



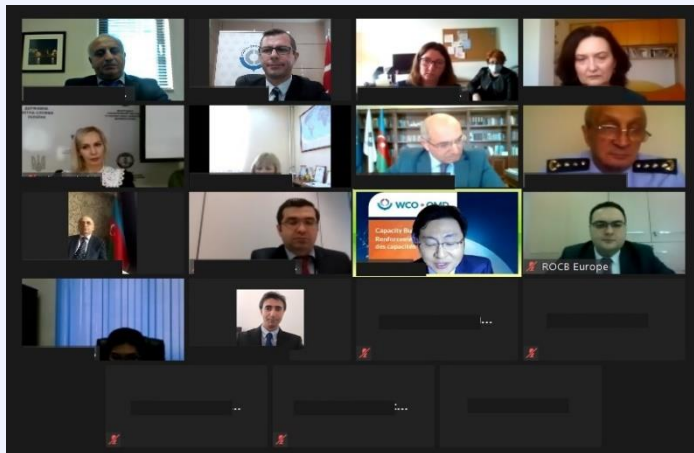
NEWSLETTER

2020/Q4

Regional Office for Capacity Building for the World Customs Organization

Virtual (10th) Meeting of the Regional Structures of the World Customs Organization Europe Region

Virtual (10th) 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 RTCs of Azerbaijan, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation, Ukraine, Kyrgyz Republic and North Macedonia.



The virtual meeting was intended to give an overview about the latest developments and activities concentrating on ROCB and RTCs in the WCO Europe Region, redefining the roles of the RTCs – ROCB – Vice-

Chair – the Secretariat, and evaluating the communication and cooperation among stakeholders. All the RTCs provided their annual progress, with a view to enhancing Customs professionalism thereby have an opportunity to learn from each other on training strategies and activities of the respective RTCs.

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WCO Europe Region Heads of Customs Conference Held

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, 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. 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.

Deputy Chairman of the State Customs Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Mr. Iqbal Babayev briefed about "Revising the Bergen Agreement" with reporting the results of the meeting of the Working Group held in Baku on January 23-24, 2020.

Report on the ROCB Europe strategies and activities as well as brand-new initiatives presented to the Heads, while joint presentation of WCO Regional Intelligence Liaison Offices was made, among other agenda items.

At the same time, the proposal to extend Azerbaijan's vice-chairmanship of the WCO Europe Region for another year was supported by the participants.

AEO MRA Webinar

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.



Academy of the State Customs Committee and Institute for Fiscal Studies of the Kingdom of Spain sign MoU



On November 26, a ceremony was held to sign a Memorandum of Understanding between the Academy of the State Customs Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan and Spain's Institute for Fiscal Studies (IEF).

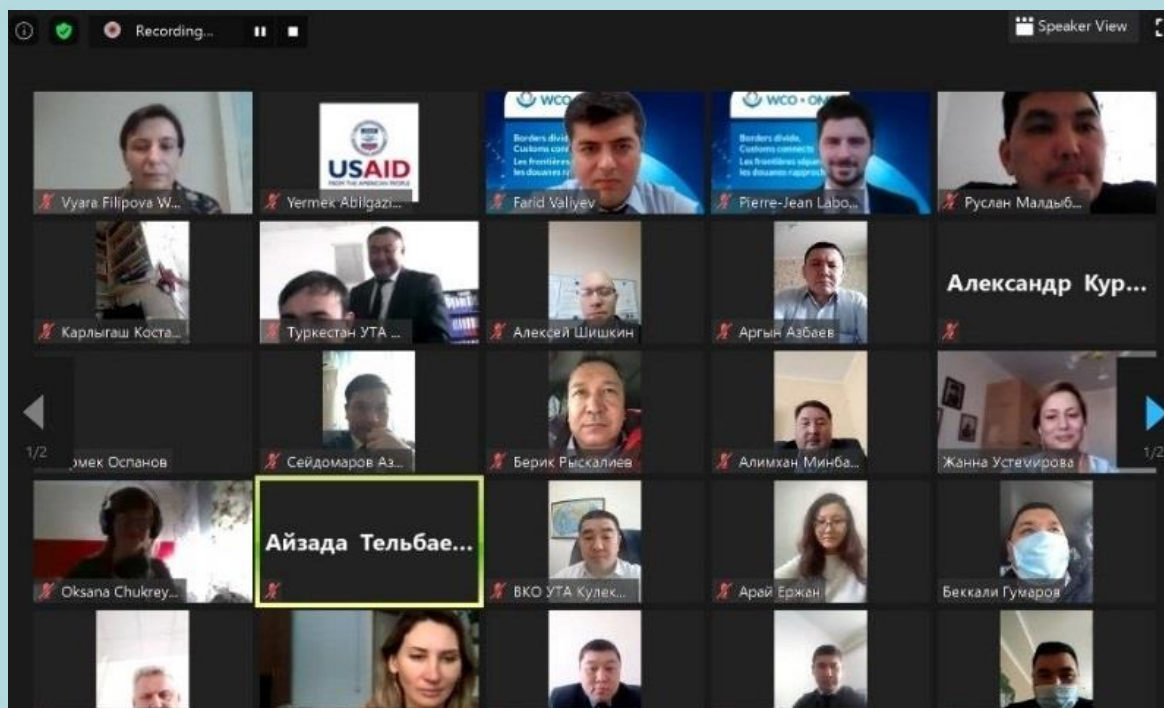
The online ceremony was attended by chairman of the State Customs Committee, customs service Colonel-General Safar Mehdiyev, director general of Spanish Customs Ms. Pilar Jurado, chief of the Academy of the State Customs Committee Gulu Novruzov, director of Spain's Institute for Fiscal Studies (IEF) Alain Cuenca and Chargé d'Affaires of the Embassy of the Kingdom of Spain in Azerbaijan Ignacio Sanchez Taboada.

The signed Memorandum of Understanding covers areas of mutual interest between the two countries, including trainings, courses, seminars and other events in customs and related fields, joint activities on e-learning and distance education, exchange of students, staff and information, scientific research and studies, mutual support in international cooperation, creation and joint use of online courses, development of bilateral and international projects and other issues.

National Transit Coordinator Webinar for Kazakhstan

In the period from 24 to 26 November 2020 the WCO Regional Training Centre in Nur-Sultan city of the Training Methodical Centre of the State Revenue Committee of the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Kazakhstan (RTC WCO in Nur-Sultan city) with the support of the international organization USAID held an international webinar on «National Transit Coordinator» with the participation of regional representatives of bodies of state revenues of the SRC MF RK.

The purpose of the webinar was to review customs transit - a customs procedure under which goods are transported (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 an overview of international experience in the field of customs transit.



EC Welcomes Agreement on Crucial VAT Relief for Vaccines and Testing Kits

On 7 December, the European Commission welcomed the adoption of important new measures which will enable Member States to relieve EU hospitals, medical practitioners and individuals of Value-Added Tax (VAT) when acquiring coronavirus vaccines and testing kits.



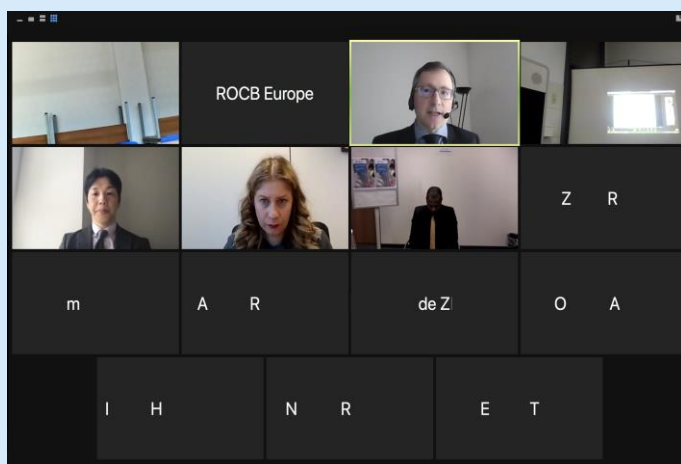
The new rules, adopted unanimously by all Member States and based on a Commission proposal of 28 October (as part of the Communication on additional COVID-19 response measures), are designed to give better and cheaper access to the tools needed to prevent, detect and treat coronavirus.



The measures will allow EU countries to put in place a temporary VAT exemption for vaccines and testing kits being sold to hospitals, doctors and individuals, as well as closely related services.

National Workshop on Combating Counterfeiting and Piracy for Bosnia and Herzegovina

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.

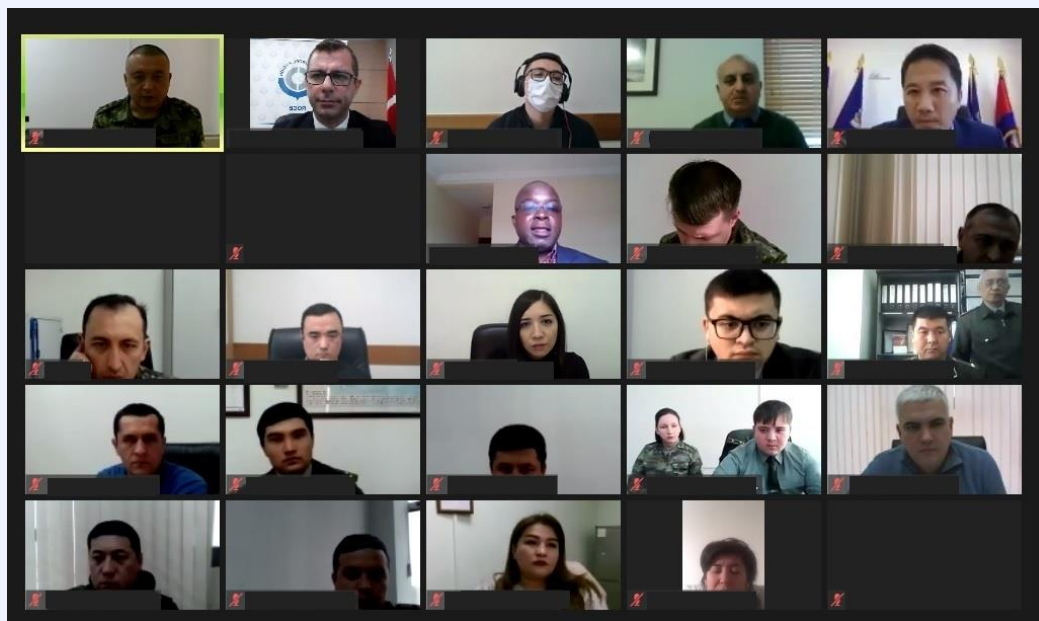
Meanwhile, overview on risk management within the context of IPR infringements, detection of inconsistencies and other related topics were elaborated.



The 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.



Uzbekistan Gears Up Toward Kyoto Convention with National Workshop



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.

Norwegian Customs Reports Seizure of Nearly 25000 Units of Illegal Medicals

Nearly 25,000 units, in the form of pills, tablets, ampoules and the like, were seized by the Customs during this year's international action against illegal medical devices and counterfeit drugs, Operation Pangea XIII. The Norwegian Medicines Agency's analyzes confirm that consumers are being deceived.



Norway was one of more than 90 countries that participated in the international campaign Pangea XIII before the summer. The campaign is coordinated by Interpol and brings together relevant authorities in the fight against the purchase and sale of illegal and counterfeit medicines and medical equipment. A total of 222 consignments of goods were reported by the Customs during the action week.

The shipments contained a total of 24,896 units of medicines and medical equipment, including cancer medicines, heart medicines, hormones, potencies as well as anti-anxiety and sedatives.



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

This newsletter is a product of the ROCB Europe. It is intended for the Member Administrations of the World Customs Organization Europe Region as well as the related audience.

The newsletter is also available on the ROCB Europe web site. For additional information and recent updates, please visit rocb-europe.org.

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