

COVID-19 is expected to provoke in the coming weeks a dramatic increase in the movement of relief goods across borders, such as supplies, medicines and medical equipment. The World Customs Organisation (WCO), however, in a recent [post](#) published on its website, urges Customs to play their role in minimising the overall impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on economies and societies, by facilitating the international movement not only of relief goods, but of all goods in general.

In particular, Customs are encouraged to establish a coordinated and proactive approach with all concerned agencies to ensure the integrity and continued facilitation of the global supply chain.

A [section of the WCO web-site](#) provides a description of all instruments, tools and initiatives that have been adopted by the different Customs administrations worldwide to address the various COVID-19-related challenges. The objective is to identify best practices that can help to prevent and better contain the spread of the virus. The European Commission (Directorate General Taxation and Customs Union), also issued [guidelines](#) on the application of customs provisions relating to the customs decision-making process, customs procedures and customs formalities following the coronavirus outbreak.

On [30 January 2020](#) the World Health Organization (WHO) declared that the outbreak of novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) constituted a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC). On [11 March 2020](#) the WHO characterized the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) as a pandemic.