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EDITORIAL

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Committed to its monthly “rendez-vous” with the export world and the international business community in Greece, Operational Steering Committee for Trade Facilitation presents the 3rd issue of its newsletter with all the latest developments of the implementation of National Strategy and the Roadmap 2012-2015. The objective of the present is to offer an integrated information tool for all export businesses in the country as well as to offer a supporting tool to those businesses starting now to target foreign markets.

In this issue we present:

- **The new Digital Customs Environment with the full production mode of the new Integrated Customs Information System (ICISnet), which will start its operation at 3/12/2013.**
- **The innovative classification of all legislation concerning foreign trade of Greece, per product category and country of destination.**
- **The very important reforms of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food (MRDF) for accelerating exports in agricultural products, such as the new institution of Approved Trader of fresh fruits and vegetables, the development of a risk analysis system and the upcoming linkage of MRDF information system with new ICIS net.**

The map of the Greek foreign trade is changing. The legal framework is being modernized and simplified while the processes are accelerating in terms of the new digital era-for all Greek products, from agricultural sector to high technology.

OSC

The Newsletter of OSC is also available at the following websites:

- Ministry of Development & Competitiveness (www.mindev.gov.gr/?p=6807)
- Ministry of Rural Development and Food (www.minaagric.gr)
- Customs Administration – ICISNet (<http://portal.gsis.gr/portal/page/portal/ICISnet>)
- HEPO-Hellenic Foreign Trade Board (www.hepo.gr/)
- PEA-Panhellenic Exporters Association (www.pse.gr/)
- SEVE-Greek International Business Association (www.seve.gr/)
- Exporter’s Association of Crete (<http://crete-exporters.com/>)
- SEV Hellenic Federation of Enterprises (www.sev.org.gr/online/index.aspx)
- EXPORTGATE.GR (www.exportgate.gr)



REMARKABLE RESULTS OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGY

ICISNET: THE NEW DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT IN CUSTOMS

Customs environment is changing. The new digital era for Customs is starting with the full production mode of a new Integrated Customs Information System (ICISnet) beginning Tuesday 3rd of December 2013. The new system is a very important tool for facilitating domestic and foreign trade, while securing the effectiveness of customs control for citizen protection from dangerous and illegal goods.

Beginning on the 3/12/13 the submission of import declaration, the declaration of excise tax and other customs documents, will be digital and done by the applicant premises thus reducing administrative and business costs, reducing the actual time of a customs transaction, thus contributing to total international commerce flow.

The direct beneficiaries from the new possibilities offered by the new ICISnet are the **customs employees** as internal users, **all economic operators** dealing with customs (importers, transport companies, customs brokers, agents etc), all internal authorized users as well as any interested party visitor user who will be able to retrieve information from the ICISnet information portal with free access.

For more information you can visit the following page:

<https://portal.gsis.gr/portal/page/portal/ICISnet/selectedfullstory?sid=1>

EXPORT LEGISLATION AND REQUIREMENTS GUIDE: PER PRODUCT CATEGORY AND COUNTRY OF DESTINATION

The Legal Working Group has just completed the systematic recording, indexing and classification of national and community regulatory framework governing exports from Greece. In this useful guide which aims at existing extrovert businesses as well as to all others who are now planning to engage in foreign trade, you can find main legislation (Laws , Presidential Decrees , Regulations, etc.) as well as normative regulations (Ministerial decisions interpretative circulars , instructions , etc.) concerning exports .

The basic objective of the guide authors, which is the result of cooperation between members of the Ministry of Finance (Mr. Dimitris Tsangalakis) and the Ministry of Development and Competiveness (Mrs Ourania Papageorgiou) is the provision of legal information in a concise and simple way in a text that will be updated periodically in order to reflect all legal changes in the future.



ACCELERATING EXPORTS IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS: APPROVED TRADER, NEW CONTROL SYSTEM & LINKAGE TO ICISNET

In 3 axis are moving the important reforms that are realized recently by the Ministry of Rural Development and Food, aiming –in the context of the National Strategy for Trade Facilitation- to facilitate and accelerate the procedures which are related to the trade of agricultural products.

In particular, the Minister of Rural Development and Food Mr. Athanasios Tsaftaris in response to the request of fresh fruit and vegetables exporters, proceeded to the issuance of a J.M.D. no. 2533/63997/29-05-2013 (GG 1380/B'/06-06-2013) concerning the establishment of the Approved Trader for exports-shipments of fresh fruits and vegetables towards the markets of EU countries and third countries as well.

The direct benefits for an Approved Trader, result from the actual reduction of administrative and financial burden as well as the time demanded for the completion of exporting/shipment of his products, given the fact that he is discharged from the continuous issuance of conformity certificates for the products, through the right of using the unique Registry Number of Approved Trader and the relevant EU logo which will be on each package of the exporter's products. The indirect benefits come from the markets themselves taking into account the increase of value in "goodwill", solvency and the brand name of an approved trader.

In case that a company would like to become an "Approved Trader", a series of particular specifications should be met regarding installations, equipment, production lines, sanity and safety and quality control of the company's products.

The first registration at the Registry of Approved Traders has already taken place on 18th of November 2013 (D.D. no 5346/140884/18-11-2013) for the company "G.N.Fragistas SA" which is established at Bolati Nafplio (Peloponnese), regarding the production lines of citrus fruits and watermelons.

➤ **The new system of control based on risk analysis**

Apart from the Approved Trader, Minister Athanasios Tsaftaris signed the development and implementation of a new system of controls for fresh fruits and vegetables; a system based on risk analysis (MD no. 2069/54616/02-05-2013 GG 1132/B'/10-05-2013), so as to achieve the harmonization of the country's system to the requirements of EC legislation and the best practices of other EU member states.

In order to implement the new control system immediately and effectively, there were issued 2 relevant circulars signed by the Secretary General Mr. Moschos Korasidis [no.4453/116157/27-9-2013 (ΑΔΑ: ΒΛ9ΑΒ-Η32) and no. 4451/116103/27-9-2013 (ΑΔΑ: ΒΛ9ΑΒ-ΜΨ8)]. Furthermore, the competent Directorate of the Ministry has organized 4 training seminars for the competent inspectors of the municipalities (Athens, Thessaloniki, Nafplio, Heraklion).

It should be noted that in the context of the national strategy for trade facilitation a working group analyzed thoroughly (Business Project Analysis Team-BPA) –with the participation of officials from



the Ministry of Rural Development and Food- two important agricultural products (kiwi-feta cheese) regarding the difficulties during the export procedures. At the next phase of the working group's project plan is scheduled the analysis of two more significant agricultural products from the food sector: olive oil and peaches.

➤ Linkage to the ICISnet

One of the basic conclusions of the analysis for the improvement of pre-customs procedures in agricultural products was the need to interconnect the informative system of Ministry of Rural Development and Foods with the informative system ICISNET of Customs Offices.

The Ministry of Rural Development and Food responded immediately to this need and proceeded with all the necessary actions, having as a goal to complete the interconnection among the 2 informative systems for the exports of fresh fruits and vegetables, within a fully digitalized environment, sending the required documents to the customs offices directly from a «SINGLE WINDOW» (one-stop-shop platform).

The establishment of the Approved Trader, the implementation of the new control system and the fully digitalized environment will facilitate the export procedures of Greek enterprises, reducing the barriers for entrepreneurship, adding value at the same time to the reinforcement of the extroversion of agricultural products' trade. In addition, those reforms will contribute effectively to (a) the reward of those enterprises that function based on trade of qualitative, safe and competitive products in the international markets, (b) the rationalization of financing and human resources distribution both in companies and public sector's competent authorities and finally (d) the constant improvement of controls system via the establishment of indexes of effectiveness and efficiency.

For more information: www.minagric.gr



HIGHLIGHTS

«The fresh fruits and vegetables are not only an important pillar of our agri-food policy, but are also products that give the signal of extroversion that should be obtained for all the agricultural production of the country. Our strategic choice is to highlight and promote Greek fresh fruits and vegetables, which are directly related to a quality place of production. The Greek fresh vegetables conquer dynamic biggest shares in international markets and are established as worthy ambassadors of Greek food culture. In this effort, made by the companies I state that I will be an ally and supporter, because the road to the exit from the crisis passes through the quality and openness along with dynamic collective efforts».

Minister of Rural Development and Food, Mr. Athanasios Tsaftaris

According to World Bank's Report «Doing Business 2014» which was publicized on 29.10.2013 the international rating for the Greek economy connected to the trade facilitation has scaled up 10 places since last year (52nd place from 62nd last year and 79th the year before).

Towards the improvement of trade facilitation, has become an added value the establishment of e-submission for the documents required from customs offices, an action which is included in the implementation of the 25 actions of simplification of exports procedures.

Press Release, Ministry of Development & Competitiveness

29.10.2013

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Με τη συγχρηματοδότηση της Ελλάδας και της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης- Ευρωπαϊκό Ταμείο Περιφερειακής Ανάπτυξης

Note: The newsletter's content does not commit the members of the Operational Steering Committee