

9190/99

LIMITE

ENFOCUSTOM 31

NOTE

from :	Incoming Finnish Presidency
to :	Customs Cooperation Working Group
No. prev. doc.:	7207/99 CORDROGUE 20; OJEC L 268, 19.10.1996, p. 2
Subject :	Questionnaire on activities by customs liaison officers of Member States in states applying for EU membership and in states having a common border with an EU Member State

1. The customs administrations of the Member States should further intensify their respective liaison officer activities, in particular in the countries applying for membership of the European Union (EU) and in countries having a common border with some of the EU Member States. Liaison officer activities are strategically important in the fight against organised crime. The EU Member States have long been sending liaison officers to those third countries in which narcotic drugs are grown or produced and to drug transit countries. The intelligence information obtained through liaison officers is generally considered to be swift, targeted and efficient.

Both 7520/96 Enfopol 94 (= OJEC L 268, 19.10.1996, p. 2) which deals with the general action plan for the Member States as regards liaison officers, and paragraph 8.4 of 7207/99 CORDROGUE 20 include several recommendations on stepping up liaison officer activities.

2. The Nordic countries have gained good experience from the so called PTN liaison officer system maintained by the Nordic Countries (PTN = Police and Customs in Nordic Countries), which was decided upon as early as the 1970s. The PTN liaison officers handle customs and police matters for all the Nordic countries on a common basis in their respective host countries. At present 33 persons are stationed as PTN liaison officers in various parts of the world. The latest PTN liaison officer will be taking up his duties in Murmansk, Russia, in the summer of 1999.

The Nordic countries derive considerable benefit from PTN activities. By sending a joint liaison officer, the Nordic Countries save a great deal in expenditure. Furthermore, the liaison officer network is much more dense than it would be if each Nordic country were to send its own liaison officer, since the total number of liaison officers available to a single country would be lower. The PTN liaison officer scheme has also created a smoothly operating network for acquiring and exchanging information between the Nordic countries.

3. Questionnaire

The purpose of the questionnaire is to obtain an overall picture of the activities of Member States' customs liaison officers and arrangements relating thereto. **The questionnaire proper is restricted to those customs liaison officers who are stationed in either a state applying for EU membership or a state having a joint border with an EU state (Annex I).**

In addition to the questionnaire proper, the Member States are requested to submit a list of all the countries in which their posted customs liaison officers are stationed and to indicate their total number (Annex II).

On the basis of the replies to the questionnaire, it may be possible in the future to establish how the Customs Cooperation Working Group would step up the activities of EU Member States' customs liaison officers.

You are kindly asked to return the completed form by 7 October 1999 to the following address:

**National Board of Customs
Enforcement and Audit Unit
Intelligence Division
POB 512
FIN-00101 Helsinki, Finland
Fax: + 358-9-614 2211**

The Finnish delegation would be grateful if Member States were to reply to the questionnaire in either English or French.

Questionnaire on customs liaison officer activities by Member States in states applying for EU membership and in states having a common border with an EU state

Name of Member State:

Host Country of Customs Liaison Officer:

N.B. A separate reply form should be completed for each host country.

(A) *Does the Member State maintain arrangements as described in point 2 (PTN) with other Member States?*

If so:

- (1) Is this arrangement based on law, agreement or some other arrangement?
- (2) With which states have joint liaison officer agreements been concluded?
- (3) How are the expenses shared?
- (4) Other comments?

If not: Pass directly to items B to E.

(B) *What powers do the customs liaison officers have to act in the host country?*

- (1) What is the liaison officer's position/status in the host country?
- (2) Does he/she participate in operational activities in the host country?

yes no

If so: In what kind of activity?

- (3) Does he/she have direct access to the records of the law enforcement authority network of the host country?

yes

no

- (4) Does the liaison officer serve all law enforcement authorities in his/her own country?

yes

no

If so: Which law enforcement authorities?

- (5) Does the liaison officer participate in any training provided for the authorities of the host country?

yes

no

(C) *Regarding customs liaison officer activities in general:*

- (1) What is the principal task of the liaison officer (short description)?
(2) What is the usual length of assignment for liaison officers abroad?
(3) To which unit/sub-unit of the national customs do the liaison officers belong at home?
(4) What is the level of seniority of the liaison officer and what customs training has he/she received?

(D) *Do you think it necessary that the activities of EU Member States' customs liaison officers should be stepped up?*

yes

no

Comments:

List of all Member States' customs liaison officers stationed abroad

Name of the Member State:

N.B.: Indicate the host countries and the total number of customs liaison officers involved.

(1) To which countries has the Member State sent a liaison officer?

(2) What is the total number of liaison officers?