROCB Europe has been performing its work on the basis of the framework as well as overall WCO strategy. Current Strategy document comprises 2018-2021.
- Reporting mechanism has been working properly as it is done every year. The Progress Report by the ROCB Europe is presented to the Member Administrations. The Work Plan is updated for better results by the ROCB Europe as well as according to the feedback from the region.



✓ *Adaptive work on the basis of adopted principles has been upheld and Member Administrations have been kept informed of the progress.*

### **5.3 Provide bilingual availability for correspondence and documents published by the Office**

- The ROCB Europe maintains news, all documents, including reports, drafted and published on its web site and official letters sent to whole region or e-mails sent to the Member Administrations to be presented with their Russian translations.

✓ *Increased outreach of the Office and convenience provided for Russian-speaking Member Administrations have been progressively upheld.*

### **5.4 Digitalize correspondence and documents of the Office for electronic archiving**

- As another initiative by the ROCB Europe targeted in the Annual Work Plan and put in place followingly in the reporting period, all documents and official letters, outgoing and incoming, since the establishment of the Office in 2011, were digitalized, indexed and stored in the ROCB Europe server.
- This project, which is carried out in detail, will enable archive search excessively easy to be done through electronic means and also represent a back-up for physical dossiers.

✓ *Ease of access and long-term stable usefulness of documents have been ensured.*

## **GOAL 6: Secure adequate funding and financial sustainability**

### **6.1 Engage in for ensuring stable and adequate funding**

- The ROCB Europe informs the Heads of Customs with respect to status of annual contributions as well as the assessment about its funding periodically.

As explained in detail in Section G: Financial Aspects, efforts for generating additional funding are prone to be not as much satisfactory as projected and always bear the risk of sudden disappearance due to its uncertain and spontaneous nature, especially in times such as pandemic. In the meantime, voluntary characteristic of contributions also bears the risk of disruption of intended ROCB Europe activities. That is why, if the revised Terms of Reference of the ROCB Europe is endorsed by a decision of the Heads of Customs of the WCO Europe Region, there might be no

need for additional decisions each year from the region for prolongation while financial contributions are already on a voluntary basis.

The abovementioned matters are determined solely upon the decisions of the Heads of Customs of the WCO Europe Region. However, the Office has been striving to maintain its effectiveness regardless of this matter.

√ *The region has been informed of the expectation on pre-determined number of annual contributions and activities taken commensurate to the funding.*

## **6.2 Maintain accountability and transparency on budgetary aspects**

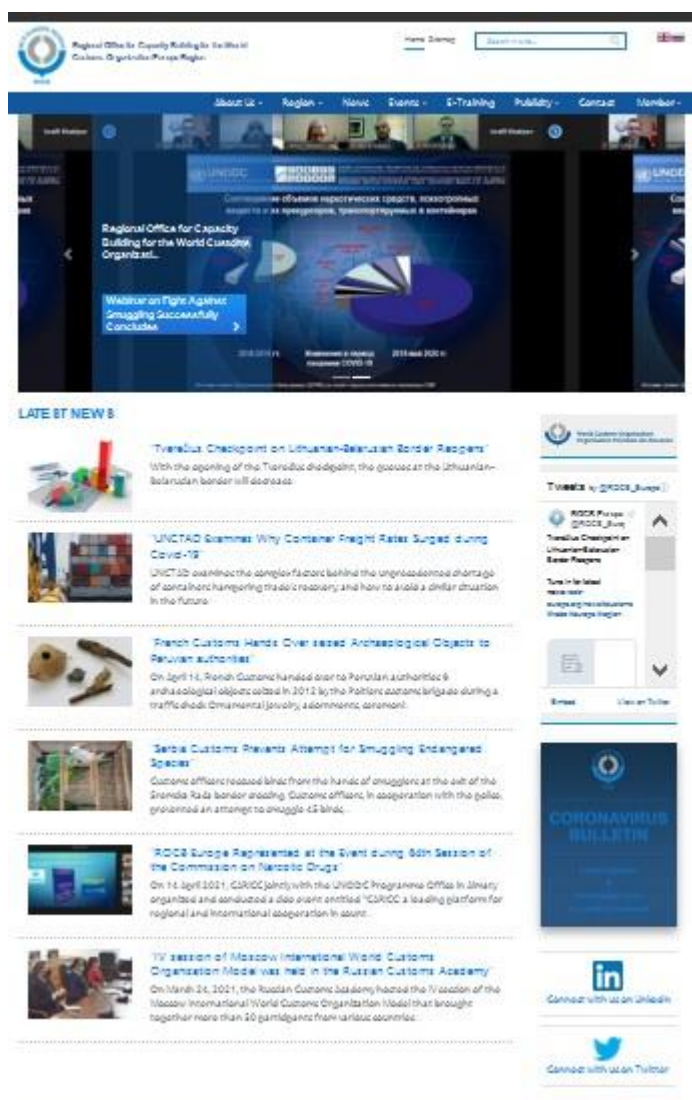
- Electronic single-entry bookkeeping is kept constant for clear and trackable expenses.
- Expenses of the Office is reported to the Heads of Customs Conference of the WCO Europe Region annually. The ROCB Europe has been performing with open and trackable values by briefing the WCO Europe Region Heads of Customs annually of its activities and use of resources. Its annual reports demonstrate accountability and integrity. The Office is ready to be audited.

√ *Use of financial resources for attaining the goals of the Office in an accountable, transparent and sustainable way has been sustained.*

## **GOAL 7: Address a broad audience and raise awareness on customs capacity building and development**

### **7.1 Ensure improved technical infrastructure and optimization for stable and user-friendly web site**

- ROCB Europe web site is kept updated and comprehensive as much as possible as it has the feature of responsive screen and relevant official as well as unofficial documents that are substantial for the WCO Europe Region and the ROCB Europe, either on the public domain or in the member section (which is only accessible with username and password) according to the restriction level of documents.
- Coronavirus Bulletin continues to stand as a stand-alone all-in-one access point for newest developments, latest figures and fundamental documents with regard to Covid-19.
- Official letters that are sent to the Region by the ROCB Europe is also being uploaded to the web site of the ROCB Europe members section for ease of reachability and convenience for the Member Administrations.
- List of events is available on the ROCB Europe web site on an annual basis. In addition to that, the ROCB Europe launched meeting registration section in order for participants to be registered online for events beforehand.



➤ Newly added sections to the ROCB Europe web site:

- E-Training
- Meeting registration
- Newsletters

➤ Following materials can be accessed through password restricted Members' Section on the ROCB Europe web site:

- Meeting documents
- Final reports
- Main Documents for the WCO Europe Region and the ROCB Europe
- List of Contact Points
- ROCB Europe Staff Contact Details
- Regional Training Centers Contact Information
- ROCB Europe Official Letters

✓ *High level of progress has been made for better and more use of ROCB Europe web site with added benefits for visitors.*

## 7.2 Use means of outreach and promotion materials

➤ **Publicity Materials:**

- **Flyer** and **brochure** are available also in Russian language. Copy of these materials are attached as Annex IV.
- **Presentation** about the ROCB Europe and its operating context, tasks and responsibilities is frequently used and visited (available on the web site).

➤ **Newsletters** (see above Activities Section C, 3.1)

➤ **Corporate design:**

- Designated letterheads and font character.
  - Designated colors and color alignment between the web site and other publicity materials.
- Social Media:
- Frequently updated **Twitter Page** (account name: @rocb\_europe).
  - Frequently updated **LinkedIn Page** (account name: ROCB Europe).
- In addition, all missions of the WCO Europe Member Administrations in where the office is located, Baku, Azerbaijan, were notified of the presence and goals of the ROCB Europe as a means of outreach.
- ✓ *Upholding customs capacity building related promotion and widened audience have been well secured.*
-

## D. EVENTS

In the period from April 2020 to March 2021, the ROCB Europe involved a total of 14 events.

#	Event	Location	Date
1	Virtual Intersessional Meeting of the WCO Europe Region National Contact Points for Capacity Building "Situation Update and the Road Ahead"	Online	2 June 2020
2	The Virtual Meeting between World Customs Organization (WCO) Capacity Building Directorate and the Regional Offices for Capacity Building (ROCBs)	Online	3 June 2020
3	Workshop in the field of cooperation between ROCB Europe and CARICC & UNODC	Online	24 September 2020
4	World Customs Organization Europe Region Heads of Customs Conference	Online	20 November 2020
5	National Workshop on Revised Kyoto Convention for Uzbekistan	Online	25-26 November 2020
6	The Virtual (10 <sup>th</sup> ) Meeting of the Regional Structures of the World Customs Organization Europe Region	Online	2 December 2020
7	National Workshop on AEO MRA for Moldova Customs	Online	2-4 December 2020
8	National Workshop on Combating Counterfeiting and Piracy for Bosnia and Herzegovina	Online	16-18 December 2020
9	National Workshop on Post Clearance Audit for Moldova	Online	18-22 January 2021
10	The 16 <sup>th</sup> Global Meeting of WCO Regional Structures	Online	18-19 February 2021

11	12 <sup>th</sup> Session of the Capacity Building Committee	Online	22-24 February 2021
12	20 <sup>th</sup> Session of the Integrity Sub-Committee	Online	25-26 February 2021
13	Webinar under the theme of "Priorities for Strengthening International Cooperation in the Fight Against Smuggling"	Online	16 March 2021
14	IV <sup>th</sup> Session of the Moscow International Model	Online	24 March 2021

## **Virtual Intersessional Meeting of the WCO Europe Region National Contact Points for Capacity Building “Situation Update and the Road Ahead”**

**2 June 2020**

With the recent developments caused by the Covid-19 and the need for customs community to stay together and share updated information, the Regional Office for Capacity Building for the World Customs Organization Europe Region (ROCB Europe) organized a Virtual Intersessional Meeting of the WCO Europe Region National Contact Points for Capacity Building under the theme of “Situation Update and the Road Ahead” that was held on 2 June 2020.

25 Member Administrations, WCO Secretariat, the Vice-Chair of the WCO Europe Region as well as the ROCB Europe were represented in the meeting. The WCO Secretariat was represented by the Director of the WCO Capacity Building Directorate, Mr. Taeil Kang. The Vice-Chair of the WCO Europe Region was represented by Deputy Chairman of the State Customs Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Mr. Igbal Babayev.

During the virtual meeting, the participants were informed about how the WCO intends to move forward with regard to capacity building delivery modality. The participants were also briefed about the WCO instruments aiming for Customs administrations to continue facilitating trade to help minimize the overall impact of the Covid-19 outbreak on economies and societies. Information was shared about updates related with the Working Group on the Revision of the Bergen Agreement as well.

Mr. Eser Çengel, Head of Regional Office for Capacity Building for the World Customs Organization Europe Region underlined that the ROCB Europe had been keen to keeping the communication channels up and running for a long while and that the stakeholders should be in touch more often especially in times like the pandemic era. He also mentioned ROCB Europe’s reaction in terms of putting new tools in service of the Members and new initiatives regarding Covid-19 process. He briefed the participants by a visual presentation about the Coronavirus Bulletin, an all-in-one web platform ([rocbeurope.org/corona](http://rocbeurope.org/corona)) which had been launched by the ROCB Europe that includes current news with regard to pandemic on customs and trade, guideline documents by international organizations, a live map of Covid-19 information, live feeds from the World Health Organization, and direct links to Covid-19 dedicated pages of the prominent international organizations, primarily the World Customs Organization. At the same time, Mr. Çengel said that the web site of the ROCB Europe ([rocbeurope.org](http://rocbeurope.org)) had been kept updated with emerging news and developments by Members as well as with recent blog articles published. The ROCB Europe was also active on social media through Twitter and LinkedIn.

At the same time, the activities carried out by the ROCB Europe especially on new initiatives, brand-new Coronavirus Bulletin and important documents and articles that describe the



measures for Customs Administrations in the face of COVID-19 pandemic provided by other international organizations presented.

The meeting served as a platform for enhancing the communication among the WCO Secretariat, ROCB Europe and participating member administrations. The participants especially underlined the importance of online trainings and use of enhanced e-training platforms on customs.

The Contact Points mentioned their administrations' initiatives on tackling the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic in the virtual meeting. Questions by the participants on a variety of issues related to regional aspects or capacity building domain were answered by the corresponding directors during the meeting. The arranged virtual meeting was the first-ever online session of the WCO Europe Region contact points.

**The Virtual Meeting between World Customs Organization (WCO) Capacity Building Directorate and the Regional Offices for Capacity Building (ROCBs)**

**3 June 2020**

On June 3 2020, World Customs Organization (WCO) Capacity Building Directorate and the Regional Offices for Capacity Building (ROCBs) worldwide had an informal meeting through video conferencing.

In the informal virtual meeting, the WCO Capacity Building Directorate and the delegates of the ROCBs of Asia/Pacific, Europe, East and South Africa, Americas and Caribbean, West and Central Africa and Middle East and North Africa exchanged views and information on WCO affairs and future capacity building delivery possibilities.

The video conference gave an opportunity to assess the current situation taking into account the coronavirus pandemic (Covid-19) and measures taken by the WCO Secretariat to tackle the Covid-19 outbreak and mitigate the effects of the crisis. The WCO meeting arrangements, WCO technical assistance and capacity building delivery and role of the WCO Capacity Building regional structures, during and post Covid-19 were among the topics discussed during the video conference.

ROCBs shared their initiatives and practices during the pandemic period as well. The meeting stood for yet another very solid example of close cooperation between the WCO Secretariat and regional structures. ROCB Europe said ROCBs need support from the WCO Secretariat and the meeting stands for a very good example for that. As a result of the WCO Europe Region National Contact Points for Capacity Building under the theme of "Situation Update and the Road Ahead" that was held on 2 June 2020 organized by the ROCB Europe, the participants stressed the need for enhanced virtual trainings.

For the role of capacity building delivery, the ROCB Europe said involving ROCBs in the process of delivery is important and also a reflection of WCO's regionalization strategy. The current arrangement in which ROCB takes over some of the events from the WCO Annual Delivery Plan could be carried over to the virtual mission delivery. The ROCB Europe can go along with its complementary role with organizing events for emerging matters or new requests from the members by benefiting from its own pool of regional experts, as ROCBs do not have access to WCO's experts' database. After WCO's survey is done, it would be beneficial to go on with the established modality for capacity building delivery and ROCBs could take their parts in the process which would be easier than face-to-face events because of the easy arrangement of virtual meetings. The visibility would be ensured with this process principally.

**Workshop in the field of cooperation between ROCB Europe and CARICC & UNODC**

**24 September 2020**

Considering the role played by the Regional Office for Capacity Building for the World Customs Organization Europe Region (ROCB Europe) in effectively supporting capacity building efforts and in line with the vision for establishing and enhancing regional cooperation, a virtual meeting took place among the ROCB Europe, the Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre (CARICC) and UNODC-CARICC Project Office on 24 September 2020.

The meeting was attended by the heads and staff of the said organizations as well as the representatives of the national competent authorities of the CARICC member states. Following the opening speeches by Mr. Eser Çengel, Director of ROCB Europe; Mr. Miralizoda Rustam Aziz, Director of CARICC and Mr. Navid Riyaz International Coordinator of UNODC and CARICC project, the parties provided presentations which included establishment, mission, goals, activities and projects among others.

As a result of the informative and provisional consultations after being acquainted with the fundamental aspects of organizations, it was decided to build cooperation on possible joint activities, establishment and enhancing ties and communication between the organizations.

## **World Customs Organization Europe Region Heads of Customs Conference**

**20 November 2020**

On 20 November 2020, a virtual conference of the World Customs Organization Europe Region Heads of Customs Administration was held.

WCO Europe Region Member Administrations and EU, WCO Secretariat, the Vice-Chair of the WCO Europe Region as well as the ROCB Europe and RILOs in the region were represented in the virtual conference. The WCO Secretariat delegation was headed by Secretary General of the World Customs Organization, Mr. Kunio Mikuriya. The Conference was chaired by the Vice-Chair of the WCO Europe Region, Chairman of the State Customs Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan, customs service Colonel-General Safar Mehdiyev.

The Chairperson of the WCO Europe Region Mr. Safar Mehdiyev delivered a welcoming speech at the beginning of the session. Chairman of the committee said despite the difficulties caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) epidemic, he praised the participation of the countries of the region in the conference as a manifestation of determination and mutual cooperation with the view of development of trade and effective organization of customs, taking into account regional and international interests, expressed his gratitude for this.

Emphasizing that the WCO's economic development in the Europe Region, the sustainability and security of the international trade chain depends on the political, economic and social problems in the region, Safar Mehdiyev said Azerbaijan supported all the steps taken to maintain peace and stability. He also briefed the participants on the work done by the Azerbaijani Customs Service during the WCO Vice Chairmanship for the Europe Region, spoke about the steps taken to increase mutual exchange of experience and strengthen capacity.

Secretary General of the World Customs Organization Kunio Mikuriya spoke about the challenges posed by the pandemic and said that the experience of the World Health Organization in terms of ensuring the security of the global supply chain should be studied and applied. Mr. Kunio Mikuriya spoke about the virtual activities of the relevant WCO bodies and noted the benefits of strengthening mutual cooperation.

Making a speech on the theme "Exchanging the best practices of the European customs bodies in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic" Turkish Deputy Trade Minister, Mr. Rıza Tuna Turagay spoke about the importance of effective organization and support of coronavirus control measures, despite the difficulties caused by the pandemic.

Deputy Chairman of the State Customs Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Mr. Igbal Babayev made a report on "Revising the Bergen Agreement" with reporting the results of the meeting of the Working Group held in Baku on January 23-24, 2020 on the initiative of Azerbaijan to prepare amendments to the Bergen Agreement and the results of the voting held on the initiative of Azerbaijan among the customs services included in the Europe region with the view of defining the principle of amendments to the Bergen Agreement.

Representative of Russia's Federal Customs Service in the Kingdom of Belgium, Mr. Dmitry Subochev made a speech on the theme "Establishing the performance measurement system in the frame of the WCO".

Head of the Regional Capacity Building Office for the WCO Europe Region, Mr. Eser Çengel made a report on ROCB Europe strategies and activities. He also briefed the Conference on the brand-new initiatives.

The joint presentation of WCO Regional Intelligence Liaison Offices for Europe region was presented by head of RILO ECE Ms. Katarzyna Banaszek.

At the end of the Conference, discussions took place on holding elections to the Policy Commission of the Customs Cooperation Council. Representatives of Turkey, Russia and European Union highly appreciated Azerbaijan's effective activity in capacity of Vice Chair and proposed to extend its chairmanship of WCO Europe Region for another year. The proposal to extend Azerbaijan's vice-chairmanship of WCO Europe Region for another year was unanimously supported by other member states of the region.

### **National Workshop on Revised Kyoto Convention for Uzbekistan**

**25 - 26 November 2020**

Promoting the work on customs capacity building and WCO instruments is one of the strategic goals of the ROCB Europe in the region. In that regard, the ROCB Europe, in close cooperation with the WCO Secretariat, coordinated Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC) National Workshop for Uzbekistan which was held on 25-26 November 2020.

Technically and financially supported by the ROCB Europe, the Workshop was delivered by the WCO for the participants from various government agencies including State Customs Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The event stood as a proper example of ROCB Europe's integration to the Capacity Building delivery process in the frame of the WCO Annual Plan.

The RKC promotes trade facilitation and effective controls through its legal provisions that detail the application of simple yet efficient procedures. The Convention also contains new and obligatory rules for its application which all Contracting Parties must accept without reservation.

During the Workshop, Uzbek Customs and relevant stakeholders improved their understanding of key provisions of the RKC; including the structure, benefits, rights and obligations and accession process. On the other hand, sessions were allocated for deepening the understanding of the provisions of General Annex and Specific annexes as well as how to conduct the gap analysis between national legislation and RKC provisions. In the meantime, WCO officials had the chance to evaluate the situation of Uzbekistan towards Revised Kyoto

Convention accession during the workshop. The successful Workshop finalized following the questions of the officials of State Customs Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The ROCB Europe is committed to further support the activities in the WCO Europe Region toward enhancing the capacities of Customs Administrations in close cooperation with the WCO Secretariat.

### **The Virtual (10<sup>th</sup>) Meeting of the Regional Structures of the World Customs Organization Europe Region**

**2 December 2020**

Virtual (10<sup>th</sup>) Meeting of the Regional Structures of the World Customs Organization Europe Region under the theme of “Annual Progress and Vision for 2021” was held on 2 December 2020. The meeting, organized by the Regional Office for Capacity Building for the World Customs Organization Europe Region (ROCB Europe), was attended by WCO Secretariat, the WCO Europe Region Vice-Chair and Regional Training Centers (RTCs) of Azerbaijan, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation, Ukraine, Kyrgyz Republic and North Macedonia.

Mr. Gulu Novruzov, on behalf of the WCO Europe Region Vice-Chair, in his opening remarks, highlighted measures in response to contain the spread of COVID-19 pandemic. In order to develop effective coordinated collective measures to combat COVID-19, the State Customs Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan, as Vice-Chair, addresses the countries in the region to share their successful experience in combating the spread of the pandemic. The particular importance of ensuring the smooth operation of customs authorities during the pandemic was also emphasized by Mr. Novruzov.

Mr. Taeil Kang, the Director of the WCO Capacity Building Directorate, also delivered opening remarks. He conveyed his sincere appreciation to ROCB Europe for organizing this Meeting with emphasizing the importance of promoting and supporting the implementation of the objectives of the WCO at a regional level. Mr. Kang also brought to the attention of the participants about recent updates and initiatives by the Secretariat in order to build a sustainable WCO Capacity Building delivery during COVID-19 pandemic and support of WCO Secretariat Capacity Building Directorate in the development of the ROCB and RTCs.

Mr. Eser Çengel, Director of ROCB Europe, thanked the participants for participating to the Virtual (10<sup>th</sup>) Meeting of the Regional Structures of the World Customs Organization Europe Region. He spoke about the importance of holding a virtual meeting, contrary to what was planned due to COVID-19 pandemic, ROCB Europe had an important role to co-ordinate the activities of the Regional Training Centers, identify training needs and evaluate training impact at a strategic level in the region.

Mr. Dashgin Aliyev, Regional Development Manager and Regionalization Manager of WCO Secretariat, gave information about decision that made on including Regional Dog Training Centers (RDTCs), Regional Customs Laboratories (RCLs), and Regional Intelligence Liaison Offices (RILOs) to 16th Global Meeting of the WCO Regional Structures. He stressed importance of establishing and developing a draft of the ToR in order to clarify the mandate of the Global Meeting of Regional Structures and that provide the framework for its organization and functioning is one of the important issues ahead. Mr. Aliyev went on inform the participants about new guide how organize and develop virtual trainings for RTCs and training schools.

ROCB Europe, said that RTCs in the WCO Europe Region were involved in various activities and events through either organizing or participating during the reporting period up to 56 events and the number of the events already planned by RTCs was 35. He also presented the result of the survey of RTCs as it was combined in a table. The mentioned table is also incorporated in the 2019/2020 Progress Report of the ROCB Europe.

The delegates were invited to share their experience, opinions and suggestions on how to move forward on further development of the RTCs as well as on the possible ways for planning in order to enhance the functionality and monitoring the performances in a structured manner.

As for the second topic of this part, specialization by the RTCs was evaluated. Expertise constitutes an essential part of capacity building efforts. WCO Europe Region has a robust resource on customs expertise. Concentrating specific expertise on the basis of individual Regional Training Centers would be beneficial with respect to resource mobilization. Some of the RTCs have already intense expertise on a specific topic. In this context, each RTC in the WCO Europe Region might become a center of excellence for a certain topic in customs. The delegates were invited to share their opinions and consider a possible regional initiative in that regard.

### **National Workshop on AEO MRA for Moldova Customs**

**2 - 4 December 2020**

In close cooperation with the WCO Secretariat, ROCB Europe coordinated a National Webinar Program for Moldova Customs on Authorized Economic Operator's (AEO) Mutual Recognition, which was held virtually from 2 to 4 December 2020. The Webinar was delivered by the WCO Secretariat and accredited experts while it was technically and financially supported and arranged by the ROCB Europe.

The aim of the event was to provide officials of Customs Service of the Republic of Moldova with relevant WCO tools and instruments on SAFE, AEO and MRAs (Mutual Recognition Agreement) and selected best practices of MRA mechanisms from around the world.

Additionally, topics on AEO MRA challenges and benefits to business and Customs, gaps analysis on AEO requirements and conditions for granting AEO status as well as AEO MRA procedures in Moldova were covered during the 3-day Webinar.



ROCB Europe supports the importance of AEO Mutual recognition and its potential impacts on securing and facilitating global supply chain as the Office increasingly supports the delivery of Capacity Building assistance in the WCO Europe Region.

### **National Workshop on Combating Counterfeiting and Piracy for Bosnia and Herzegovina**

**16 - 18 December 2020**

A National Workshop on Combating Counterfeiting and Piracy for Indirect Taxation Authority of Bosnia and Herzegovina was carried out from 16 to 18 December 2020. The Workshop was delivered by the WCO Secretariat whereas financed by the Customs Co-operation Fund of Japan (CCF/Japan) and technically supported by the ROCB Europe.

The 3-day Workshop was realized in the frame of the WCO Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Health and Safety Programme. During the event, information on the trend in illicit trade during the Covid-19 crisis, Operation STOP outcomes and the WCO Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) CENcomm Group was shared with the participants. Meanwhile, overview on risk management within the context of IPR infringements, detection of inconsistencies and other related topics were elaborated.

The Indirect Taxation Authority of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Right Holders also made presentations and provided information about their activities. The workshop included roundtable discussions as well.

The ROCB Europe, adopting a proactive approach, continues to support the capacity building delivery for the Member Administrations in the WCO Europe Region in close cooperation with the WCO Secretariat. The ROCB Europe works toward strengthening the modernization of Member Administrations in an effort to achieve common objectives.

### **National Workshop on Post Clearance Audit for Moldova**

**18 - 22 January 2021**

A National Workshop on Post Clearance Audit was held virtually from 18 to 22 January 2021 for Moldova Customs as a part of the WCO capacity building delivery plan. The five-day event was made possible through technical support by the Regional Office for Capacity Building for the World Customs Organization Europe Region.

Delivered by WCO Secretariat Compliance and Enforcement Sub-Directorate and PCA Experts, the Workshop benefited nearly 30 officials of Moldova Customs. The head of the ROCB Europe, Eser Çengel in his opening remarks, emphasized the ongoing support of the Office for the customs capacity building assistance in the WCO Europe Region.

The purpose of the Workshop was to introduce WCO's concept and policy on Post Clearance Audit (PCA) and its application in Experts' Administrations. The WCO Secretariat introduced the policy and management aspects of PCA. Details of current situation in Moldova such as legal background, organizational chart, operational processes were submitted to attention.

Moreover, current situation of the performance indicators was one of the topics which were mentioned during the Workshop. Concept of targeting auditee with trade data was presented as well with the help of the presentation of actual operation of audit. The participants expressed their appreciation for the practical part of the Workshop, which stands for a useful element in their daily duties.

### **The 16<sup>th</sup> Global Meeting of WCO Regional Structures**

**18 - 19 February 2021**

Meeting of the Global Meeting of WCO Regional Structures for strengthening collaboration among the Vice-Chairs' Offices, and all WCO Regional Structures, namely the Regional Offices for Capacity Building, Regional Training Centers, Regional Intelligence Liaison Offices, Regional Customs Laboratories and Regional Dog Training Centers, the WCO Secretariat was held on Thursday 18 and Friday 19 February 2021.

The Platform provided a suitable opportunity for interaction and exchange of experience among the participants. The Meeting was invited to further discuss the draft Terms of Reference of the Global Meeting of the WCO Regional Structures and made a recommendation to Capacity Building Committee for endorsement. Enhanced cooperation and coordination among the Regional Structures at a regional level, guide for a successful transition to live virtual training, operationalizing the WCO Capacity Building Strategy – Action Plan on the WCO Organizational Development Package and competency based HRM Tools for ROCBs were other Agenda items elaborated during the Meeting.

Head of the Regional Capacity Building Office for the WCO Europe Region, Mr. Eser Çengel made a presentation on ROCB Europe strategies and progress made. He also gave information about the new initiatives that will be carried out by ROCB Europe in the near future.



## **12<sup>th</sup> Session of the Capacity Building Committee**

**22 - 24 February 2021**

The 12<sup>th</sup> session of the WCO Capacity Building Committee (CBC), under the theme "Leading Customs to Navigate Challenging Times and Beyond" was conducted in two phases. The document-based phase 1 took place from 25 January to 8 February and was followed by the phase 2 web-conference sessions from 22 to 24 February 2021.

The web-conference was attended by nearly 340 representatives of Member administrations, development partners, academia and other stakeholders. In his welcome address, the WCO Secretary General, Dr. Kunio Mikuriya reminded the delegates that the CBC 11 was the last meeting to be held in the traditional way and this new meeting process had now become the 'new normal' under the current circumstances. The Secretary General underlined that the theme of the meeting, "Leading Customs to Navigate Challenging Times and Beyond", was well in line with the WCO theme of the year "Customs bolstering Recovery, Renewal and Resilience for a sustainable supply chain," and emphasized the importance of a united approach in contributing to recovery from the crisis caused by COVID-19 pandemic, by enhancing collaboration with partners and stakeholders in the public and private sector and focusing on the role of Leadership and People in times of crisis and challenge from several perspectives, whilst setting the people at the center.

Mr. Levan Kakava, Director General of the Revenue Service, Ministry of Finance of Georgia, delivered a keynote address, emphasizing that "Strength is in Unity". The integrated border management approach, single window and E-services and E-formalities were key factors for Georgia in managing the pandemic challenges in four main directions: (1) Facilitating the Cross-border Movement of Relief and Essential Supplies; (2) Supporting the Economy and Sustaining Supply Chain Continuity; (3) Protecting staff and (4) Protecting society. Mr. Kakava concluded that now was the time when increased cooperation, especially on the establishment of common rules, between international organizations, state agencies and other stakeholders, should be developed, supported and encouraged. He also sent a message to the meeting that challenges can be turned into opportunities and create a great value for tomorrow.

The 12<sup>th</sup> session of CBC discussed and provided direction on a number of key issues, that included People and Organisational Resilience, Operationalizing the WCO Capacity Building Strategy – Action Plan on the WCO Organizational Development Package, the next WCO Environmental Scan and Strategic plan 2022-2025, Report of the Global Meeting of Regional Entities, Innovation, Digitization and Data Analytics in Support of Organisational Resilience, Experts Management and Deployment, and Tailor-made and Responsive Approach to Ensure Business Continuity, among others.

## **20th Session of the Integrity Sub-Committee**

**25 - 26 February 2021**

The 20<sup>th</sup> session of the WCO Integrity Sub-Committee (ISC), which held under the theme “Evolution of Integrity in Customs and the Need to be Responsive” was conducted in two phases. The document-based phase 1 took place from 28 January to 11 February and was followed by the phase 2 web-conference sessions which held from 25 to 26 February 2021. The web-conference was attended by more than 240 delegates from Member administrations, development partners, academia, observers and other stakeholders.

The meeting was opened by the WCO Deputy Secretary General (DSG) Mr. Ricardo Treviño Chapa who welcomed the delegates and underlined the theme of the meeting that focused on the 20 years of WCO and its Members’ capacity building efforts on integrity development. The DSG highlighted the significant progress made by the WCO Members in strengthening integrity and fighting corruption within Customs. He stressed that, this year in particular, with the massive global challenges posed by the COVID-19, integrity efforts within the Customs community become even more vital. He emphasized that the role played by Customs is becoming increasingly prominent in addressing the crisis, given that Customs is at the forefront of the global supply chain and integrity is a key element in safeguarding the global economic recovery process.

In addition, through a series of presentations and subsequent discussions, the WCO Members were introduced to the concept of “Psychological contracts” which focuses on promoting an integrity-driven behavior, especially in crisis times, and shared experiences on “Managing Conflicts of Interest” taking into account the operating specifics of Customs. The ISC delegates were also informed of the latest WCO integrity-related activities and initiatives and they discussed, reviewed, and endorsed a new iteration of the WCO Integrity Development Guide.

## **Webinar under the theme of “Priorities for Strengthening International Cooperation in the Fight Against Smuggling”**

**16 March 2021**

Regional Office for Capacity Building for the World Customs Organization Europe Region (ROCB Europe) hosted a Webinar under the theme of “Priorities for Strengthening International Cooperation in the Fight Against Smuggling” on 16 March 2021. The webinar was attended by 21 countries with more than 70 customs officers from the Member Administrations of the World Customs Organization European Region.

The main purpose of the webinar, which is carried out with the participation of experts from the Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Center (CARICC), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Southeast European Law Enforcement Center (SELEC) and ROCB Europe was to provide information on preventing smuggling, share experience on effective measures to be taken in this direction, promote international cooperation and investigation strategies, and present the latest achievements.

In his opening remarks, Mr. Eser Çengel, Director of the ROCB Europe, noted the importance of cooperation and regional deliberations in the fight against smuggling at the strategic level, which in turn contribute to increase in the effectiveness of coordination at the international level.

The experts of the partner organizations made presentations on the activities, especially on the achievements in the fight against smuggling and the work done in order to strengthen international engagement. Further, developing and coordinating the interaction between customs and other law enforcement agencies in member states in a more effective way was among the topics evaluated.

The participants were provided with detailed information with regard to modern customs control, container transportation for cross-border drug trafficking, criminal justice cooperation in post-seizure cross-border drug investigations and technical information on containers together with methods of violations and interferences made in that regard.

#### **IV. Session of Moscow International World Customs Organization Model**

**24 March 2021**

On March 24, 2021, the Russian Customs Academy hosted the IV session of the Moscow International World Customs Organization Model that brought together more than 50 participants from various countries.

The main topics for discussion at the Model were the development of new ideas and technologies, the experience exchange to improve cooperation and partnerships between customs administrations, private sector, international organizations and academic community.

The results of the session were interesting discussions of the leading experts, scientists and practitioners in the field of customs administration, exchange of experience between delegates in the field of customs affairs in three working groups:



- Working group on assessment of the customs administration's activities;
- Working group on application of the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System;
- Working group on Information management.

## E. WORK PLAN 2021/2022

# ROCB Europe Work Plan 2020/2021

With the aim of achieving the objectives in the frame of the Strategic Framework and the Execution Program, activities depicted in the Work Plan for the 2021/2022 period is projected to be implemented by the Regional Office for Capacity Building for the World Customs Organization Europe Region.

The Work Plan is constructed in a way to achieving the goals on the basis of results-based management approach as further explained below. It has been revised for more compact elements and fulfilling targets.

### **Methodology**

Results-Based Management (RBM) is a management strategy that is focused on performance and achievement of outputs, outcomes and impacts.<sup>2</sup> In other words, performance results of given activities are concentrated on by using the approach. It is also a proper way to manage processes within the frame of transparency and accountability. The RBM enables learning from experience, implementing activities as well as adapting to circumstances realistically.

As hardship in measuring capacity development activities has been evident, no pre-defined prescriptions are available in that regard. In this juncture, defining indicators becomes the critical matter in the process. Determining alterations realized necessitates a delicate analysis of functions performed or foreseen to be performed by a given institution. It is important to define and make the analysis on the basis of essential service of the institution and to whom the service is being provided for. Aside from the evaluation feedbacks from the beneficiaries which is also difficult in the face of challenging task of obtaining fully extensive assessments, another way to define the performance exists through reviewing the aspects of service, which might include institutional outreach such as number of beneficiaries serviced. Furthermore, some indicators may be well pre-defined, i.e., regular publication of certain documents or dissemination of useful materials.<sup>3</sup> The Work Plan is established on the foundation of these

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<sup>2</sup> Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management:  
<https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/2754804.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Results Based Management Concepts and Methodology:  
<http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/RBMConceptsMethodgyjuly2002.pdf>

factors, using RBM elements so as to reach a proper level of monitoring the performance and results of activities, outputs and outcomes.

The RBM includes interconnected processes among good planning, monitoring and evaluation. As this interconnectedness has the potential to increase the effectiveness to a great extent, a sensible planning enables focusing on resource allocation and implementation. If effectively made, monitoring and evaluation bolsters the endeavor aimed at attaining the results by better adjusting the initiatives for subsequent periods of planning.<sup>4</sup> In this context, the RBM approach is adopted also for monitoring and evaluation of the activities and results, thereby having room for flexibility and optimization of reforming activities and, if necessary, a better revaluation of goals and sub-objectives.

The Work Plan is constructed in the frame of RBM elements, definitions of which are presented below.<sup>5</sup>

### **Definitions:**

**Activity:** Actions taken or work performed through which inputs are mobilized to produce specific outputs.

**Stakeholders:** Parties that would have an effect on or would be beneficiaries of a certain activity, having direct or indirect interest.

**Output:** Specific products and services which come out in consequence of realizing activities through planning.

**Status:** Standing condition of a certain activity.

**Indicator:** Quantitative or qualitative factor or variable that provides a simple and reliable means to measure achievement, to reflect the changes or to help assess the performance.

**Outcome:** Actual or intended changes in conditions.

**Impact:** Foreseen/intended result of the activities for a particular goal.

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<sup>4</sup> Results-based management: <http://www.fao.org/investment-learning-platform/themes-and-tasks/results-based-management/en/>

<sup>5</sup> Most of the definitions cited from Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management: <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/2754804.pdf>

## **ROCB EUROPE STRATEGIC GOALS**

### **Keystone Strategic Goals:**

1. Promote the work on customs capacity building and WCO instruments.
2. Foster customs reform and modernization process of Member Administrations.
3. Strengthen regional cooperation among Member Administrations.
4. Enhance collaboration with stakeholders, development partners and donors.

### **Strategic Goals on Organizational Management:**

5. Strengthen office management and improve institutional functionality.
6. Secure adequate funding and financial sustainability.

### **Strategic Goal on Communication:**

7. Address a broad audience and raise awareness on customs capacity building and development.

\* \* \*

*The Work Plan for ROCB Europe 2021/2022 is hereby attached.*





<b>GOAL 1: Promote the work on Customs Capacity Building and WCO instruments.</b>						
<b>#</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Stakeholders</b>	<b>Expected Output</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Intended Outcome</b>
1.1	Maintain and promote sustainable mechanism for collection of capacity building needs of Member Administrations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Member Administrations</li> <li>• WCO</li> </ul>	Collecting and examining the needs and forwarding to the WCO Secretariat with proposals	Ongoing	Number of needs collected	Orchestrated approach with the WCO Secretariat for customs capacity building assistance
1.2	Support WCO Capacity Building efforts in compliance with the WCO Annual Delivery Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Member Administrations</li> <li>• WCO</li> </ul>	Complementing activities of WCO in the region in the scope of WCO Annual Delivery Plan	Ongoing	Number of activities	Optimized and expanded servicing for fulfilling capacity building needs of Member Administrations
1.3	Initiate, design and implement work for promotion of WCO tools and training materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Member Administrations</li> <li>• WCO</li> <li>• Other International Organizations</li> <li>• Private Sector</li> </ul>	Actions on introducing and publicizing promos on WCO instruments	Ongoing	Improvement in advertising	Widened audience and increased frequency for promotion of WCO tools and training materials

1.4	Track WCO developments and align the work of the ROCB Europe accordingly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Member Administrations</li> <li>• WCO</li> </ul>	Keeping abreast of WCO state of affairs and trajectory	Ongoing	Number of activities or actions taken	Staying informed and up to date of WCO developments and accommodated Office work in the same direction
<b>Expected Impact:</b> Enhanced support for customs capacity of Member Administrations and increased benefit from and better use of WCO instruments.						

<b>GOAL 2:</b> <b>Foster customs reform and modernization process of Member Administrations.</b>						
#	Activity	Stakeholders	Expected Output	Status	Indicator	Intended Outcome
2.1	Upon request, support Member Administrations' efforts in Customs Capacity Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Member Administrations</li> <li>• WCO</li> <li>• Other International Organizations</li> </ul>	Provide technical assistance, training and experience sharing activities	Ongoing	Number of activities	Elevated level of Capacity Building at Member Administrations
2.2	Provide informative and training materials for Member Administrations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Member Administrations</li> <li>• WCO</li> </ul>	Prepare, design and publish materials	Ongoing	Publication of materials	Expanded availability of resources for empowering customs and trade knowledge

2.3	Maintain the Regional Experts Database (RED)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Member Administrations</li> <li>• WCO</li> </ul>	Request expert nominations and conduct regular updates for the database	Ongoing	Availability and recency of the database	Sustained and up to date resource of expertise for providing technical assistance
<b>Expected Impact:</b> Increased customs capacity of Member Administrations.						

<b>GOAL 3:</b> <b>Strengthen regional cooperation among Member Administrations.</b>						
#	Activity	Stakeholders	Expected Output	Status	Indicator	Intended Outcome
3.1	Provide Members with an effective platform for communication using innovative technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Member Administrations</li> <li>• WCO</li> </ul>	Provide means for effective communication using technical possibilities	Initiated, ongoing	Availability of communication platform	Enhancement of communication means among Member Administrations
3.2	Organize events for cooperation and information sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Member Administrations</li> <li>• WCO</li> <li>• Other International Organizations</li> </ul>	Plan and execute events aimed at gathering Member Administrations on certain topics	Ongoing	Number of activities	Ensured collaboration and information sharing among the Member Administrations



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3.3	Maintain and update the National Contact Points database	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Member Administrations</li><li>• WCO</li></ul>	Request Member Administrations for nominations and updates of Contact Points	Ongoing	Availability and recency of the database	Sustained and up to date contact information of Member Administrations
<b>Expected Impact:</b> Increased regional cooperation among the Member Administrations.						

<b>GOAL 4:</b> <b>Enhance collaboration with stakeholders, development partners and donors.</b>						
#	Activity	Stakeholders	Expected Output	Status	Indicator	Intended Outcome
4.1	Build or strengthen partnerships that enable cooperation and information-sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Member Administrations</li> <li>• WCO</li> <li>• Other International Organizations</li> <li>• Private Sector</li> </ul>	Actions for establishing connections with potential partners and/or boosting collaborative work with existing partners	Ongoing	Improvement with respect to engagements and collaborative work	Wider cooperation possibilities and more effective collaboration
4.2	Coordinate activities of the Regional Training Centers and further strengthen cooperation among regional structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Member Administrations</li> </ul>	Urge Regional Training Centers (RTCs) to work in cooperation with the ROCB Europe and provide them with guidance	Ongoing	Monitoring activities of RTCs and identifying and designing work for further advancement	Enhanced effectiveness on Capacity Building in the region
<b>Expected Impact:</b> Increased audience, reinforced promotion of customs capacity building activities and the Office.						

## **GOAL 5:**

### **Strengthen office management and improve institutional functionality.**

#	Activity	Stakeholders	Expected Output	Status	Indicator	Intended Outcome
5.1	Ensure proper conditions for the Office and its staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Host Administration</li> <li>• Member Administrations</li> </ul>	Take necessary measures for Office setting to sustain the environment for proper working conditions	Ongoing	Maintenance and improvement with respect to Office environment	Effective functioning of the Office and the staff
5.2	Update the Strategic Framework as well as Work Plan on the basis of feedback from the Member Administrations and maintain a reporting mechanism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Member Administrations</li> </ul>	Review and optimize guidance documents in a way to best serve the regional needs and priorities	Ongoing	Regularly updated guidance documents and report of activities submitted to the Members	Adaptive work on the basis of adopted principles and informed Member Administrations of the progress
5.3	Provide bilingual availability for correspondence and documents published by the Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Member Administrations</li> </ul>	Provide Russian language versions of documents produced by the Office as much as possible	Initiated in early 2020	Availability of bilingual documents	Increased outreach of the Office and convenience provided for Russian-speaking Member Administrations

**Expected Impact:**

Increased effectiveness and competency of the Office.

**GOAL 6: Secure adequate funding and financial sustainability.**

#	Activity	Stakeholders	Expected Output	Status	Indicator	Intended Outcome
6.1	Engage for stable and adequate funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Member Administrations</li> </ul>	Inform Member Administrations of the course of financial situation and annual contributions	Ongoing	Endeavor for stable funding and informing Member Administrations thereof	Pre-determined and anticipated amount of annual contributions and activities taken commensurate to the funding
6.2	Maintain accountability and transparency on budgetary aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Member Administrations</li> </ul>	Retain trackable figures of income and spending	Ongoing	Submitting budget report to Member Administrations	Use of financial resources for attaining the goals of the Office in an accountable, transparent and sustainable way

**Expected Impact:**

Improved functionality of the ROCB Europe in providing customs capacity activities.



## **GOAL 7:**

**Address a broad audience and raise awareness on customs capacity building and development.**

#	Activity	Stakeholders	Expected Output	Status	Indicator	Intended Outcome
7.1	Ensure improved technical infrastructure and optimization for stable and user-friendly rich content web site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Member Administrations</li> <li>• WCO</li> <li>• Other International Organizations</li> <li>• Private Sector</li> </ul>	Consistent, readily accessible and user-centric, informative web site	Ongoing	Maintain a properly working effective web site and number of visits	Better and more use of ROCB Europe web site with added benefits for visitors
7.2	Use means of outreach and promotion materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Member Administrations</li> <li>• WCO</li> <li>• Other International Organizations</li> <li>• Private Sector</li> </ul>	Implement public engagement efforts and reach out to customs and trade community by effective communication and representation	Ongoing	Number of activities or actions taken on outreach	Upheld customs capacity building related promotion and widened audience

### **Expected Impact:**

Increased audience as well as awareness in customs and trade community.

## **F. ACTIVITIES OF REGIONAL TRAINING CENTERS**

There are seven Regional Training Centers in the WCO Europe Region as accredited by the WCO. These are:

- RTC Baku (Azerbaijan)
- RTC Budapest (Hungary)
- RTC Bishkek (Kyrgyz Republic)
- RTC Khmelnytsky (Ukraine)
- RTC Moscow (Russian Federation)
- RTC Nur-Sultan (Kazakhstan)
- RTC Skopje (North Macedonia)

The role of the RTCs is as follows:

- The development of regionally relevant training.
- The maintenance of specialist trainer pools.
- The provision of specialist training at a regional level.
- The development and support of the WCO's blended learning programme.

In line with the expected output stated in Activity 4.4 of the Work Plan of the ROCB Europe, Regional Training Centers will be urged to work in cooperation with the ROCB Europe and they will be provided with guidance with a view to attaining enhanced effectiveness on Capacity Building in the region.

In the meantime, as explained more in detail in the Report of Activities Section C, point 4.4 above, the ROCB Europe endeavored for attaining a snapshot of the RTCs with respect to their fundamental characteristics and provided for standardized reporting for RTCs. Also, a possible initiative for having RTCs as excellence centers on certain customs field(s) has thus started. The matter was forwarded to the RTCs with an official letter together with a form for becoming a center of excellence.

Reports by the Regional Training Centers in the WCO Europe Region are presented in Annex V.

## **G. FINANCIAL ASPECTS**

### **1. Financial Sustainability**

There has been no change with respect to financial aspects on sustainability for the ROCB Europe for a considerable period of time. Balancing financial sustainability with organizational goals has been one of the core challenges for the ROCB Europe. Therefore, it is important to determine major difficulties with respect to financial sustainability that are faced by the Office considering the overall objectives.

In general terms, sustainability is considered as the ability of maintaining an organization in the long term. The challenges in that respect are balancing the need for retaining financial sustainability and organizational objectives through a stable and satisfactory plan in the long term.

In an effort to maintain financial sustainability in the long term with increased expected outcomes from its activities, elements of strategic and financial planning, sound administration, additional funds generation have been worked on by the ROCB Europe.

Strategic and financial planning is needed for a well-established programming of activities and initiatives that would benefit the WCO Europe Region on a large scale in terms of customs capacity building. Strategic and financial planning should be done in line with robust administrative practices. Sound administration also includes transparency and accountability in terms of use of the financial resources directed at Office activities as well as organizational matters of operation. The ROCB Europe has been performing in line with these open and trackable values by briefing the WCO Europe Region Heads of Customs annually of its activities and use of resources. Its annual reports demonstrate accountability and integrity.

The ROCB Europe also strived for additional funding by pursuing additional fund generation. However, it turned out that this kind of initiatives do not generate remarkable additional income for the Office. Renting is not frequently carried out in the face of competitive other places such as hotels, and with the Covid-19 pandemic, it might not be possible for a considerable time. On the other hand, organizing fund raising events returns less income compared to the labor and time devoted to this kind of an event. That is to say, channeling these resources to the core objectives of the Office might be more logical and effective.

Another effective way for funded activities would be having donations by certain willing Member Administrations directed at specific projects or programs coordinated by the ROCB Europe in partnership with the donor member. This kind of a donor partnership would be more satisfactory in terms of expected outcomes and impact. The ROCB Europe is always open and ready to be involved in such partnership initiatives.

Yet, secondment is an excellent example of making contributions to ROCB Europe by the Members. For a considerable period of time now, Azerbaijan and Turkey have been seconding staff at the ROCB Europe, a policy that deserves much appreciation. Other WCO Europe

Region Member Administrations are regularly invited to follow this practice and support the Office to a greater extent as well.

Consequently, abovementioned efforts for generating additional funding are prone to be not as much satisfactory as projected and always bear the risk of sudden disappearance due to its uncertain and spontaneous nature. In the meantime, voluntary characteristic of contributions also bears the risk of disruption of intended ROCB Europe activities. However, the Office has been striving to maintain its effectiveness regardless of this matter.

## **2. Member Contributions**

Current funding mechanism for the ROCB Europe operates as follows:

- a) The amount of annual financial contribution to the ROCB Europe from each of the WCO Europe Region Member is 1,750.00 Euros;
- b) The annual contributions are on a voluntary basis.

In that context, the trend of the number of contributions received from the Member Administrations in the Region for the last six years is as follows:

Financial Year	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021
Number of Contributing Members	37	38	39	39	37	37

***The ROCB Europe received funding from 37 members totaling 63,957.82 Euros annually for the Financial Year 2020/2021.<sup>6</sup>***

## **3. Reporting Period Budget**

Budget items of the ROCB Europe is classified as follows:

- Chapter 1: Premises
- Chapter 2: Supplies and Services
- Chapter 3: Missions
- Chapter 4: Regional/Subregional Events
- Chapter 5: Representation
- Chapter 6: Other

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<sup>6</sup> This figure is as of 31 March 2021. Some of the Member Administrations paid partially hence the total amount.

Chapter 1 comprises elements for basic maintenance of premises.

Chapter 2 includes items for Office supplies, maintenance and repairing of office equipment, documentation and printing, translations, IT investments and miscellaneous expenses in the context of supplies and services.

Chapter 3 is devoted to missions, delivered as a capacity building national support mission or a scoping/working/preparatory mission or a public relations mission directed at awareness raising.

Chapter 4 comprises regional and subregional events.

Chapter 5 is dedicated to representation by the ROCB Europe in meetings divided as WCO and other meetings.

Chapter 6 is used for items that are not classifiable in any of the other categories.

The expenditure (in Euro) from 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2020 until 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2021 is as follows:

**Expenditure**

Chapter	Item	Amount
1	Premises	€ 339.12
2	Supplies and Services	€ 9,919.79
3	Missions	€ 1,937.57
4	Regional/Subregional Events	€ 0.00
5	Representation	€ 0.00
6	Other	€ 0.00
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>€ 12,196.48</b>

The revenue (in Euro) from 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2019 until 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2020 is as follows:

**Revenue**

<b>Contributions</b>	<b>€ 63,957.82</b>
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In this frame, balance for the reporting period stands as below:

<b>BALANCE</b>	<b>€ 51,761.34</b>
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The current funding for the ROCB Europe provides adequate resources for maintaining short or midterm operational capacity.<sup>7</sup> It should also be noted that the host administration, the State Customs Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan, supports the ROCB Europe to a great extent, by bearing the running costs primarily in operational and administrative aspects.

In-place/psychical trainings or events had been severely disrupted because of the coronavirus pandemic. This has been the situation in the pandemic era. Even regular use of online events needed some time before finding its path. That is why, some of the budget items indicate zero expenditure. The outstanding balance will be also used for attaining goals of ROCB Europe strategy in the future. On the other hand, the expenditure for capacity building support is indicated by the figures in missions as well as partly in IT expenses by way of using online platforms for those activities.

The events financially supported and hosted or co-organized by the ROCB Europe in the reporting period are as follows:

- **Virtual Intersessional Meeting of the WCO Europe Region National Contact Points for Capacity Building**  
*2 June 2020, Virtual Meeting*
- **ROCB Europe and CARICC & UNODC Meeting**  
*24 September 2020, Virtual Meeting*
- **Revised Kyoto Convention National Workshop for Uzbekistan**  
*25-26 November 2020, Virtual Meeting*
- **Virtual (10<sup>th</sup>) Meeting of the Regional Structures of the World Customs Organization Europe Region**  
*2 December 2020, Virtual Meeting*
- **Authorized Economic Operator National Workshop for Moldova**  
*2-4 December 2020, Virtual Meeting*
- **National Workshop on Combating Counterfeiting and Piracy for Bosnia and Herzegovina**  
*16-18 December 2020, Virtual Meeting*
- **Virtual National Workshop on Post Clearance Audit for Moldova**  
*18-22 January 2021, Virtual Meeting*
- **Webinar: Priorities for Strengthening International Cooperation in the Fight Against Smuggling**  
*16 March 2021, Virtual Meeting*

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<sup>7</sup> It should be reiterated that “the regional entities are initiatives of the Regions” (Doc. SP0399, paragraph 11) and that the regional entities are “the responsibility of each region” (SP0612E1b, paragraph 77).

Details of these events are available in the Events Section.

Materials already translated into Russian language have been uploaded to the ROCB Europe web site for use by customs officers. There was no emerging need for translation of materials either from ROCB Europe or WCO. Interpretation costs benefited in capacity building support events were included in figures within the item 'missions'.

The Annual Progress Report 2019/2020 was also presented in an elegant design with printed editions as well for the first time in the history of the Office last year.

### **Detailed Expenditure: 2020/2021**

#### **Chapter 1 - Premises**

Description		Expenditure
1.0	Maintenance	€ 339.12
	<b>Total</b>	<b>€ 339.12</b>

#### **Chapter 2 – Supplies and services**

Description		Expenditure
2.1	Office Supplies	€ 143.76
2.2	Maintenance and Repair of Equipment	€ 849.13
2.3	Documentation/Printing	€ 3411.43
2.4	Translations	€ 0.00
2.5	IT expenses	€ 4,113.96
2.6	Miscellaneous	€ 1,401.51
	<b>Total</b>	<b>€ 9,919.79</b>

#### **Chapter 3 – Missions**

Description		Expenditure
3.1	Support Missions	€ 1,937.57
3.2	Scoping Missions	€ 0.00
3.3	Awareness Raising Missions	€ 0.00



	<b>Total</b>	<b>€ 1,937.57</b>
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#### **Chapter 4 – Regional/Subregional Events**

	<b>Description</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>
4.0	Regional/Subregional Events	€ 0.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>€ 0.00</b>

#### **Chapter 5 – Representation**

	<b>Description</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>
5.1	WCO Meetings	€ 0.00
5.2	Other Meetings	€ 0.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>€ 0.00</b>

#### **Chapter 6 – Other**

	<b>Description</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>
6.0	Other	€ 0.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>€ 0.00</b>

<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>€ 12,196.48</b>
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## **4. Outlook**

It is expected that in-place/psychical trainings or events might continue to take up lesser part as most of these activities highly likely continue online for a longer while. This underlines the importance of investments for online tools. The ROCB Europe takes this matter into consideration and plans its road ahead accordingly. The end-result should be providing benefits to the Member Administrations in the region through the best possible way. As the initial turmoil due to the pandemic is now diminished and online events take up speed in recent

times, it is expected that the ROCB Europe will be involved many more capacity building support or information exchange events in the upcoming period than the reporting period.

In the face of the unforeseen amount of contributions and possible unexpected developments due to pandemic, there is no possibility for ROCB Europe to make any estimate not only for future expenditure, but also for its earnings. In any case, as mentioned above, the allocation of financial resources is made by ensuring effective use of those in an effort to provide best possible benefit to the region in line with the WCO and ROCB Europe strategies.

On the other hand, member contributions are prolonged by a decision of the Heads of Customs of the WCO Europe Region annually. However, member contributions are already voluntary and not mandatory. This is why the best way would be not setting a period for contributions and, in contrast, having the annual voluntary contributions permanent.

The draft Terms of Reference (annexed) for the ROCB Europe contains a provision<sup>8</sup> for voluntary contributions. That is why, if the Terms of Reference is endorsed by a decision of the Heads of Customs of the WCO Europe Region, there might be no need for additional decisions each year from the region for prolongation while financial contributions are already on a voluntary basis. These matters are determined solely upon the decisions of the Heads of Customs of the WCO Europe Region.

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<sup>8</sup> In Section 4. Budget, it reads "The budget of the ROCB Europe is formed of annual voluntary contributions received from the Members of the WCO Europe Region."

## **ANNEXES:**

- Annex I: ROCB Europe Strategic Framework Document**
- Annex II: Revised Role of Capacity Building Contact Points**
- Annex III: Draft Terms of Reference for the ROCB Europe**
- Annex IV: Flyers and Brochures**
- Annex V: Reports by Regional Training Centers**

## ANNEX I

### ROCB EUROPE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK DOCUMENT 2018-2021

This document is intended for providing a strategic guidance for ROCB Europe.

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Regional Office for Capacity Building (ROCB) for the World Customs Organization (WCO) Europe Region is the 6th and final ROCB comprising WCO's largest region which has been operational since 2011.

The Office operates in its own building, which includes spacious conference hall, computer lab and two classrooms alongside offices for staff and has its own Cargo and Container Training Center (Section I: Current Status).

ROCB Europe is the beacon for the work of customs capacity building activities in the WCO Europe Region. It exclusively aims at enhancing capacities of Customs Administrations in paving the way for more secure and simplified customs processes and international trade operations.

ROCB Europe's vision is to realize sustainable capacity building activities with concrete outcomes that favorably benefit Customs Administrations based on the values of *Excellence, Cooperation, Inclusiveness, and Continuous Improvement*.

ROCB Europe performs its work in line with its four keystone strategic goals and three strategies on organizational management and communication (Section II: Strategy).

#### Keystone Strategic Goals:

- **Promote the work on customs capacity building and WCO instruments.**
- **Foster customs reform and modernization process of Member Administrations.**
- **Strengthen regional cooperation among Member Administrations.**
- **Enhance collaboration with stakeholders, development partners and donors.**

#### Strategic Goals on Organizational Management:

- **Strengthen office management and improve institutional functionality.**
- **Secure adequate funding and financial sustainability.**

#### Strategic Goal on Communication:

- **Address a broad audience and raise awareness on customs capacity building and development.**

The Execution Program is projected to be implemented with a view to achieving the strategic goals (Section III: Execution Program).

## **SECTION I: CURRENT STATUS**

### **A. OPERATING CONTEXT:**

The Regional Office for Capacity Building (ROCB) for the World Customs Organization (WCO) Europe Region has been functioning in Baku, Azerbaijan, since 17 October 2011 based on the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the WCO and the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

ROCB Europe is the 6<sup>th</sup> and final ROCB comprising WCO's largest region.

ROCB Europe performs its work by means of its technical as well as administrative services. The State Customs Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan gives extensive support in terms of logistical arrangements and administrative support to ROCB Europe.

Technical staff of ROCB Europe is seconded by Customs Administrations of WCO Europe Region. Currently, there are three technical staff seconded by the Customs Administrations of Turkey (head of office), and the Republic of Azerbaijan. *(updated - February 2020)*

The Office is fully ensured with administrative staff including office manager and support staff as well as guardsmen by the State Customs Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

### **B. ASSETS:**

#### ***i) Facilities***

ROCB Europe operates in its own building, which includes the following alongside spacious offices for staff:

- Fully equipped conference hall;
- Computer lab with working stations;
- 2 well-equipped training classes;
- Cafeteria as well as fully equipped kitchen;
- Parking garage.

WCO, WCO Member Administrations and international governmental organizations as well as the State Customs Committee and other government agencies of the Republic of Azerbaijan are welcome to use the premises.

#### ***ii) Cargo and Container Training Center***

The Cargo and Container Training Center is located at the ROCB Europe premises and intended for providing training for frontline customs officers on cargo and container control matters both theoretically and practically. The center, which was built with the kind support of Customs Administration of the Netherlands, is the second center worldwide after the one in Rotterdam. ROCB Europe hosts cargo and container trainings ex officio at the center upon receiving requests from member states.

## **SECTION II: STRATEGY**

### **A. SWOT ANALYSIS**

#### **i) Strengths:**

- There is an extensive ongoing support to ROCB Europe from the host administration, the State Customs Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan.
- ROCB Europe has its own premises with spacious offices and well-furnished large meeting hall and training sections.
- The coverage of ROCB Europe is the largest in comparison to other WCO Regions and it is comprised of Member Administrations some of which are substantially advanced in customs.
- The location of the ROCB Europe is practical and it is virtually in the center of the WCO Europe Region in geographical means which makes it easily reachable from any country in the WCO Europe Region.

#### **ii) Weaknesses:**

- ROCB Europe traditionally suffers from under employment of technical personnel and lack of adequate financial support from the member Customs Administrations which in turn causes ROCB Europe to underperform. The level of low backing seems to be dramatic considering the large coverage of the WCO Europe Region.
- The attention and willingness to hold collaborative activities of Member Administrations with ROCB Europe is limited.
- Absence of a strategy for the WCO Europe Region prevents ROCB Europe from performing in a fulfilling way in line with regional guidance and needs.

#### **iii) Opportunities:**

- ROCB Europe has the potential to play a role in regional capacity building activities as well as customs related projects to a much greater extent as opposed to the current situation.
- ROCB Europe can act as a coordination hub for the region for Regional Training Centers, RILOs and Vice-Chairmanship as well as WCO Europe Region Heads of Administration Conference.
- ROCB Europe web site can be used for accessing working documents and announcements for regional meetings and events through public or member only sections, as the case may be.
- Within the framework of a long term regional strategy, ROCB Europe can use its potential for a stable and sustainable work program.

#### **iv) Threats:**

- Ongoing low level of support could result in decreased attention and a decline of interest for WCO activities in WCO Europe Region.
- Limited number of high level regional events coupled with low level of regional coordination might result in as an unbalanced regional coordination as well as lack of mutual understanding among Member Administrations.

## **B. STRATEGIC GUIDANCE**

### **i) Mission statement:**

ROCB Europe is the beacon for the work of customs capacity building activities in the WCO Europe Region. It exclusively aims at enhancing capacities of Customs Administrations in paving the way for more secure and simplified customs processes and international trade operations.

### **ii) Vision:**

Realizing sustainable capacity building activities with concrete outcomes that favorably benefit Customs Administrations.

### **iii) Values:**

Excellence, Cooperation, Inclusiveness, Continuous Improvement.

## **C. KEYSTONE STRATEGIC GOALS**

ROCB Europe operates with the aim of achieving the following keystone strategic goals:

- **Promote the work on customs capacity building and WCO instruments.**
- **Foster customs reform and modernization process of Member Administrations.**
- **Strengthen regional cooperation among Member Administrations.**
- **Enhance collaboration with stakeholders, development partners and donors.**

## **D. ORGANISATIONAL MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

In order to complement and boost the work on the keystone strategic goals, ROCB Europe also operates in the context of the following organizational management strategy goals:

- **Strengthen office management and improve institutional functionality.**
- **Secure adequate funding and financial sustainability.**

## **E. COMMUNICATION STRATEGY**

In order to complement and boost the work on the keystone strategic goals, ROCB Europe also operates in the context of the following communication strategy goal:

- **Address a broad audience and raise awareness on customs capacity building and development.**

### SECTION III: EXECUTION PROGRAM

Below program comprises overall deliverables with corresponding elements and is projected to be implemented with a view to achieving the strategic goals of the ROCB Europe through an annually updated detailed Work Plan on the basis of results-based management approach:

<b>GOAL 1:</b>	
<b>Promote the work on customs capacity building and WCO instruments.</b>	
<b>Deliverables</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organize, coordinate or host regional, sub-regional and national events on customs capacity building and WCO instruments.</li> <li>• Produce, collect, analyze or disseminate information about customs capacity building and WCO instruments.</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Stakeholders</b>	Customs Administrations, WCO, other international governmental organizations, private sector.
<b>Expected Impact</b>	Enhanced customs capacity of Member Administrations and increased benefit from and better use of WCO instruments.
<b>Performance Indicators</b>	Number of events organized, hosted or coordinated.
<b>GOAL 2:</b>	
<b>Foster customs reform and modernization process of Member Administrations.</b>	
<b>Deliverables</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide customs capacity building support through coordination of technical assistance, training and experience sharing activities for Member Administrations.</li> <li>• Assist initiation or implementation of projects and programs of Member Administrations on customs capacity building.</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Stakeholders</b>	Customs Administrations, WCO, other international governmental organizations.
<b>Expected Impact</b>	Increased customs capacity of Member Administrations.
<b>Performance Indicators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of events organized, hosted or coordinated.</li> <li>• Number of projects or programs assisted.</li> </ul>
<b>GOAL 3:</b>	
<b>Strengthen regional cooperation among Member Administrations.</b>	
<b>Deliverables</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a common platform for regional communication, view exchange, information sharing; coordinate regional and sub-regional meetings; keep databases for experts, programs and projects and other relevant information.</li> <li>• Draft and propose WCO Europe Region Regional Strategic Plan.</li> </ul>



<b>Potential Stakeholders</b>	Member Administrations, WCO Secretariat.
<b>Expected Impact</b>	Increased regional cooperation between the Member Administrations.
<b>Performance Indicators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of initiatives taken for strengthening regional cooperation</li> <li>• Status of WCO Europe Region Regional Strategic Plan.</li> </ul>
<b>GOAL 4:</b> <b>Enhance collaboration with stakeholders, development partners and donors.</b>	
<b>Deliverables</b>	Increase engagement with stakeholders, development partners and donors in order to organize joint activities and urge them to take initiatives.
<b>Potential Stakeholders</b>	Governments, WCO, other international governmental organizations, private sector, embassies, missions in Azerbaijan.
<b>Expected Impact</b>	Increased audience, reinforced promotion of customs capacity building activities and the Office.
<b>Performance Indicators</b>	Number of projects, visits and events carried out.
<b>GOAL 5:</b> <b>Strengthen office management and improve institutional functionality.</b>	
<b>Deliverables</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure effective human resources development and provide training where available and proper conditions for staff at the Office.</li> <li>• Conduct on the basis of adopted institutional procedures and principles.</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Stakeholders</b>	N/A
<b>Expected Impact</b>	Increased effectiveness and competency of the Office.
<b>Performance Indicators</b>	Ongoing process.
<b>GOAL 6:</b> <b>Secure adequate funding and financial sustainability.</b>	
<b>Deliverables</b>	Ensure long term funding thereby consistent implementation of the Execution Program for customs capacity building activities.
<b>Potential Stakeholders</b>	Customs Administrations, development partners, donors.
<b>Expected Impact</b>	Improved functionality of ROCB Europe in providing customs capacity activities.

<b>Performance Indicators</b>	Balanced budget and the number of activities provided.
<b>GOAL 7:</b>  <b>Address a broad audience and raise awareness on customs capacity building and development.</b>	
<b>Deliverables</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage as many stakeholders as possible to attract more attention to the work of ROCB Europe and urge stakeholders to take initiatives on customs capacity building by effective communication techniques and representation.</li> <li>• Reach out stakeholders with a view to urging them to uphold customs capacity building related activities.</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Stakeholders</b>	Customs and trade community.
<b>Expected Impact</b>	Increased audience as well as awareness in customs and trade community.
<b>Performance Indicators</b>	Number of outreach actions taken.

## **SECTION IV: PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND REVIEW**

### **A. PERFORMANCE MONITORING**

Performance monitoring with regard to Execution Program shall be made based on Progress Report which shall indicate the activities of ROCB Europe on an annual basis taking into consideration a results-based approach and impact observation through quantitative as well as qualitative methods.

### **B. REVIEW**

The ROCB Europe Strategic Framework shall be reviewed by ROCB Europe aligned with the inputs received from the Member Administrations, WCO Europe Region Vice-Chair and the WCO Secretariat.

## **ANNEX II**

*Draft Doc. 2019/3*

### **Role of Capacity Building Contact Points in the WCO Europe Region**

Capacity Building Contact Points form a professional network of individuals working within their respective Customs administrations as the main points for liaison.

This role falls within the scope of implementation of the World Customs Organization's (WCO) Capacity Building Strategy and related matters in the WCO Europe Region.

These individuals or structures work closely with the WCO Secretariat (the Regional Development Manager in the Capacity Building Directorate) and the Regional Office for Capacity Building for the Europe Region (ROCB Europe) with the goal of creating conditions conducive to the development and efficiency of the region's Customs administrations.

The role and tasks of a Capacity Building Contact Point are as follows:

#### **1. Cooperation with the WCO Secretariat and the ROCB Europe**

- Serve as a focal point to facilitate and promote active communication between the WCO Secretariat, ROCB Europe and their administration in order to ensure the widespread circulation of WCO recommendations and best practices in the Capacity Building and Customs modernization domain;
- Regularly submit information to the WCO Secretariat and ROCB Europe on the progress in terms of the implementation of Customs modernization and capacity building activities and initiatives within their administration;
- Send information to the WCO Secretariat and ROCB Europe on best practices, innovative approaches and/or case studies on different areas of Customs work. This information will be published by the WCO for the Capacity Building Committee and uploaded on the ROCB web site.
- Regularly submit copies of their administration's strategic plans or development programs, if available in English, French or Russian, to the WCO Secretariat and the ROCB Europe with a summary in one of these languages of their reform and modernization process' priorities and key objectives;

- Co-operate with the ROCB to forge close links aimed at promoting capacity building with the donor community and other key partners;
- Organize the internal process for receiving support missions and expert advice delivery from WCO Secretariat and ROCB Europe.

## **2. Promoting and Coordinating Capacity Building Efforts**

- Serve as channels of information sharing and input on members' development projects and programs;
- Support Customs modernization and sustainable organizational development within their respective administrations;
- Provide input to the different Capacity Building initiatives being implemented within their administration;
- Publicize and promote the implementation of recommendations and best practices stemming from regional work and the WCO's tools and instruments;
- Foster the implementation of international Customs standards within their administration.

## **3. Monitoring and Evaluating the Modernization Process**

- Collect, analyze, consolidate and present their administration's requirements and needs for Capacity Building support and ensure that requests for external assistance submitted to the WCO Secretariat and the ROCB Europe are relevant;
- Monitor progress regarding their administration's modernization process, using information gathered from project managers and change initiatives.

## **4. Expert Mobilization and Support to Capacity Building Delivery**

- Identify and evaluate officers within their administration displaying the potential to contribute to the regional and global capacity building activities and submit their data to the WCO Secretariat and the ROCB Europe for participation in expert accreditation workshops and related events;
- Identify and evaluate experienced officers (other than WCO accredited experts) within their administration who can provide any regional/sub-regional assistance especially in areas where no WCO accredited experts are available and submit their data to the WCO Secretariat and the ROCB Europe.

## ANNEX III

*Draft Doc. 2019/2.Rev*

# **REGIONAL OFFICE FOR CAPACITY BUILDING FOR THE WORLD CUSTOMS ORGANIZATION EUROPE REGION TERMS OF REFERENCE**

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Starting from 2004, Regional Offices for Capacity Building were established in all regions of the World Customs Organization (WCO), which are intended to take over the load in the practical implementation of the WCO standards and instruments.

In this direction, in May 2009, the Conference of Heads of Customs Services of the European region in Bergen, Norway, decided to establish a Regional Office for Capacity Building for the WCO Europe Region in Baku, Azerbaijan.

This decision was approved at the 113th/114<sup>th</sup> WCO Council Sessions in June 2009. On 11 November 2009, the World Customs Organization and the State Customs Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan signed a Memorandum of Understanding on the establishment of the Regional Office for Capacity Building.

The Regional Office for Capacity Building for the World Customs Organization Europe Region (ROCB Europe) has been functioning in Baku, Azerbaijan, since 17 October 2011 based on the said Memorandum of Understanding.

The mission of the Regional Office for Capacity Building for the WCO Europe Region is to effectively coordinate activities in the area of institutional development of customs services, based on international standards and instruments of the WCO.

## **II. MANDATE**

The ROCB Europe is a regional initiative by the WCO Europe Region, established in accordance with the WCO's commitment to regionalization of its Capacity Building Strategy. It acts in close cooperation with the Vice-Chair of the WCO Europe Region, the WCO Members of the Europe Region, the WCO Secretariat and the host administration.

The direction of the work of the ROCB Europe is based on the guidance steered by the Heads of Customs Administrations of the WCO Europe Region.

## **III. SCOPE**

### **1. Role**

The ROCB Europe is central to capacity building efforts in the WCO Europe Region. It supports Members Administrations primarily in needs assessment process and helps coordinate Capacity Building activities within the region.

In this context, the role of the ROCB Europe consists of the following:

- Working toward Customs Capacity Building in the WCO Europe Region in the context of WCO's Capacity Building Strategy and regionalization approach, and as directed by the Heads of Customs of the Europe Region;
- Supporting the development of Member Administrations on Customs reform and modernization;
- Promoting the work of the WCO and its tools and instruments;
- Making recommendations to the Members of the WCO Europe Region on common priorities for the Europe Region and, if approved by the Heads of Customs for the Europe Region, implement them;
- Improving the conditions or establishing necessary mechanisms for enhanced communication in the Europe Region;
- Supporting the development of cooperation among Member Administrations;
- Launching initiatives on emerging trends in Customs that are relevant to the Region, in accordance with the Strategic Framework;
- Raising awareness on WCO tools and instruments as well as Capacity Building efforts;
- Promoting modern and professional human resources development programs.

## **2. Functions**

The ROCB Europe aims at enhancing the capacities of Customs Administrations in paving the way for more secure and simplified customs processes and international trade operations.

For that aim, the ROCB Europe performs its work in meeting the following functions:

- Identifying the needs and coordinating Capacity building activities for Member Administrations of the Region accordingly;
- Participating in the WCO Capacity Building Directorate planning of capacity building programs in order to streamline the different activities organized in the Region.
- Providing Customs capacity building support through coordination of technical assistance, training and experience sharing activities for Member Administrations;
- Organizing, coordinating or hosting regional, sub-regional and national events on customs capacity building and WCO instruments;
- Organizing relevant activities with respect to Customs development and priorities of the Region;
- Establishing, managing or coordinating developmental projects for bolstering the Customs modernization in Member Administrations;
- Forming and maintaining close liaison with the Member Administrations;
- Developing, promoting and maintaining partnerships with key international and regional stakeholders;
- Representing the WCO and/or WCO Europe Region as appropriate in regional events where applicable;
- Supporting the implementation of international standards for Customs and trade;
- Promoting Public – Private Sector Partnership in Customs matters;
- Cooperating closely with the Regional Training Centers in the Europe Region;
- Supporting the Regional Training Centers in an effort to equip them with relevant expertise and monitoring their activities;
- Collecting information on Customs projects, initiatives and best practices in the Europe Region;

- Providing strategic guidance to management of Member Administrations in the Europe Region where requested;
- Producing, collecting, analyzing and/or disseminating information about customs capacity building and WCO instruments;
- Providing a common platform for regional communication, for information sharing;
- Evaluating the developmental progress of Member Administrations as appropriate.

#### **IV. MEANS OF OPERATION**

##### **1. Strategic Framework**

The ROCB Europe conducts its work based on a Strategic Framework as approved by the Heads of Customs of the WCO Europe Region. The Strategic Framework is updated every three years, based on a proposal by the ROCB Europe.

##### **2. Annual Work Plan**

The Annual Work Plan for the ROCB Europe is based on the Strategic Framework and identified regional needs and priorities. The ROCB Europe develops the draft Plan for the in cooperation with the WCO Secretariat and the Vice-Chair and submit for consideration and endorsement by the Heads of Customs Conference of the WCO Europe Region.

##### **3. Annual Progress Report**

The ROCB Europe drafts an Annual Progress Report that provides an assessment of the implementation of the Annual Work Plan, in accordance with the Strategic Plan. The draft Report is submitted to the Heads of Customs Conference of the WCO Europe Region for its consideration and approval. The Annual Progress Report should be used for the ROCB Europe monitoring and performance purposes.



## **V. RESOURCES**

### **1. Facilities**

The Office is located in its own building provided by the State Customs Committee of Azerbaijan. The host administration bears essential expenses associated with daily functionality of the Office and maintenance.

### **2. Staff**

The ROCB Europe performs its work by means of its staff, including the Head of the Office, and support services. Staff is seconded by the Member Administrations of the WCO Europe Region, whereas support staff is provided by the host administration.

The staff seconded to the ROCB Europe by the Member Administrations of the WCO Europe Region enjoy the privileges granted by the Republic of Azerbaijan. At the request of the seconding Customs Administration, these staff are assigned technical attaché status by the WCO Secretariat.

The ROCB Europe staff is independent of their home administration and the host administration in terms of their work for the Office. The WCO Staff Rules applies to the staff of the ROCB Europe where applicable.<sup>9</sup>

The staff may be made available by the Member Administrations of the WCO Europe Region through a remote working mechanism without the need for physically joining the Office.

### **3. Head of the ROCB Europe**

The Head of the ROCB Europe is appointed through a process coordinated and headed by the Vice-Chair. A selection board may be formed if deemed necessary during the process. In the event of a vacancy of the post, the Vice-Chair calls upon all the Members of the Region for nominating candidates sufficiently in advance of the WCO Europe Region Heads of Customs Conference.

The final decision for the appointment for the position is made by the Heads of Customs Administrations of the WCO European Region.

The Head of ROCB Europe is assigned for a period of three years, with the possibility of extension for one additional year, where justified, and subject to the

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<sup>9</sup> This provision excludes the cases where the application of a certain staff rule is practically or structurally impossible. For example, terminal allowance.

approval of the Heads of Customs Administrations of the WCO European Region. The Head of the ROCB is eligible for reappointment for another term of three years.

#### **4. Budget**

The ROCB Europe has its own budget, separate from that of the WCO.

The budget of the ROCB Europe is formed of annual voluntary contributions received from the Members of the WCO Europe Region. The Office may seek to generate additional income and financial support.

The Office keeps records of its financial dealings and is subject to examinations of financial activities upon the common request of the Heads of Customs Administrations of the WCO Europe Region.

The annual financial statement for the previous financial year as well as the budget for the upcoming financial year are drafted by the ROCB Europe and submitted to the WCO Europe Region Member Administrations for consideration and endorsement.

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## ANNEX IV



### REGIONAL OFFICE FOR CAPACITY BUILDING FOR THE WORLD CUSTOMS ORGANIZATION EUROPE REGION

#### FOUNDATIONS

The Regional Office for Capacity Building (ROCB) for the World Customs Organization (WCO) Europe Region was officially opened on October 17, 2011 in Baku, Azerbaijan.

Operational  
since 2011

#### OBJECTIVE

Enhancing  
capacities

The Regional Office for Capacity Building for the World Customs Organization Europe Region exclusively aims at enhancing the capacities of Customs Administrations in paving the way for more secure and simplified international trade operations.

#### COVERAGE

ROCB Europe comprises WCO's largest region with its 53 members out of 182 total.

53  
Members

#### FOCUS AREAS

Planning  
&  
Coordinating

Capacity  
Building

Developing  
Partnerships

- Planning and coordinating Customs Capacity Building activities;
- Developing staff to be able to support Members with organizational development;
- Supporting the implementation of international standards for Customs and trade reflected in the WCO instruments;
- Establishing projects in individual Members of economic regions;
- Coordinating the activities of the Regional Training Centers;
- Developing , promoting and maintaining partnership with key regional stakeholders.



## REGIONAL OFFICE FOR CAPACITY BUILDING FOR THE WORLD CUSTOMS ORGANIZATION EUROPE REGION

### RESPONSIBILITIES

ROCB Europe aims at supporting Member Customs Administrations to better provide services by:

- Developing, managing and monitoring a pool of experts in organizational development and technical Customs matters;
- Identifying common issues amongst the Members in the implementation of new initiatives and providing seminars, workshops, or direct consultancy to address them;
- Seeking opportunities to establish development projects;
- Evaluating the developmental progress of the Members at regular intervals, for both confirming progress and identifying further development requirements;
- Coordinating the activities of the Training Centers in the region;
- Identifying training needs at a strategic level.



### FACILITIES

ROCB Europe premises includes the following:

- Fully equipped conference hall (53 seats with mics);
- Computer lab with 20 working stations;
- 2 equipped training classes (30 seats each);
- Cafeteria as well as equipped kitchen;
- Parking garage.

These facilities are to be rented by organizations and companies for a variety of conferences, business meetings and activities.

World Customs Organization, the customs administrations as well as the State Customs Committee and other government agencies of the Republic of Azerbaijan use the premises of the Regional Office at no charge.

### ROCB Europe

<http://rocb-europe.org>

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## Regional Office for Capacity Building for the World Customs Organization Europe Region

### REGIONAL OFFICE FOR CAPACITY BUILDING FOR THE WORLD CUSTOMS ORGANIZATION EUROPE REGION

The Regional Office for Capacity Building (ROCB) for the World Customs Organization (WCO) Europe Region exclusively aims at enhancing the capacities of Customs Administrations in paving the way for more secure and simplified customs processes and international trade operations.

ROCB Europe is the 6th and final ROCB that comprises WCO's largest region with its 53 members.

The Office performs its work primarily on the following:

- Developing, managing and monitoring a pool of experts in organizational development and technical Customs matters;
- Identifying common issues amongst the Members in the implementation of new initiatives and providing seminars, workshops, or direct consultancy to address them;
- Seeking opportunities to establish development projects;
- Evaluating the developmental progress of the Members at regular intervals, for both confirming progress and identifying further development requirements;
- Coordinating the activities of the Training Centers in the region;
- Identifying training needs at a strategic level.

#### ROCB Europe

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### REGIONAL OFFICE FOR CAPACITY BUILDING FOR THE WORLD CUSTOMS ORGANIZATION EUROPE REGION

*Enhancing capacities for better customs services.*

[rocb-europe.org](http://rocb-europe.org)

## WORLD CUSTOMS ORGANIZATION

The World Customs Organization (WCO), established in 1952 as the Customs Co-operation Council (CCC), is an independent intergovernmental body whose mission is to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of Customs administrations.

Today, the WCO represents Customs administrations the globe that collectively process approximately 98% of world trade. As the global center of Customs expertise, the WCO is the only international organization with competence in Customs matters and can rightly call itself the voice of the international Customs community.

As a forum for dialogue and exchange of experiences between national Customs delegates, the WCO offers its Members a range of Conventions and other international instruments, as well as technical assistance and training services provided either directly by the Secretariat, or with its participation.



### WCO Mission Statement

The WCO provides leadership, guidance and support to Customs administrations to secure and facilitate legitimate trade, realize revenues, protect society and build capacity.

#### World Customs Organization

<http://wcoomd.org>

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## REGIONAL OFFICES FOR CAPACITY BUILDING

The Regional Offices for Capacity Building (ROCBs) are the cornerstone of the Region's approach to capacity building as laid out in its Capacity Building Strategy.

Their mission is to assist member Customs administrations with their capacity building programs at regional level by helping them:

- to identify more accurate capacity building needs and possible solutions;
- to enhance the coordination of capacity building activities with regional members and the WCO Secretariat;
- to monitor projects;
- to improve networking with donor agencies and relevant organizations;
- to use resources more cost-effectively; and
- to coordinate the use and implementation of WCO tools and practices in the Region.

### REGIONAL TRAINING CENTERS

Regional Training Centers constitute one of the key components of the regional approach. Forming virtually independent and autonomous entities, the regions are best placed to identify and respond to their Members' training needs. This type of training, which is broader in scope than that offered to individual countries, makes it possible to pool and optimize resources in a single region.





## **ANNEX V**

# **REPORTS BY REGIONAL TRAINING CENTERS**



**WORLD CUSTOMS ORGANIZATION  
EUROPE REGION REGIONAL TRAINING CENTER (RTC)  
ANNUAL REPORT  
(1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021)**

**I. GENERAL INFORMATION**

<b>Name of the RTC:</b>	Regional Training Centre of the World Customs Organization in the Kyrgyz Republic (RTC Bishkek)
<b>Head of the RTC:</b>	Almaz Asanbaev
<b>RTC Website and E-mail Address:</b>	Stc@customs.gov.kg
<b>Number of Staff:</b>	36 employees
<b>Contact Person:</b>	Narynkul Tagainazar kyzy
<b>Contact Person E-Mail &amp; Phone Number:</b>	t.narynkul@mail.ru +996502 59 59 57



### **Brief History & Information about the Center:**

On December 19, 2018, a Memorandum of Understanding between the State Customs Service under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic and the World Customs Organization on the establishment of the WCO Regional Training Centre in the Kyrgyz Republic was signed at the headquarters of the World Customs Organization in Brussels, Belgium on the basis of the specialized customs of the State Customs Service under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic.

The WCO Regional Training Centre in the Kyrgyz Republic (hereinafter - RTC in the Kyrgyz Republic) is located in the suburb of the capital of the Kyrgyz Republic, in the village of Leninskoe. The total area of the RTC in the Kyrgyz Republic is 3.8 hectares, where all the infrastructure facilities of the Customs Training Centre are located.

The main areas of specialization of the RTC in the Kyrgyz Republic are radiation safety and canine.

RTC in the Kyrgyz Republic is equipped with a passenger plane, a railway wagon, vehicles and a canine training complex.

To carry out practical exercises on the implementation of customs control at the border, a mock-up of the checkpoint was built, which is equipped with a NUCTECH CX100100TI X-ray inspection system for inspecting luggage and carry-on baggage, a red and green corridor for passenger traffic.

In addition, equipment was installed to carry out weight and dimensional control at the checkpoint and inspection sites for customs clearance of cargo trucks.

The mock-up of the checkpoint is equipped with automobile and pedestrian radiation-portal monitors (RPM).



## II. ORGANIZED OR HOSTED EVENTS

#	Name of the Event	Date	Attendance	Purpose & Outcomes
1	Strategic Trade and Export Awareness Workshop under the UNODC-WCO Global Export Control Program	11.08-13.08 2020	4 employees	<i>Capacity building</i>
2	Regional Workshop on Combating Illicit Trafficking in Drugs and Precursors under the UNODC-WCO Global Container Control Program	10.11- 12.11 2020	1 employee	<i>Capacity building</i>
3	Regional Seminar on Strategic Trade Control (WCO)	23.03- 26.03 2021	20 employees	<i>Capacity building</i>
4	Regional Seminar on the use of inspection systems ST-6035 in cooperation with RTC Moscow	10.02- 14.02 2020	49 employees	<i>Capacity building</i>

### III. PLANNED OR FORESEEN EVENTS

#	Name of the Event	Date	Attendance	Purpose & Outcomes
1	Regional Workshop on inspection and inspection complexes jointly with RTC Moscow	17-21 May 2021	30 employees	Capacity building
2	Online course on technical means of customs control together with RTC Azerbaijan	June 2021	20 employees	Capacity building
3	Regional Training in methods of inspection of goods and vehicles using TSTK in conjunction with the RTC Moscow.	July 2021	30 employees	Capacity building
4	Regional Workshop on Radiation monitoring with RTC Moscow, RTC Astana	2 quarter	30 employees	Capacity building
5	Regional Meeting of the WCO RTC in the European Region	Until the end of 2021	10 employees	Experience exchange

<b>6</b>	Regional Training on combating drug crime in cooperation with RTC Azerbaijan	3 quarter 2021	20 employees	<i>Capacity building</i>
<b>7</b>	Study of international experience in the exchange of information between customs services together with all RTCs in the European WCO region	4 quarter 2021	10 employees	Experience exchange

#### **IV. DEVELOPMENTS**

RTC Bishkek assisted in the translation into Russian of the teaching guidelines developed for the regional training centers of the WCO and national training centers “Human Resource Development in Crisis Conditions”.

Educational-methodical complexes and manuals for customs officers of the Kyrgyz Republic on various issues of customs, in particular on technical customs control.

## V. ADDITIONAL REMARKS

As you know, RTC Bishkek is one of the youngest WCO RTC in the WCO Europe Region. In this connection, the RTC Bishkek notes that during from the moment of obtaining the Status, and also from the first half of 2020 activities were mainly aimed at preparatory works related to the implementation of the activities of the RTC Bishkek. Namely, the training of high-quality instructors with the assistance of WCO experts; invitation of WCO experts to conduct diagnostics and assessment of RTC Bishkek, participation of RTC Bishkek employees in various WCO events, to establish contacts with other WCO RTCs and to expand cooperation, to learn the experience of other WCO RTCs, etc.

RTC Bishkek with WCO ROCB in Europe also developed the RTC Bishkek Strategic Document for 2020-2023. The Strategic document represents only the first stage of the document, which is closely interlinked and has common interests with the WCO ROCB in Europe. At the same time, the RTC Bishkek notes that many of the planned activities for the 2nd half of 2020 are postponed to 2021, given the unstable situation in the world, in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Nevertheless, in this time, the RTC Bishkek in close cooperation with the OSCE Program Office, continues to work hard to implement the main mission of the RTC Bishkek. In 2021, the RTC Bishkek proposes to pay special attention to the Modernization and digitalization of the education process in the WCO European Region, given the current situation with COVID-19. In this connection, the RTC Bishkek, with the OSCE Program, is ready to assist the widespread use of the WCO CLIKC E-learning platform for Russian-speaking countries, namely, it is ready to make efforts to translate training modules and existing courses in this platform. That will expand the circle of users at the regional level.

In the second half of 2020, the RTC Bishkek plans, with the help of independent WCO experts, to develop the second stage of the Strategic Document, which is closely interlinked with the WCO Strategic Document and the main WCO activities. This document will be agreed with the WCO and take into account the interests and implementation of the main activities of the WCO. Another important event that the RTC Bishkek offers is to consider holding an online conference in the format of discussions and presentations on each side of the participants, sharing experiences on the application of the latest techniques, best practices, and interactive training technologies.

I especially want to note that, as practice and analysis of the current situation show, the absence or low interest of other countries to participating in WCO regional activities is more dependent on funding sources. And in this regard, I believe that the WCO, ROCB and RTCs should make more efforts to attract international donors, international organizations and programs that could provide support in solving these problems.

RTC Bishkek, is actively working in this direction.



**WORLD CUSTOMS ORGANIZATION**  
**EUROPE REGION REGIONAL TRAINING CENTER (RTC)**  
**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**(1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021)**

**I. GENERAL INFORMATION**

<b>Name of the RTC:</b>	RTC-WCO in Skopje, Ss. Cyril and Methodius University, Faculty of Economics – Skopje, RN of Macedonia
<b>Head of the RTC:</b>	Irena Kikerkova, Ph.D.
<b>RTC Website and E-mail Address:</b>	<a href="http://www.eccf.ukim.edu.mk">www.eccf.ukim.edu.mk</a>
<b>Number of Staff:</b>	
<b>Contact Person:</b>	Irena Kikerkova, Ph.D., Ss. Cyril and Methodius University, Faculty of Economics – Skopje, RN of Macedonia Zaklina Andreska, Customs Administration of the RN of Macedonia
<b>Contact Person E-Mail &amp; Phone Number:</b>	<a href="mailto:irena@eccf.ukim.edu.mk">irena@eccf.ukim.edu.mk</a> , + 389 2 3 286 860 <a href="mailto:zaklina.andreska@customs.gov.mk">zaklina.andreska@customs.gov.mk</a> , + 389 70 279 114



### **Brief History & Information about the Center:**

The Customs Administration of the Republic of North Macedonia, the Faculty of Economics-Skopje, and the World Customs Organization from Brussels, Belgium signed a Memorandum of Understanding in the autumn of 2007 and initiated the establishment of a regional training center for continuous training of customs servants and the business community according to the professional standards of the WCO. The established cooperation and the proposed initiative were supported by the Macedonian Government. On the 27th of September 2009 the General Secretary of the World Customs Organization, Mr. Kunio Mikuriya, officially opened the Regional Training Centre - World Customs Organization (RTC\_WCO) as an organizational unit of the Ss. Cyril and Methodius University, Faculty of Economics –Skopje. Since, the RTC-WCO organized in average two international trainings and workshops with accredited WCO experts per year; many national trainings on issues of importance and of relevance for the Customs service, updating the knowledge and strengthening the competences of the customs officers, but also for customs brokers and forwarders; organized lectures by eminent customs experts; hosted visits for delegations from foreign Customs administrations such as from Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Syria, South Chorea, as well as of the high representatives of the Regional Office for Capacity Building – WCO for Europe; and two times was hosting the annual meeting of the Heads of the RTC-WCO and the ROCB-WCO for Europe. In October 2019 the RTC-WCO in Skopje hosted the XIV WCO world annual scientific PICARD Conference in Skopje.

## II. ORGANIZED OR HOSTED EVENTS

#	Name of the Event	Date	Attendance	Purpose & Outcomes
1	The Harmonized System (HS) and Tariff Classification	1 - 3 .12. 2020	30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With the increased volume of requests for Binding tariff information submitted to the Customs Administration for tariff classification of technical goods from Chapters 84 and Chapter 85, there was a need for a workshop where the legal basis for classification of this type of goods will be explained, in order to uniformly apply the Combined Nomenclature.</li> <li>• Introducing the participants to the new changes of the CH 2020</li> <li>• Improving the skills of customs officers on proper tariff classification of technical goods from Chapter 84 and Chapter 85</li> <li>• Prepare for new changes in CN 2022</li> </ul>

### III. PLANNED OR FORESEEN EVENTS

#	Name of the Event	Date	Attendance	Purpose & Outcomes
1	Excise Law (new IT system on Excise)	End of the year	30-50	Participants to gain knowledge how to implement new procedures as a result of new IT systems and procedures.
2	Tariff classification	End of the year	50	Customs officers working on Transit procedures to upgrade their knowledge in tariff classification (due to changes in NCTS Phase 5)

### V. DEVELOPMENTS

Customs Administration of the Republic of North Macedonia continues to provide necessary trainings for the customs officers as well as trainings and counseling for the business community. In the period from 1. 4.2020 to 31.3.2021 Customs Administration realized 133 events in form of trainings, presentations, workshops with 1.647 customs officers as participants. Within these trainings 9 were organized for business community with 511 participants. Due to COVID 19 Pandemic most of the trainings were delivered online with different tools for online meetings and trainings.





In the process of the capacity building stakeholders have possibility to use modern training techniques (e-learning courses published on the internet site of Customs Administration). Providing new equipment and tools for distance learning as well as enhancing competencies of the trainers and employees for distance learning will be one of the challenges for the upcoming period.



**WORLD CUSTOMS ORGANIZATION  
EUROPE REGION REGIONAL TRAINING CENTER (RTC)  
ANNUAL REPORT  
(1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021)**

**I. GENERAL INFORMATION**

<b>Name of the RTC:</b>	The WCO RTC (Khmelnyskyi, Ukraine)
<b>Head of the RTC:</b>	Halyna Potashnikova
<b>RTC Website and E-mail Address:</b>	e-mail:ds.post@customs.gov.ua
<b>Number of Staff:</b>	69
<b>Contact Person:</b>	Iryna Kykylyk



**Contact Person E-Mail & Phone Number:**

E-mail: irinakykylyk@gmail.com; Phone Number: +380679485878

**Brief History & Information about the Center:**

The WCO RTC / RDTC (Khmelnyskyi, Ukraine) functions on the basis of the Department for Specialized Training and Canine Services of the State Customs Service of Ukraine. According to Memorandum of Understanding between the WCO and The State Fiscal Service of Ukraine of July 16, 2016 the WCO Regional Dog Training Center was established on the base of the Department (WCO RDTC).

WCO RDTC conducts specialized training of canine teams of WCO Europe Region. WCO RDTC conducts specialized training according to 6 kinds of educational programs for canine teams of the customs authorities of foreign countries for the search of narcotic drugs, weapons and ammunition, tobacco products, CITES objects, etc. The WCO Regional Training Centre was relocated from Dnipro city to Khmelnytskyi in 2016. The WCO RTC provides high level training via professional programmes and implementation of WCO standards and best practices, conducting training activities at the national, regional and international levels.

**II. ORGANIZED OR HOSTED EVENTS**

#	Name of the Event	Date	Attendance	Purpose & Outcomes
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1	WCO workshop on competency-based HRM under the Executive and Professional Competency Based HRM Programme – EPCA-HRMP.	9-12 June 2020	A total of 14 participants (10 women and 4 men) from the HRM Department and Customs in Kyiv, Odesa and Volyn, as well as the Department for Specialized Training and Canine Services of the SCSU (the WCO Regional Training Centre, Ukraine) took part in this workshop	<p>This e-workshop aimed at equipping and empowering SCSU's HRM department and HRM modernization working group with the competencies and tools to strategically manage human resources and promote the use of competency-based HRM within the administration.</p> <p>At the end of the workshop, participants committed to develop a realistic and measurable HRM modernization work plan and design competency-based HRM tools.</p>
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### III. PLANNED OR FORESEEN EVENTS

#	Name of the Event	Date	Attendance	Purpose & Outcomes
1.	Diagnostic Mission of Canine Development. Expert assistance in canine development of the State Customs Service of Ukraine)	4 quarter of 2021	WCO RDTC, Khmelnytskyi, Ukraine	Assessment of the activities of the WCO RDTC (Khmelnytskyi, Ukraine) and development of the WCO RDTC Strategy for the years 2022 – 2025

2.	Accreditation of Canine Experts. Training for trainers	1 quarter of 2022	WCO RDTC, Khmelnytskyi, Ukraine	Activities related to the development of the canine services:  - training of 3 officials of WCO RDTC  - dissemination of best practices of the WCO member states in the field of canine teams training.
3.	Development of Competency based HRM Tools for the WCO RTC/RDTC (Khmelnytskyi, Ukraine)	4 quarter of 2021	WCO RTC, Khmelnytskyi, Ukraine	Assessment of the activities of the WCO RTC /RDTC (Khmelnytskyi, Ukraine) and development of the Competency based HRM Tools
4.	Train for trainers on customs law enforcement activities	3 quarter of 2021	WCO RTC, Khmelnytskyi, Ukraine	Introduction of best practices of WCO member states on the training system, certification in the field of customs law enforcement; as well as the creation of a national system of training of the managers and customs officials, responsible for this specific direction and certification in the field of law enforcement

#### **IV. DEVELOPMENTS**

**1. WCO CLIKC!**

- the Department officials are National Coordinators of the WCO e-Learning Portal CLIKC! 400 employees of the State Customs Service of Ukraine were given access to the WCO e-learning portal

**2. Implementation of the WCO RTC Strategic Plan:**

Forming a pool of trainers on the regional level has started: 11 experts on various customs topics from the customs of the State Customs Service of Ukraine were added to the pool of national trainers.

#### **V. ADDITIONAL REMARKS**

**1. The officials of the Department took part in:**

- WCO Global webinar series: Managing HR through a crisis and beyond
- 16th Global Meeting of WCO Regional Structures;
- Capacity Building Committee (12th Session);

-a Virtual Specialized PITCH (Preventing Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Heritage) training, organized jointly by the World Customs Organization (WCO) and Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) from 15 to 18 March 2021. The training was an opportunity for the officers to refresh their skills, expand their knowledge, and network with peers from around the region. The training was supported by experts from INTERPOL's Works of Art Unit, the University of Oslo and the Association for Research into Crimes against Art (ARCA);

- WCO Global webinar series: improving awareness of COVID-19 Vaccines(1st series: From 21 to 28 January 2021 with Pfizer/BioNTech and 2nd series: From 15 to 16 March 2021 with Moderna);

- delivering of international events at the WCO request namely “WCO Strategic Trade Control Enforcement (STCE) Programme”

With the WCO’s Operation Cosmo Central Asia scheduled to be conducted in the summer of 2021, and also given high demand and interest from the WCO member administrations and their officers in attending STCE training workshops, on March 2nd – 4th, 2021, a Strategic trade control themed risk management and targeting webinar was held.

The event was attended by 23 representatives from 9 countries, including Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Mongolia and Azerbaijan.

Officials of the Department for Specialized Training and Canine Services of the State Customs Service of Ukraine (RTC, Khmelnytskyi) - WCO STCE expert trainers Viacheslav Slavinskyi, Pavlo Biletskyi and Maksym Prykhodchenko, together with representatives of the WCO and the United Kingdom Border Force, were involved in the webinar as co-trainers.

- WCO working group on Integrity, Middle Management Development (MMD) Training, Capacity Building Virtual Working Group On WCO Expert Deployment

## 2. Cooperation:

### 1) Cooperation with the Customs Training Center of the Republic of Lithuania

On September 23, 2020 the Department for Specialized Training and Canine Services of the State Customs Service of Ukraine and the Customs Training Centre of the Republic of Lithuania held an online working meeting. During the meeting, the ways of conducting specialized training in both countries were discussed, including distance learning methods, and a preliminary agreement was reached on the involvement of experts from both countries in the training activities to be held in the partner country.

Parties continued the coordination of the procedure for conducting and developing the practical training course, aimed at working out the full cycle of customs officers’ actions in carrying out customs control over goods and vehicles in real conditions at the customs border. Considering the need for a large number of participants to stay in one place, the joint implementation of this course will take place after the completion of

all quarantine restrictions. Particular attention was paid to the discussion of the legal regulation of cooperation between Ukraine and Lithuania in terms of customs officials training and exchange of training methods. We are all in difficult circumstances caused by COVID-19. However, the work of customs officers cannot be suspended, as well as the process of their professional development. Representatives of both countries expressed hope for the development of further cooperation

**1) Cooperation with the European Union project EU4PFM (the Public Financial Management Support Program in Ukraine).**

In terms of the programme a number of activities were implemented from July to December 2020 on:

- Customs Audit;
- Risk Management;
- NCTS implementation;
- Customs Legislation Analysis.

In addition, the Department, together with the EU4PFM experts, trained trainers on issues of ensuring control by the customs authorities of Ukraine for endangered species of animals and plants (CITES Convention).

**2) Cooperation with with the OSCE in strengthening response to the illicit trafficking of weapons, ammunition and explosives**

In the framework of cooperation with the OSCE on support of the State Customs Service of Ukraine in preventing and combating the illicit trafficking of weapons, ammunition and explosives a meeting with international expert Mr. Jeff Spicer was conducted.





**WORLD CUSTOMS ORGANIZATION  
EUROPE REGION REGIONAL TRAINING CENTER (RTC)  
ANNUAL REPORT  
(1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021)**

**I. GENERAL INFORMATION**

<b>Name of the RTC:</b>	WCO Regional Training Centre on the basis of Russian Customs Academy
<b>Head of the RTC:</b>	Mr. Vladimir Mantusov
<b>RTC Website and E-mail Address:</b>	rta.customs.ru; academy@customs-academy.ru
<b>Number of Staff:</b>	
<b>Contact Person:</b>	Petropavloskiy Denis, Head of International Cooperation Department
<b>Contact Person E-Mail &amp; Phone Number:</b>	international@customs-academy.ru; +7-495-500-13-36

### **Brief History & Information about the Center:**

Russian Customs Academy is a leading specialized higher educational institution that provides training, retraining and advanced training of specialists in the field of Customs, economics, law, as well as a research centre that conducts innovative research on current problems in the field of foreign economic activity and Customs. One of the priorities of Russian Customs Academy is the development of international cooperation and the training of specialists for the Customs services of foreign countries.

Russian Customs Academy is the basic training centre for Customs officials of the CIS member states Customs. It is carried out on the basis of intergovernmental agreements and resolutions of the Government of the Russian Federation. In accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding between the WCO and the State Customs Committee of the Russian Federation dated November 25, 2002, the Regional Training Centre (RTC WCO) was created and successfully operates on the basis of the Academy.

The purpose of the centre is the development of international cooperation in the field of training, education, modernization, research in the field of Customs, as well as joining the WCO international conventions. WCO RTC regularly hold international events, including with the participation of leading WCO experts on topical Customs issues. More than 700 representatives of the Customs Services of Russia, CIS member states and other foreign countries have been trained in the framework of RTC.

Centre of Excellence for the training of specialists in the field of application of inspection systems (IS) for the WCO member states, which was assigned the corresponding international status, was created on the basis of the Academy. Representatives of foreign Customs administrations show a deep interest in the training technologies of the International Centre and note its high educational potential.

Academy representatives actively participate in meetings of the WCO technical expert groups on non-intrusive inspection equipment, which are held at the WCO headquarters (Brussels).

## II. ORGANIZED OR HOSTED EVENTS

No	Name of the Event	Date	Attendance	Purpose & Outcomes
1	The VII virtual session of the NII WCO Technical group of experts	September 08 – 09, 2020	Representative of St. Petersburg branch of the Academy (1 representative).	Participation in the VII virtual session of the NII WCO Technical group of experts on UFF-Format.
2	The 10th virtual session of the WCO training workshop	September 08 – 10, 2020	Representatives of Russian Customs Academy (2 people).	Participation in the 10th virtual session of the WCO training workshop «Knowledge Academy on Customs and Trade», aiming at in-depth study of the customs basic areas.
3	Training in the Academy on the E-Learning Programme	September 17 – October 2, 2020	Representatives of the State Customs Service of Kyrgyz Government (27 people)	Training in the Academy of representatives of the State Customs Service of Kyrgyz Government on the E-Learning Programme “Customs value of goods”

4	Training of Kyrgyz customs officers in St. Petersburg branch of the Academy	October 30 - November 17, 2020	Kyrgyz customs officers (19 people).	Training of Kyrgyz customs officers in St. Petersburg branch of the Academy on the E-Learning Programme «Methods and technologies to detect violation of the customs legislation based on passengers' behavior (Profiling)».
5	Training of the State Customs Service of Kyrgyz Government in Rostov branch of the Academy	November 09-18, 2020	Representatives of the State Customs Service of Kyrgyz Government (12 people).	Training of representatives of the State Customs Service of Kyrgyz Government in Rostov branch of the Academy on the E-Learning Programme «Organization and implementation of customs operations in the automobile checkpoints».
6	Training of Kyrgyz customs officers in Rostov branch of the Academy	November 09 – 24, 2020	Kyrgyz customs (14 people).	Training of Kyrgyz customs officers in Rostov branch of the Academy on the E-Learning Programme «Customs control of goods and vehicles of the international carriage».
7	10th virtual meeting of the regional structures of the European region of the World Customs Organization	December 02, 2020	Representatives of the Russian Customs Academy (2 people).	Discussion, devoted to results of the work of the WCO Regional Training Center on the basis of the Russian Customs Academy (for 2020 and plans for 2021)
8	Webinar series: Managing Human Resources (HR) through crisis and beyond	January 19-21, 2021	Representatives of the Russian Customs Academy (7 people).	The purpose of this series of webinars is to create a platform for sharing and collecting international best practices relating to the role of HR professionals in managing the COVID-19 crisis and potentially future similar crises.

9	16th International Meeting of WCO Regional Structures	February 18-19, 2021	Representatives of the Russian Customs Academy (2 people).	To highlight the issues of strengthening cooperation and interaction between the offices of the Vice-Chairman and the WCO regional structures, referred to as regional offices of capacity building, regional training centers, and regional offices for the collection and processing of strategic information.
10	IV session of the Moscow International Model of the world customs organization	March 24, 2021	Participants from various countries of the near and far abroad (50 people).	Development of new ideas and technologies, exchange of experience in order to improve cooperation and partnerships between customs administrations, the private sector, international organizations and the scientific community.

### III. PLANNED OR FORESEEN EVENTS

#	Name of the Event	Date	Attendance	Purpose & Outcomes
1	V session of the Moscow International Model of the world customs organization	II-III quarter of 2020	Representatives of the WCO Secretariat and WCO ROCB Europe region, Customs administrations of foreign countries and partner universities	Development of new ideas and technologies, exchange of experience in order to improve cooperation and partnerships between customs administrations, the private sector, international organizations and the scientific community.

#### **IV. DEVELOPMENTS**

One of the main activities of the WCO RTC on the basis of Russian Customs Academy is to organize the activities of the International Centre of Excellence for training specialists of inspection systems. Representatives of the Centre take an active part in meetings of the WCO technical experts Group on non-destructive Customs control technologies on the issues of developing a unified file format (UFF) for inspection systems. Participation in WCO technical expert Group provides:

- an opportunity to test at the international level the author's results of research and development work carried out by Russian Customs Academy on the creation of software for training inspection systems operators;
- the formation of methodological, algorithmic and information support for automatic image recognition technologies obtained using inspection systems together with the Federal Customs Service of Russia and Scantronic-systems, the developer of the Russian inspection systems;
- development of scientific and methodological support for the use of UFF in the EEU member States;
- creation creative conditions for proactive training of domestic inspection systems operators, as well as all students at the Academy at the level of WCO international standards.

Another achievement is the award of the Russian Customs Academy on April 10, 2019 of the certificate of recognition of compliance of the educational program "Customs" with the professional standards of the WCO PICARD.



**WORLD CUSTOMS ORGANIZATION**  
**EUROPE REGION REGIONAL TRAINING CENTER (RTC)**  
**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**(1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021)**

**I. GENERAL INFORMATION**

<b>Name of the RTC:</b>	Lt. Gen. Mihály Arnold Regional Training Centre of the World Customs Organization (henceforth: WCO RTC)
<b>Head of the RTC:</b>	International Relations Department of the National Tax and Customs Administration's Central Management (henceforth: NTCA CM) supervises the RTC
<b>RTC Website and E-mail Address:</b>	international@nav.gov.hu;
<b>Number of Staff:</b>	There is no permanent staff in the Budapest RTC
<b>Contact Person:</b>	LT. Col. Zsuzsa Kecskés
<b>Contact Person E-Mail &amp; Phone Number:</b>	kecskes.zsuzsa@nav.gov.hu; international@nav.gov.hu;



#### **Brief History & Information about the Center:**

The very first WCO RTC was established in 2001 in Budapest. (Please find attached the signed Memorandum of Understanding.) In the 10 years elapsed since the establishment the Hungarian Customs and Finance Guard (NTCA's predecessor in title) organized many successful international events thus contributing to the realization of the objectives of the WCO. The 10th anniversary was celebrated in February 2011 with the participation of Mr. Kunio Mikuriya, Secretary General of the WCO, and Mr. Walter Deffaa, Director General of the Directorate General Taxation and Customs Union. Since then, as well, our goal is to further enhance cooperation with the WCO.

#### **V. ADDITIONAL REMARKS**

The NTCA - which operates the RTC Budapest - like the rest of the world's Customs Administrations, has tackled the health and economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, taking measures to facilitate reduced trade in combating the epidemic (contributing to the smooth movement of protective equipment, medical devices and vaccines), and the taxpaying private individuals.

Despite the epidemic situation, the NTCA considers it important to participate in the work of the WCO, including in the area of capacity building. In this context, our delegates attended the 16th Global Meeting of the Regional Structures, the 12th meeting of the Capacity Building Committee, and the 20th meeting of the Integrity Sub-Committee.

Depending on the evolution of the epidemic, together with the WCO we plan to organize a Seminar on Performance Measurement for the customs administrations of the WCO Europe Region's Member States and a traditional international scientific tax and Customs conference jointly with the National University of Public Service in the future.





**WORLD CUSTOMS ORGANIZATION**  
**EUROPE REGION REGIONAL TRAINING CENTER (RTC)**  
**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**(1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021)**

**I. GENERAL INFORMATION**

<b>Name of the RTC:</b>	RTC Baku
<b>Head of the RTC:</b>	Dr. Gulu Novruzov, Major General of Customs Service
<b>RTC Website and E-mail Address:</b>	www.ascca.edu.az
<b>Number of Staff:</b>	-
<b>Contact Person:</b>	Mr. Elvin Mejidov, Coordinator for International Cooperation and Projects Ms. Sevinj Aliyeva, Senior Specialist of Lifelong Learning Centre
<b>Contact Person E-Mail &amp; Phone Number:</b>	elvin.mejidov@ascca.edu.az; +99470 675 80 50 sevin.aliyeva@ascca.edu.az; +99470 846 65 47



### **Brief History & Information about the Center:**

On September 30, 2002, the State Customs Committee (SCC) and the World Customs Organization (WCO) signed a Memorandum on the establishment of a Regional Training Center (RTC) in Baku. The opening ceremony in September 2003 was attended by the Secretary General of the WCO.

On October 27-30, 2003, an international seminar was held at the WCO RTC. The seminar was organized within the framework of the joint program of the European Union, the United Nations Development Program and the Government of Azerbaijan " South Caucasus regional drug control program" (SCAD).

On December 3-4, 2009, the 1st meeting of the WCO RTCs in the Europe Region was held at the WCO RTC in Baku. The event was attended by the responsible representatives of the customs services of Azerbaijan, Hungary, Macedonia, Kazakhstan, Russia, as well as the WCO.

Around 50 participants can attend an event at the RTC, at a given time. The RTC is provided with modern equipments, a conference hall, classrooms, library and other amenities of the Academy of the State Customs Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan (ASCCA).

The RTC uses the ASCCA's capacities and hosts different national, regional events. Workshops and lectures on such topics as the

"Customs Valuation", "Unified Administrative Documentation in Europe and its Implementation Methods", "Trade Facilitation and World Trade Organization", "Mobile Customs Brigades", "Single Window and Data Harmonization in Central Asia", "International Road Transport", "Harmonized System", have been held organized. Other seminars undertaken by the RTC have included but are not limited to such themes as "Trade environment in Azerbaijan: innovative projects applied in the customs system", "Management principles of the Azerbaijani model of release time measurement project", "Trade assistance based on release time measurement - reforms and applications".

In its capacity as a WCO RTC in Baku, the entity needs to arrange several seminars, workshops and trainings of national, regional and international importance, , on a variety of Customs-related topics. For these purposes, the ASCCA is planning to enquire the WCO for arranging relevant online capacity building events, in line with the predetermined national and regional training needs. Currently, the ASCCA develops, organizes and implements a series of pre- and in-service training and retraining sessions for the national Customs officers, on the basis of approved training programs drawn up in consistency with the conducted needs assessment results.

It should be noted that with a view to ensuring the higher education, continuous training, retraining and professional development of the national Customs officers, as well as for conducting research on Customs matters, the the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Mr. Ilham Aliyev issued a respective Decree in January 2012, on the Establishment of the ASCCA.

At present, based on its own Charter, and particularly, on the Decree (Nr. 1000/222) on "Some Measures on Capacity Building for the Customs Professionals of the State Customs Committee", signed (dated 16.08.2019) by the SCC Chairman, the ASCCA is tasked to ensure all necessary domestic and international measures (trainings, conferences, courses, seminars etc.) on the capacity building for the Customs officers of the SCC, its structural units and subordinate entities.

## II. ORGANIZED OR HOSTED EVENTS

#	Name of the Event	Date	Attendance	Purpose & Outcomes
1	Pre-service trainings for customs officers	25 January 2021 – 16 February 2021	30 customs officers of the State Customs Committee (SCC) and its structural units	<p>Pre-service trainings are aimed at providing customs officers with necessary knowledge and skills in order to perform their daily tasks. Training topics include but are not limited to rules of service conduct, Single Automated Management System (SAMS), customs clearance of goods and means of transport, risk management, project management, cybersecurity, law enforcement activities of customs authorities, goods nomenclature.</p> <p>The training was organized based on the Order of the State Customs Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan No. 1000/010.</p>

				The knowledge and professional skills acquired by the employees involved in the training were evaluated at the end of the training and were generally positive. Also, participants were assessed via written exam.
2	Pre-service trainings for customs officers	22 February 2021 – 18 March 2021	28 customs officers of the SCC and its structural units	<p>Pre-service trainings are aimed at providing customs officers with necessary knowledge and skills in order to perform their daily tasks. Training topics include but are not limited to rules of service conduct, Single Automated Management System (SAMS), customs clearance of goods and means of transport, risk management, project management, cybersecurity, law enforcement activities of customs authorities, goods nomenclature. Also, participants were assessed via written exam.</p> <p>The training was organized based on the Order of the State Customs Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan No. 1000/023.</p> <p>The knowledge and professional skills acquired by the employees involved in the training were evaluated at the end of the training and were generally positive. Also, participants were assessed via written exam.</p>
3	Professional development training for customs officers	30 March 2021 – 07 May 2021	60 customs officers of the SCC and its structural units	Professional development trainings were designed to increase the intellectual and practical knowledge of customs officers in their specific field of work. The trainees were customs officers who have immense experience in the field.

				<p>The training was organized based on the Order of the State Customs Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan No. 1000/041.</p> <p>The knowledge and professional skills acquired by the employees involved in the training were evaluated at the end of the training and were generally positive. Also, participants were assessed via written exam.</p>
4	<p>Preferential and simplified rules for the movement of goods not intended for production or commercial purposes across the customs border by natural persons</p>	<p>26-28 January 2021</p>	<p>15 customs officers working at customs border checkpoints</p>	<p>The training provided customs officers with knowledge and professional skills about the legal basis of transportation of medicines, as well as service and civilian weapons at customs border checkpoints by natural persons, which are not intended for production or commercial purposes, as well as the related rules, offenses, and measures to eliminate the causes of such offenses.</p> <p>The training was organized based on the Order of the State Customs Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan No. 1000/012.</p> <p>The knowledge and professional skills acquired by the employees involved in the training were evaluated at the end of the training and were generally positive.</p>
5	<p>First medical aid</p>	<p>25 February 2021</p>	<p>24 customs officers working at customs border checkpoints</p>	<p>The one-day training lasted a total of 6 hours. Practical tasks, simulations, as well as videos were used during the training. The training covered topics of scene assessment, safety, CPR or cardiopulmonary resuscitation, as well as myocardial infarction, stroke, arrhythmias, cardiac arrest, pacemaker use, and cardiovascular and pulmonary</p>

			<p>pharmacotherapy. In addition to theoretical knowledge, the training focused on teaching intensive practical skills.</p> <p>The training was organized based on the Order of the State Customs Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan No. 1000/024.</p> <p>At the end of the training, participants were assessed through practical simulations and written exams. Also, questionnaires were distributed to the participants in order to measure the quality of the training. In the survey, listeners were asked questions about trainers in various areas and had the opportunity to evaluate the training. The survey was conducted on the principle of anonymity. The results of the survey were analyzed, relevant instructions were given to eliminate the identified shortcomings and their implementation was monitored.</p>
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### III. PLANNED OR FORESEEN EVENTS

RTC note: as mentioned in the “Developments” section below, due to the COVID-19 pandemic situation, some of the planned trainings on 64 modules for the year 2020 have been canceled and they are planned to be held online. The following table only presents an example of the planned or foreseen events. A relevant full list is available at the RTC upon request.

#	Name of the Event	Date	Attendance	Purpose & Outcomes
1	Business English for customs officers	May-June 2021	15 customs officers working at customs border checkpoints	The one-month training is planned to increase the English communication skills of customs officers who are working at the customs border checkpoints and communicate with foreign citizens on a day-to-day basis.
2	Pre-service trainings for customs officers	17 May 2021 – 30 June 2021	60 customs officers of the SC and its structural units	Pre-service trainings are aimed at providing customs officers with necessary knowledge and skills in order to perform their daily tasks. Training topics include but are not limited to rules of service conduct, Single Automated Management System (SAMS), customs clearance of goods and means of transport, risk management, project management, cybersecurity, law enforcement activities of customs authorities, goods nomenclature.

3	Seminar on different types of drugs and methods of their concealment	May 2021	Officers from SCC and its structural units	The seminar is planned to increase knowledge of customs officers on different types of drugs and methods of their concealment.
4	Call Center Agent Training	July 2021	Officers from SCC Call Center	The training is aimed at increasing agents' performance with best practice customer call guidelines and vocal techniques. Also, live chat essentials, stress management and effective communication techniques will be taught.
5	Goods nomenclature system and examination of goods	September 2021	SCC and its structural units	The seminar is planned to increase knowledge of customs officers on goods nomenclature system and examination of goods.



#### **IV. DEVELOPMENTS**

The WCO RTC in Baku is planning to enhance its training activities, in cooperation with the SCC, WCO Capacity Building Directorate as well as the other relevant WCO structures such as the ROCB Europe.

In order to develop and implement the nationally and regionally important and demanded WCO (currently, virtual) trainings in Europe Region, the RTC will make official requests to the WCO, through the SCC.

Additionally, to enhance its online training capacities and implement the WCO "Guide for a Successful Transition to Live Virtual Training", the WCO RTC / ASCCA proposes a regional (Europe) capacity building project that can promote collaboration for strengthening the WCO regional structures' virtual training capacities by nurturing a mutual sharing of the expertise and practices from both the Europe Region entities, as well as from the other WCO regional structures (for instance, in the Asia-Pacific Region).

#### **V. ADDITIONAL REMARKS**

The WCO RTC / ASCCA would like to set up a systematic training cooperation with the ROCB in Baku, in order to promote synergies and mutual support, in order to make the best use of the inter-institutional resources and capacities for the benefit of the WCO Europe Region. However, this specific partnership with the ROCB in Baku is different from what was indicated above: WCO RTC / ASCCA would like to closely work with the WCO and its relevant intra-institutional structures, to organize and implement various capacity building events of regional significance and necessity.

RTCs as Centers of Excellence: WCO RTC in Baku / ASCCA expects that in cooperation with the WCO and other institutions, the process of establishing these centers will gain traction in the year 2021. So far, no activities have been initiated, in that direction.

Furthermore, the WCO RTC in Baku / ASCCA expects that its feedback to the "Best Practices Guidance for ROCBs and RTCs" (sent to ROCB, 16.02.2021) will also be considered by the WCO, as it also highlights important nuances on the WCO RTC in Baku and around the world.

Last but not least, the WCO Global Meetings should also involve specific sessions on how to make the WCO RTCs more functional, agile, modern and up-to-date with the demands and challenges of the Customs human resources development and training.



**WORLD CUSTOMS ORGANIZATION  
EUROPE REGION REGIONAL TRAINING CENTER (RTC)  
ANNUAL REPORT  
(1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021)**

**I. GENERAL INFORMATION**

<b>Name of the RTC:</b>	Regional Training Centre of the World Customs Organization (Nur-Sultan)
<b>Head of the RTC:</b>	Abilova Botagoz Nursapaevna
<b>RTC Website and E-mail Address:</b>	-
<b>Number of Staff:</b>	4
<b>Contact Person:</b>	Ospanov Yermek Maralbekuly
<b>Contact Person E-Mail &amp; Phone Number:</b>	er.ospanov@kgd.gov.kz, +7 747 577 35 99



### **Brief History & Information about the Center:**

On June 26, 2009, at the WCO headquarters (Brussels), a Memorandum between the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the World Customs Organization (WCO) on the establishment of the WCO Regional Training Center on the basis of the Training and Methodological Center in Astana was signed.

The official opening of the WCO Regional Training Center in Astana was held on December 14, 2009, attended by Prime Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan K. K. Massimov and newly elected WCO Secretary General Kunio Mikuriya.

In accordance with the above-mentioned memorandum, the TMC in Astana has gained international status and has become the fifth regional training center of the WCO European region.

The WCO RTC in Astana is considered as a link between the European and Central Asian regions, which seeks to use regional cooperation, maintain close ties with regional and foreign customs services.

Currently, in the European region, in addition to the RTC in Astana, there are 6 more WCO regional training centers (Budapest - Hungary; Baku - Azerbaijan; Moscow - Russian Federation, Skopje - Macedonia; Dnepropetrovsk – Ukraine; Bishkek – Kyrgyzstan).

## II. ORGANIZED OR HOSTED EVENTS

#	Name of the Event	Date	Attendance	Purpose & Outcomes
1	Sub-regional webinar for Central Asian countries on «Authorized economic operators»	The period from June 29 to July 2, 2020	Participants: 60 people (representatives of the State Revenue bodies of the Republic of Kazakhstan-49, representatives of the customs services of Kyrgyzstan-3 people, Uzbekistan-4 people, Tajikistan-4 people)	<p>The purpose of the webinar was to assist the state revenue authorities in implementing a comprehensive strategy for the implementation of the World Trade Organization Agreement on Trade Facilitation in terms of improving the AEO institute.</p> <p>The webinar allowed to demonstrate the world experience of the best AEO practices, to familiarize the participants of the webinar with the WCO standards, instructions and tools for AEO, to get acquainted with the experience of the customs administrations of Central Asia on compliance with the AEO program. The webinar helped the participants to improve their competence in the development of the AEO Institute.</p> <p>The WCO experts presented recommendations for the development of the AEO institute in the Republic of Kazakhstan. The recommendations were presented based on the results of a comparative analysis of the AEO criteria set out in</p>

				the SAFE Framework of Standards and the current legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan.
2	International webinar on "Time Release Study".	The period from 19 to 22 October 2020	Participants: 24 people, including representatives of the OSCE-1 person, GIZ-1 person, regional representatives of the SRC of the Republic of Kazakhstan- 22 people.	<p>The purpose of the webinar was to review the TRS, a strategic, internationally recognized tool for measuring the actual time required for the release and/or customs clearance of goods from the moment of arrival to the physical release of the cargo, in order to identify bottlenecks in the process of trade flow and take appropriate necessary measures to improve efficiency.</p> <p>During the webinar, an overview of the WCO TRS (concept, methodology, advantages and stages of the WCO TRS) was conducted, the international experience of the participants of the TRS was demonstrated on the example of Australia, Laos and Japan, and the Map of the business process of the TRS was also considered.</p> <p>The participants gained extensive experience and skills in researching the time of release of goods during the webinar.</p>

3	International webinar on "National Transit Coordinator".	Period from 24 to 26 November 2020	Participants: 62 people, including representatives of the state revenue bodies of the Republic of Kazakhstan- 61 people representative of USAID-1 person.	<p>The purpose of the webinar was to review customs transit - a customs procedure under which goods are transported from the customs authority of departure to the customs authority of destination without paying customs duties, taxes, special, anti-dumping, countervailing duties, subject to the conditions for placing goods under this customs procedure, as well as international experience in the field of customs transit.</p> <p>During the webinar, the participants were introduced to the WCO activities, the annexes of the Revised Kyoto Convention (GAC) in customs transit issues, the experience of Customs transit on the example of the EU, the TIR Convention as best practices in transit, the principles of freedom of transit and the implementation of Article 11 of the TFA in Kazakhstan. The participants asked their questions, to which the experts gave clear and detailed answers, and gained extensive experience and skills on national transit issues, which can be used in the further work of the participants. In the final session of the webinar, there was an open discussion on the implementation of Article 11.17 of the TFA, which was attended by lecturers and webinar participants.</p> <p>At the end of the webinar, the WCO experts provided the participants with the final version of</p>
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				the WCO Transit Guide for use in the further work of the participants.
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### III. PLANNED OR FORESEEN EVENTS

#	Name of the Event	Date	Attendance	Purpose & Outcomes
1	Webinar on «Post-customs control»: 1.1. Experience in implementing and applying the due diligence principle, including the integration of government information systems; 1.2. Theory and practice of applying the risk management system after the release of goods; 1.3. Joint tax and customs inspections.	April 26-30, 2021	60-70 people	To study the experience of implementing and applying the due diligence principle, to familiarize participants with the law enforcement practice of the risk management system after the release of goods, to familiarize participants with innovations in the field of joint tax and customs inspections.
2	International webinar on «International practice on the classification of certain types of goods and the application of non-preferential rules of origin of goods»	May-June 2021	25-30 people	To familiarize participants with the innovations related to the application of non-preferential rules of origin of goods
3	International webinar on Export control: 3.1. Export control of dual-use and military goods; 3.2. Identification of goods subject to	During 2021	25-30 people	To familiarize the participants with the innovations related to the export control of dual-use and military goods





	export control; 3.3. Risk management system.			
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## **ROCB EUROPE ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT 2020/2021**

This work is a product of the staff of the ROCB Europe, except where explicitly stated otherwise. It is intended to be submitted to the Member Administrations of the World Customs Organization Europe Region. The report is also available on the ROCB Europe web site member section. For additional information and updates, please visit [rocb-europe.org](http://rocb-europe.org).

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