

There are no translations available.

Following the spread of the COVID-19, customs administrations worldwide are adopting a series of measures to minimise the overall impact of the outbreak on economies and societies, by facilitating the international movement of goods, in particular of relief goods. The virus emergency is affecting not only imports, but also exports. Agriculture-based countries of Sub-Saharan Africa for instance, are facing a significant drop in the export of agriculture products (ex. horticulture and floriculture items), due to a massive decrease of their demand and prices on foreign

markets

. Hereunder is a summary of the most common measures adopted by Customs:

- Waiving of customs duties and VAT on the import of medical equipment, Individual Protective Equipment (I.P.E.) and medicines;
- Suspension of excise duties on alcohol used for producing hand sanitisers, disinfectant sprays and liquids (i. e., ethanol, ethyl, Isopropyl alcohol);
- Deferment of payment of customs duties/VAT on imports;
- Revision of risk profiles for food items, medical devices and tools used in the prevention and fight against the spread of coronavirus (ex. protective face masks), so that they can benefit from the green lane (immediate release, without any physical and documentary control), and therefore immediate clearance;
- Free distribution to sanitisers' producers of stocks of ethanol seized by Customs that would otherwise receive another destination (ex destruction);
- Identification of inter-State "safe trade" corridors for freight vehicles transporting food items (particularly fresh food and essential food products, live animals and feed, agricultural production inputs and substances of human origin), as well as medical equipment and medicines, where streamlined and faster border clearance procedures are implemented at border crossings;
- Development of coordinated procedures between Customs and health authorities at the borders with neighbouring countries in order to avoid overlaps and waiting times;
- Easing of existing restrictions to the export-import processes of key and sensitive products;
- Creation of Customs Operational Centers for Crisis Management competent to supervise, monitor and guide the customs processes.

