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DECISION No 1/2026 OF THE EU–TÜRKIYE CUSTOMS COOPERATION COMMITTEE

of 16 July 2026

concerning the mutual recognition of the authorised economic operator programme of the European Union and the authorised economic operator programme of the Republic of Türkiye [2026/2303]

THE CUSTOMS COOPERATION COMMITTEE,

HAVING REGARD TO the Agreement establishing an Association between the European Community and Turkey signed at Ankara on 12 September 1963 ([1]) and in particular Articles 2(1) and 7 thereof, and to Decision No 1/95 of the EC-Turkey Association Council of 22 December 1995 on implementing the final phase of the Customs Union ([2]), and in particular Article 28(1), point (c) and Article 28(3) thereof,

Whereas:

(1) Article 2(1) of the Agreement establishing an Association between the European Community and Turkey signed at Ankara on 12 September 1963 (the 'Association Agreement') establishes that 'the aim of this Agreement is to promote the continuous and balanced strengthening of trade and economic relations between the Parties'.

(2) Article 7 of the Association Agreement stipulates that 'the Contracting Parties shall take all appropriate measures, whether general or particular, to ensure the fulfilment of the obligations arising from this Agreement'.

(3) Article 28(1), point (c), of Decision No 1/95 of the EC-Turkey Association Council of 22 December 1995 (the 'Customs Union Decision') establishes that the Republic of Türkiye ('Türkiye') is to adopt provisions based on the Community Customs Code and its implementing provisions in the field of, among others, introduction of goods into the territory of the Customs Union.

(4) Article 28(3) of the Customs Union Decision establishes that the Customs Cooperation Committee is to lay down the appropriate measures to implement such provisions.

(5) Security and safety, and the facilitation of the international trade supply chain, can be significantly enhanced through mutual recognition of the respective trade partnership programmes, namely of the authorised economic operator (AEO) programme of the Union and the national AEO programme of Türkiye.

(6) The two AEO programmes are based on internationally recognised security standards advocated by the SAFE Framework of Standards to Secure and Facilitate Global Trade adopted by the World Customs Organization in June 2005 ('SAFE Framework').

(7) Mutual recognition allows the Contracting Parties to provide facilitative benefits to economic operators who have invested in supply-chain security and have been authorised under their respective programmes.

(8) Site visits and a joint evaluation of the AEO programmes in the Union and in Türkiye have revealed that their qualification standards for security and safety purposes are compatible and lead to equivalent results.

(9) Decision 2/69 of the EC-Turkey Association Council of 15 December 1969 establishing the Customs Cooperation Committee ([3]) and in particular Article 2 thereof, stipulates that the Customs Cooperation Committee is to be responsible for ensuring administrative cooperation between the Contracting Parties with a view to the correct and uniform application of the customs provisions of the Association Agreement and for carrying out any other tasks in the customs field which the Association Committee may entrust to it,

([1]) OJ EC L 361, 31.12.1977, p. 29, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/agree_internation/1964/732/oj.
([2]) OJ EC L 35, 13.2.1996, p. 1, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/1995/1(5)/oj.
([3]) Decision not published.

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

Definitions

For the purposes of this Decision, the European Union (the 'Union') and the Republic of Türkiye ('Türkiye') are each individually referred to as a 'Party' or collectively as 'Parties', and the following definitions apply:

(1) 'Customs Authority' means the customs authority of a Member State of the Union or the customs authority of Türkiye, hereinafter referred to collectively as 'Customs Authorities';

(2) 'Economic operator' means a person involved in the international movement of goods;

(3) 'Personal data' means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person ('data subject'); an identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person;

(4) 'Programme' means:

(a) in the Union: the authorised economic operator (AEO) status for security and safety granted under Article 38(2), point (b), of Regulation (EU) No 952/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council ([4]);

(b) in Türkiye: the AEO Programme granted under Article 5/A of Customs Code (No.4458) ([5]) and Regulation on Facilitation of Customs Clearance Procedures ([6]);

(5) 'Programme Members' means economic operators holding AEO status in the Union and economic operators holding membership status in Türkiye as referred to in point (4) when referred to collectively.

Article 2

Mutual recognition and implementation of this Decision

1. The Programmes of the Union and of Türkiye are hereby mutually recognised to be compatible and the corresponding AEO statuses granted are mutually accepted.

2. The Parties shall implement this Decision through their respective Customs Authorities.

Article 3

Compatibility

1. The Customs Authorities shall cooperate to maintain the compatibility between their Programmes, in particular with respect to the following matters:

(a) the application process for granting the AEO status and membership;

(b) the assessment of applications;

(c) the granting of the AEO status and membership;

(d) the managing, monitoring, suspension, re-assessment, and revocation of the AEO status and membership;

(e) promoting cooperation between Customs Authorities and environmental authorities to promote AEO status and membership compliance with international environmental standards.

2. The Parties shall ensure that their trade partnership programmes operate within the relevant standards of the SAFE Framework.

([4]) Regulation (EU) No 952/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 October 2013 laying down the Union Customs Code (OJ EU L 269, 10.10.2013, p. 1, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2013/952/oj).
([5]) OJ of the Republic of Türkiye 23866, 04.11.1999 pp. 9-69 (recast OJ 27281, 07.07.2009).
([6]) OJ of the Republic of Türkiye 28524, 10.01.2013. pp. 11-59.

Article 4

Benefits

1. Each Customs Authority shall provide benefits to Programme Members of the other Customs Authority that are comparable to the benefits that it provides to its Programme Members.

2. The benefits referred to in paragraph 1 include:

(a) fewer security and safety-related controls: each Customs Authority takes the status of a Programme Member granted by the other Customs Authority favourably into account in its risk assessment in order to reduce inspections or controls and in other security and safety-related measures;

(b) the giving of priority to the inspection of consignments covered by exit or entry summary declarations and transit declarations that include same data elements required for entry or exit summary declarations, lodged by a Programme Member if the Customs Authority decides to proceed with an inspection;

(c) the recognition of business partners status during the application process: each Customs Authority takes the status of a Programme Member granted by the other Customs Authority into account with a view to treating the Programme Member as a secure and safe partner when assessing the business partners' requirements for applicants under its own Programme;

(d) business continuity mechanism: both Customs Authorities endeavour to establish a business continuity mechanism to respond to disruptions in trade flows due to increases in security alert levels, border closures or natural disasters, hazardous emergencies or other major incidents, by which priority cargos related to Programme Members should be facilitated and expedited to the extent possible by the Customs Authorities.

3. Following the review process referred to in Article 7(5), each Customs Authority may provide, in cooperation with other government authorities in its territory, further facilitation benefits, which may include streamlining processes and increasing the predictability of movement at the border, to the extent possible, such as by establishing fast track lanes at land borders.

4. Each Customs Authority:

(a) may suspend the benefits provided under this Decision to a Programme Member of the other Customs Authority only for duly justified reasons equivalent to those for which it would suspend a Programme Member from its Programme, such as when the Programme Member is found to be involved in a safety and security related incident;

(b) shall, within a reasonable time, communicate the suspension operated under point (a) and the reasons for the suspension to the other Customs Authority via the competent services of the European Commission.

5. Each Customs Authority shall, when it deems appropriate, report irregularities via the competent services of the European Commission involving Programme Members of the other Customs Authority's Programme to that Customs Authority for the purpose of ensuring immediate analysis of the appropriateness of the benefits and status granted by the other Customs Authority.

6. For greater certainty, this Decision does not limit a Party or a Customs Authority from requesting information pursuant to the mutual administrative assistance referred to in Annex 7 to the Customs Union Decision or other applicable instrument between the Parties, or between the Customs Authorities.

Article 5

Exchange of information and communication

1. The Parties shall enhance their communication in order to implement this Decision effectively by:

(a) providing each other with the details on their Programme Members in accordance with paragraph 3;

(b) providing each other with updates on the operability and development of their Programmes in a timely manner;

(c) exchanging information regarding supply-chain security policy and trends; and

(d) ensuring effective communication through the competent services of the European Commission and the Customs Authority of Türkiye to enhance risk-management practices with respect to supply-chain security.

2. The exchange of information and communication in the framework of this Decision shall occur between the competent services of the European Commission and the Customs Authority of Türkiye.

3. Upon receiving consent from its Programme Member, each Party shall send to the other Party the following details about that Programme Member:

(a) name;

(b) address;

(c) membership status, namely authorised, suspended, revoked or cancelled;

(d) validation or authorisation date when available;

(e) unique identification number (for example: EORI or AEO numbers); and

(f) other details that may be mutually determined between the Parties in writing, subject, when applicable, to any necessary safeguards.

4. The details referred to in paragraph 3, point (c) do not include the reasons for suspension, revocation or cancellation.

5. The Parties shall exchange the information referred to in paragraph 3 in a systematic manner by electronic means.

6. Each Customs Authority may share its national contact points in order to handle any issues relating to the clearance of goods of Programme Members.

Article 6

Data Protection

1. Each Customs Authority shall use personal data under this Decision only if and to the extent necessary for the implementation of this Decision, including monitoring and reporting.

2. Each Customs Authority shall obtain the prior written approval from the communicating Customs Authority that sent the information (the 'communicating Customs Authority') to use that information for other purposes. Such use shall be subject to any restrictions laid down by that authority.

3. Notwithstanding paragraph 2, the Customs Authority that has received the information under this Decision ('the receiving Customs Authority') may use that information in any judicial or administrative proceedings instituted for failure to comply with its customs legislation, including in its records of evidence, reports and testimonies. The receiving Customs Authority shall notify the communicating Customs Authority prior to such use.

4. Each Customs Authority shall apply the following minimum safeguards to the processing of personal data received from the other Customs Authority:

(a) personal data must be processed lawfully, fairly, and in a transparent manner in relation to the concerned Programme Members;

(b) personal data must be collected and processed for the specified, explicit and legitimate purpose of implementing this Decision and not be further processed by the communicating Customs Authority or by the receiving Customs Authority in a way incompatible with that purpose;

(c) personal data must be accurate and kept up to date;

(d) personal data must be kept in a form which permits the identification of Programme Members for no longer than it is necessary for the purpose for which the data were collected or for which they are further processed;

(e) information received under this Decision must be processed in a manner that ensures appropriate security of the personal data, taking into account the specific risks of processing, including protection against unauthorised or unlawful processing and against accidental loss, destruction or damage, using appropriate technical or organisational measures; the receiving Customs Authority shall take appropriate measures to address any data breach, and shall notify the communicating Customs Authority of such breach without undue delay;

(f) both the communicating Customs Authority and the receiving Customs Authority shall take every reasonable step to ensure without delay the rectification or erasure, as appropriate, of personal data where the processing does not comply with this Article, in particular because those data are not adequate, relevant, accurate, or they are excessive in relation to the purpose of processing. This includes the notification of any rectification or erasure to the other Customs Authority;

(g) upon request, the receiving Customs Authority shall inform the communicating Customs Authority of the use of the communicated data and about the implementation of the safeguards with respect to these data;

(h) the communicating and the receiving Customs Authorities are under an obligation to make a written record of the communication and receipt of personal data;

(i) Programme Members shall, subject to necessary and proportionate limitations established by law to protect important grounds of public interest, have the right to receive information on the processing of their personal data, to access such data and to have inaccurate or unlawfully processed data rectified or erased;

(j) Programme Members shall have the right, without prejudice to any other administrative or non-judicial remedy, to an effective judicial remedy for the violation of the aforementioned safeguards.

5. Each Customs Authority shall promptly notify the other Customs Authority if it determines that information it has sent to the other Customs Authority is inaccurate, incomplete or unreliable, or if its receipt or further use contravenes this Decision.

6. Each Customs Authority shall provide Programme Members access, as it relates to their personal data, to administrative redress or judicial review regardless of their nationality or country of residence.

7. The Customs Authorities shall publish information to inform Programme Members of their options of seeking administrative redress or judicial review.

8. Compliance with this Article by each Customs Authority is subject to supervision by their competent independent authority, which ensures oversight and that complaints relating to non-compliance in the treatment of information are received, investigated, responded to and appropriately redressed. Those authorities are:

(a) in the Union: the European Data Protection Supervisor or its successor, and the Member States' data protection authorities;

(b) in Türkiye: the Personal Data Protection Authority (KVKK) of the Republic of Türkiye.

Article 7

Implementation, consultation, monitoring and review

1. The Parties shall resolve any issues related to the implementation of this Decision through consultations under the auspices of the Customs Cooperation Committee.

2. Both Parties shall cooperate closely regarding the implementation of this Decision and shall monitor this regularly by means of periodical on-site joint monitoring visits to identify possible strengths and weaknesses in the Programmes of both Parties.

3. In particular, both Parties shall closely cooperate regarding the implementation of Article 3 and will inform each other of any updates or changes to their Programmes, they will assess whether these changes might impact the compatibility of the Programmes of both Parties including through on-site joint monitoring visits and, where necessary, will take measures to ensure continued compatibility of the Programmes.

4. Both Parties shall closely cooperate to ensure the use of this Decision by the Programme Members.

5. The Customs Cooperation Committee shall review the implementation of this Decision regularly. This review process may include, in particular:

(a) exchanges of views on details exchanged and benefits referred to in Article 4 granted to Programme Members, including any future details or benefits;

(b) exchanges of views on details of the management of the AEO status, e.g. monitoring, re-assessment, suspension and revocation;

(c) exchanges of views on security provisions such as protocols to be followed during and after a serious security incident (business resumption) or when conditions merit suspension of mutual recognition;

(d) examination of the suspension of the benefits referred to in Article 4;

(e) review of the implementation of Article 6; and

(f) any changes to the Programmes of the Parties.

Article 8

Final provisions

1. The Customs Cooperation Committee may amend this Decision. The amendment shall enter into force in accordance with the procedure described in Article 9.

2. A Party may suspend cooperation under this Decision at any time by providing the other Party with 30 days' written notice. Notwithstanding the suspension of the cooperation under this Decision, the Customs Authorities of both Parties shall continue to comply with Article 6 in order to ensure the protection of information.

3. Either Party may terminate this Decision at any time by notifying the other Party through diplomatic channels. This Decision shall be terminated 30 days after the written notification is received by the other Party. Notwithstanding the termination of this Decision, the Customs Authorities shall continue to comply with Article 6 in order to ensure the protection of information.

4. In case of termination, either of the Parties is entitled to require that the information which it has communicated, together with any backups thereof, be returned to the communicating Party or deleted in its entirety. The Party responsible for the deletion shall certify the deletion of the information to the other Party. Until the information is deleted or returned, the receiving Party shall continue to ensure compliance with Article 6. In case local laws applicable to the receiving Party prohibit the return or deletion of the communicated information, the receiving Party warrants that it will continue to ensure compliance with Article 6 and will process the information only to the extent and for as long as required under that local law.

Article 9

Entry into force

This Decision shall enter into force on the first day of the month following the date on which the Parties have notified each other of the completion of their own procedures necessary for its entry into force.

Done at Brussels, 16 July 2026.

For the Customs Cooperation Committee
The President
M. PETSCHKE