



CURRENT ASPECTS OF BULGARIAN CUSTOMS POLICY

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ABSTRACT

Customs policy is a set of activities and mechanisms designed to regulate foreign trade and protect the national economy from competition for cheaper goods and services from abroad. The unification of international customs legislation and the adoption of unified technologies of customs control is a global trend, established in favor of the existing customs administrations and the modern framework of international trade.

Key words: customs activity, customs union, customs legislation, international trade

INTRODUCTION

The intensive and multifaceted development of international trade requires the introduction of optimal strategies in customs practice, which will simplify and speed up the customs process. The unification of international customs legislation and the adoption of unified technologies of customs control is a global trend, established in favor of the existing customs administrations and the modern framework of international trade. The foreign trade regime of each country is an important lever for regulating its foreign economic activity. It takes into account the basic principles such as export promotion, increasing the competitiveness of national goods, stabilizing the internal market.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The aim of the study is to research the state

of customs policy in Bulgaria and the prospects for its development.

The methods that are applied are analysis and synthesis, systematic and structural approach, etc.

To achieve this goal the following tasks are set:

- To analyze the state of the Bulgarian customs and foreign trade policy.
- To present and analyze Bulgaria's opportunities for development of foreign trade and strategy.
- To draw conclusions and recommendations on the researched topic.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Customs policy is the set of actions that the state applies to regulate the foreign trade strategy, through a set of activities and mechanisms designed to regulate foreign trade and protect the national economy from competition for cheaper goods and services from abroad.

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The elements of the customs policy are: the existing duties, taxes and fees; the established organization for implementation of the customs policy; customs policy management, which includes: planning, analysis, reporting and control.

The issue of customs policy occupies an important place in economic relations between countries. It is especially relevant today, when the processes of globalization of the world economy are advancing at a rapid pace. The development of this process requires the use of various forms of mediation between the trader and the customs authority. They appear as an objective need of both parties in this relationship. The dynamics of foreign trade flows implies that their customs clearance is carried out in a regulated time and in different geographical points, which naturally requires knowledge of at least two customs laws, because modern aspects of international economic relations have long exceeded bilateral relations.

Customs policy occupies a strategic place in the foreign economic policy of states and supranational associations and serves as one of the main regulators of their relations with third countries. The processes of intensive development and deepening of the comprehensive international relations of Bulgaria, the accelerated growth of the foreign trade exchange, the multilateral development of the passenger communications, the various transport-forwarding functions, etc., on the one hand, as the limited composition of the customs control units on the other hand as an important task for the customs administration is the need for continuous research and analysis of the technology of the customs enforcement process in the border and internal operational areas and the possibilities for implementation of rational concepts for optimization of the control power.

After Bulgaria's accession to the European Union, the Bulgarian administration took responsibility for the protection and control of the Bulgarian part of the EU's external borders. Customs union is a concept of economics that expresses a degree of economic integration. The customs union builds on the concept of a free trade area by adding a common customs policy. The reasons for building a customs union are economic and political, and the effects of the creation are positive or negative. Of the positive economic effects, the most important are: achieving higher efficiency in production (economies of scale) and creating new trade flows. Certain effects are: redirection of part of international trade affected by the creation of the union, as well as redistribution of economic goods between consumers, producers and the state. The diversion of trade flows can also be seen as a consequence of indirect discrimination against countries outside the customs union, as any economic integration is automatically a disintegration of non-members.

The actual activity of the customs is based on regulated procedures related to the importation of goods and their export from the territories of the EU Member States, and the objectives of these procedures are to ensure budget revenues (fiscal) and safety and security for citizens. (8, 10)

The customs administration has been given certain powers to implement community policies - reducing time spent at borders, protecting intellectual property rights, and effectively fighting economic and organized crime. With its accession to the EU, our country is committed to implementing appropriate training systems in order to build an environment for a professional and motivated customs administration.

Another major and important achievement in the country's customs reform was the harmonization of customs declaration and procedures for the application of customs directions and regimes, as well as customs reliefs with those of the European Union. The European standards for work and service were adopted by the Bulgarian customs services. (8-11)

These are the use of electronic information systems to implement the Multiannual Strategic Plan for Electronic Customs adopted by the European Union. It includes legislative changes and simplification, interoperability and computerization of the customs process. This increases the ability of our customs to exchange information with other EU member states. This information is extremely important for both Bulgaria and the European Union, given our new responsibilities as an external border of the Community. The system is important because through it Bulgaria will be able to apply the Common Customs Tariff of the European Union and will more easily join the Common European Economic Area. European standards are mainly applied in the control of our borders.

Customs control checks imported and exported goods to determine whether imports or exports are legal and to determine the quality, quantity and value of imported and exported goods. This system can only be stable if the ties within the union itself are stable. Effective controls are needed at all checkpoints, as goods entering through any Member State can move freely anywhere within the Union.

The main role of EU customs is to facilitate trade, stimulate EU production, and protect EU citizens. Customs authorities implement EU policies in almost every area related to international trade. They are at the forefront

of the fight against fraud, terrorism and organized crime.

The mission of the customs administration is determined by the development of society, by its increasing demands to create an optimal economic environment conditioned by liberal and effective trade policy. At the same time, society requires the customs administration to protect its achievements by effectively confronting violations and crimes against fiscal interests, cultural heritage and intellectual products, and to protect the lives and health of citizens.

Its responsibilities are: to facilitate the functioning of the market, to ensure the proper implementation of European Union policies, to ensure control of external borders, to protect society from dangerous goods, to correctly apply the Common Customs Tariff, the Common System of Preferences, anti-dumping and other measures, which are fundamental to the functioning of the common European economy.

The main function of the customs administration is the collection of customs duties and other state receivables from its competence. The Bulgarian Customs Administration assists in the protection of cultural heritage and the protection of intellectual property rights. The administration collects and analyzes statistics on international trade, participates in the development and implementation of international treaties relating to customs activities and carries out international customs relations.

During the period 2019-2021, the public, social and economic life in Bulgaria and the world significantly changed and rearranged in the conditions of Covid-19. In these conditions, the communications and trends in

the information flow between businesses, institutions and citizens in the field of online services, online business, online training and others have changed significantly. All economic structures, including the Customs Agency, have rethought their processes in the conditions of continuing active trade activity. (8, 9, 14)

In 2020, in connection with the implementation of customs legislation, common trade and other EU policies, the Customs Agency actively participates through virtual meetings in the activities of committees and customs expert groups of the European Commission, presenting Bulgaria's positions and policies. to protect its interests. Wider international cooperation is crucial to protect the interests of EU citizens and businesses around the world. In the context of the pandemic, employees performed their duties in a highly dynamic environment and made efforts to quickly orient and adapt their work to the changes taking place. In 2020, instructions and other internal administrative acts related to customs regimes and procedures, the customs status of goods, guarantees for potential and existing customs debt, etc. were prepared.

Meetings and trainings were held with customs officials and businesses in connection with the implementation of EU customs legislation in the context of Covid-19, as well as legislation in the field of common EU policies. The mutual exchange of knowledge and experience with customs administrations outside the EU helps to increase the quality of their services. In accordance with the European and national strategies for the development of e-customs in 2020, the Customs Agency continued its efforts to develop its information systems by construction of new modules and systems.

Until recently, the role of customs was mainly in collecting customs duties and

indirect taxes on imports, but enlargement, the globalization of trade and supply chains, the development of e-commerce, the threat of terrorist attacks and the internationalization of organized crime have changed the environment in which they operate. customs. (11, 14)

Customs authorities perform a wide range of supervisory and control tasks in respect of goods imported into the customs territory of the EU and the country. Together with law enforcement, administrations and agencies responsible for border and internal security, they cooperate in the fight against fraud, terrorism and organized crime. In addition, they are responsible for managing and ensuring compliance with an increasing number of preferential trade agreements between the EU and other countries. They collect duties and VAT on imported goods as well as excise duties. They check for compliance of products with standards and rules in the field of food, health and environmental protection, intellectual property and many other aspects.

Customs seeks to balance control with facilitating legitimate trade, as international trade is vital to the EU's success. In order to strike the right balance between these requirements, customs procedures and control methods need to be modernized and cooperation between the various services needs to be strengthened.

The use of electronic systems significantly contributes to more accurate and efficient communication between business and the customs administration of the country and the EU, which has contributed to the smooth implementation of the same procedures throughout the Union. As e-government with a focus on citizens and business and its accelerated development is one of the main priorities in recent years and is one of the aspects of the efficiency of administrative

services and better information of business. (8-14)

In 2020, revenues from excises, VAT on imports, customs duties and fines collected by the Customs Agency amounted to BGN 9,160.4 million, which is BGN 91.8 million (1.0%) higher than planned for the period. Despite the Covid-19 crisis and the deteriorating economic situation internationally, revenues cannot reach the levels of 2019, as VAT on imports is overfulfilled by 2%, customs duties by 12%, and the implementation of excise duties is at 99.9%. In 2020, the cash receipts from excise duty amount to BGN 5,444.5 million. Compared to the previous year, revenues from excise duties on tobacco products increased by 1.5%, as the quantities of excised cigarettes increased by 0.9%, the average rates of excise duty on cigarettes - by 0.2%, and the quantities of smoking tobacco - by 11.5% while maintaining of the excise rate. Revenues from VAT on imports of goods in 2020 amount to BGN 3,497.2 million. They are affected by the crisis caused by Covid-19, which includes a fall in the prices of some of the main raw materials on international markets, a depreciation of the dollar and the limited volume of imported goods. There is a positive trend of increase by 1.6% of the average statistical value per kilogram of imported goods. In the conditions of a pandemic, the customs administration continued to exercise its control functions, together with the bodies of the Ministry of Interior and the Prosecutor's Office, with an emphasis on "designer fuels", alcohol production and the fight against tobacco products. Revenues collected by the Customs Agency in the period up to September 2021 are the highest reported revenues from 2016 to date compared to comparable periods in the six years. (10, 11)

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In 2021, the Agency's employees will carry out enhanced physical control of risk categories of goods declared for free circulation, with a focus on undeclared goods and those infringing intellectual property rights.

Measures and fight against the illegal trafficking of protected species, which in recent years has become an increasingly serious problem and is gaining momentum that puts at risk more and more representatives of wild flora and fauna. Globally, profits from this natural resource-damaging activity are increasing. The illicit trade in protected specimens is the most profitable after drug and arms trafficking.

In order to carry out their various responsibilities effectively, customs maintains an ongoing dialogue with stakeholders. They continuously consult with the business sector and all major players in international supply chains in order to develop new policies and legislative initiatives. In recent years, the customs authorities of the Member States have been facing challenges in fulfilling their various roles. Despite the entry into force of the Union Customs Code, there are reports of problems such as underestimation of goods to avoid customs duties and VAT, smuggling of illegal or dangerous goods, imbalances between Member States in customs control and diversion of goods to the weakest entry and exit points. existing points to the customs territory of the EU. In addition, the global economy is facing structural changes with digitalisation and new business models such as e-commerce. Customs authorities must also be able to respond better to changing or exceptional circumstances, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

CONCLUSION

The development of international integration processes and the intensification of foreign trade relations between the various countries are increasingly elevating the role of customs control. Until recently, as a management function, whose main task is to preserve the monopoly of foreign trade, today it has become a specialized control with multi-spectrum action. The modern development of customs control goes beyond a formal action and becomes an important economic regulator of foreign trade flows.

In recent years, the European Commission has stepped up dialogue with the business community. This helps to achieve effective simplification and harmonization of international trade procedures, in particular to simplify the practices and formalities related to the collection, presentation, disclosure and processing of data required for import and export procedures.

Trade organizations and various business structures contribute to the development of new policies and legislative initiatives through their participation in seminars and working groups at various levels.

Numerous publications and economic studies have been devoted to the problems of customs policy. The huge interest in this topic, not only from professionals but also from society as a whole, is due to the direct impact that customs policy has on the daily life of every citizen. The living standards of the population, employment, national production and prosperity of the nation largely depend on it. Therefore, customs policy and the efficiency of the customs system should not be taken lightly.

The European Union is one of the most export-oriented economies in the world and intends to maintain this trend. The modernization of the customs union, which began in 2003, in order to move to a paperless

environment is quite advanced, and some EU customs administrations regularly rank first among the best in the world in this respect. Over 98% of customs declarations submitted in the EU are electronic. Efforts need to continue in order to meet future challenges. Customs is facing an increasing globalization of trade, business models and logistics, as well as crime and terrorism.

The trend in the field of customs policy continues to support cooperation between customs authorities, financing of IT systems, in order to support a pan-European electronic customs environment with the exchange of information in real time.

The EU internal market, which created an area without internal borders. before the free movement of goods, requires more than ever to ensure the uniform application of the rules at the external borders for goods that can move freely after entering the customs territory. Customs must balance this control by facilitating international trade and global supply chains; In recent decades, exports to the rest of the world have become an increasingly important source of business opportunities for European companies and job creation for Europeans, while 80% of EU imports provide raw materials for EU production activities.

How successful the government's actions in this direction depends mainly on the good political will of the government. Naturally, external factors also influence, such as the desire to strengthen the integration process (such as Bulgaria's aspiration to the EU), the desire to improve trade conditions and to increase budget revenues. It should not be forgotten, however, that whatever the reasons for intervention and change in customs policy, they must stem from a single motive - improving the welfare of the nation, protecting national priorities and security of the state.

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