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EU customs: Council and Parliament agree on landmark reform

On 26 March 2026 the Council and the Parliament agreed to overhaul the EU customs framework, giving the Union a more modern toolbox to deal with trends such as huge increases in trade volumes, especially in e-commerce, a fast-growing number of EU standards that must be checked at the border and challenging geopolitical realities.

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The reform establishes innovative new instruments to facilitate global trade, collect customs duties more efficiently and to tighten controls on non-compliant, dangerous or unsafe goods. Overall, the new system will allow for more robust controls without excessive burden for authorities and traders.

The co-legislators have agreed on legislation to:

- create a single, state-of-the-art EU customs data hub
- introduce enhanced customs simplifications for the most trusted traders
- implement a new EU-wide handling fee for items contained in small parcels
- establish a new decentralized agency for customs – the EU customs authority – which will oversee the EU customs data hub.

Next steps

The Council and the European Parliament will continue work to finalize the technical elements of the package before final adoption by the co-legislators. The new customs legislation will come into full application 12 months following publication in the EU's official journal.

More information to be found in the Council's **press release of 26 March 2026**.

Keywords

Customs simplifications, trade agreement