

## PRESS RELEASE

### European Logistics Platform (ELP) Event on EU Customs Reform

**Brussels, 26 March 2025** – The European Logistics Platform (ELP) convened a high-level debate on the proposed EU Customs Reform, hosted by MEP Dirk Gotink, Rapporteur on the reform, to explore the challenges and opportunities for business in navigating the most significant customs overhaul since 1968. Over 60 policymakers and logistics industry leaders gathered in Brussels to exchange views on the way forward. Discussions focused on the practical implications of the reform, the evolving role of customs representatives, and the need for digital simplification and shared responsibility across the supply chain.

In his opening remarks, **MEP Gotink** underlined the scale of the reform: *“We can talk about it, but we now also need to do something about it. We are the ones who can create instruments to address these changes.”* Acknowledging the reform as the most significant since 1968, he noted that the European Parliament is ready for trilogues and encouraged the Council to move quickly, emphasising the need to avoid future “Evergreen moments” in international trade.

**Arno Bijl**, Head Customs (Benelux) of Siemens Energy presented a business perspective, outlining the challenges for non-AEO companies under the proposed Trust & Check (T&C) system. Mr Bijl explained why many smaller entities within Siemens Energy do not pursue AEO certification, citing administrative burdens and limited benefits. He emphasised the need for a model that accommodates direct representation and allows businesses to continue relying on AEO-certified customs brokers.

**Olivier Thouard**, Global Logistics Leader of CEVA Logistics Olivier Thouard warned against placing excessive responsibilities on customs representatives under the T&C model. “Customs representatives act on behalf of clients, but they are not the importer. Shifting the legal burden will deter many from applying for T&C status and compromise trade flow efficiency,” he stated. He also highlighted risks around harmonisation of criminal sanctions across Member States, and the possibility of “cherry picking” clearance locations due to regulatory divergences.

**Eva Cartwright**, Policy Manager from CLECAT stressed the need to maintain flexibility and recognise the diversity of trade flows and actors: *“The reform must reflect how modern supply chains function. Customs representatives, freight forwarders and logistics companies must remain able to support the trading routines of companies of all sizes in an efficient and compliant manner - without bearing disproportionate risk.”*

**Mechteld Fletcher**, Deputy Director General of Dutch Customs acknowledged the risks associated with the mandatory use of indirect representation and the concentration of facilitations under T&C. She confirmed that these issues are being actively discussed within the Council, noting the complexity of addressing a system that touches more than 1.2 million importers, but only a few hundred declarants. *“There is room for direct representation,”* she said, adding that the Netherlands is working with traders on solutions that could fit into future legislation.

In his closing reflections, **Gerassimos Thomas**, Director-General of DG TAXUD, underlined the Commission’s commitment to an inclusive reform. He welcomed the input from the ELP community and reiterated the

goal of simplifying procedures and enabling a digital-by-default approach. “Ultimately, customs declarations should be submitted via a simple app,” he noted. *The customs reform must support both compliance and competitiveness. This requires ongoing dialogue and adaptability.*”

For more information about the European Logistics Platform and future events, visit [www.european-logistics-platform.eu](http://www.european-logistics-platform.eu).

The European Logistics Platform consists of more than twenty industry stakeholders representing a wide variety of actors involved in logistics and supply chains across Europe. Current members include:

