



10 FACTS

about the EU's Customs Union

DID YOU KNOW?

The EU's Customs Union is unique in the world. It consists of 28 countries using a common set of rules, called the Union Customs Code, to run one single system for importing and exporting goods.

The new code that comes into force on 1 May will simplify procedures for traders. Among other benefits, it will allow goods to clear customs more simply and quickly, getting them to consumers faster and more cheaply.



454.2 tonnes of drugs were seized by EU customs authorities in 2014 – an increase of 10% on the year before.



EU customs authorities are in the front line against the international trafficking of firearms. In 2015, they seized **7,000 weapons** and around **3.2 million items of ammunition**.



4.3 million businesses are registered by customs authorities to trade goods in and out of the EU, with **98% of customs declarations** being made electronically.



The EU's Customs Union controls the flow of non-declared cash which can be used to **finance terrorism and other crimes**. Almost **11,000** sums of non-declared cash were seized in 2014, with a total value of **€415 million**.



Trade in **valuable art treasures** out of the EU was responsible for 118 infringements of EU rules on the trafficking and smuggling of cultural goods



Sea transport is the most used form of transport for goods in and out of the EU. It accounted for a huge **54% of EU trade** in 2014, followed by **air transport at 19%**.



More than **119 000 officials** of the customs authorities across the EU work to provide service **24 hours** a day and **365 days** a year



Over **35 million articles of counterfeit goods** were detained in 2014, with an estimated value of **€617 million**. **China** was the primary originating country (**80%**), followed by Hong Kong, the United Arab Emirates, Turkey and India.



Peru was the originating country of a large amount of counterfeit **fruit** which infringed on Community Plant Variety Rights, while **Panama** was the top source for counterfeit alcoholic beverages. **Thailand** was in the lead for fake ink cartridges and **Malaysia** topped the list for counterfeit mobile phone accessories.



In 2015, the value of **global trade amounted to almost €24 trillion**. The EU accounted for **15%** of that, making it one of the main players on the world's trade arena.

WHAT DO OUR CUSTOMS OFFICIALS DO?

Customs are there to:

- protect us against international trafficking and smuggling of illicit goods, e.g. arms and drugs
- protect consumers against goods which pose a risk to their safety or their health
- protect the financial interests of the EU and its Member States.