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.

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

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%.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.