

## PRESS RELEASE

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**Committed to help Member States' customs administrations “act as one” in the future, more than 70 customs officers forming EUCAB's expert team met in Bonn to fine-tune objectives and working methods**

Bonn, March 20, 2025

*EUCAB is more than just 70 experts:* the whole should be more than the sum of its parts, said Martin REUTER, Head of EUCAB, to the participants gathered for the kick-off meeting in Bonn, on March 19-20.03 2025.

The expert team, steered by Member States' customs administrations and supported by the European Commission's Directorate General for Taxation and Customs Union (DG TAXUD), is structured into four operational units (air & post, maritime, land border and mobile groups), backed up by two transversal units in charge of coordination and support. However, this core team will seek to multiply EUCAB's results, by developing networks of national experts from the Member State's customs administrations focused on cross-challenges such as risk management, training, equipment or innovation.

Indeed, the issues that customs administrations will have to tackle require a broad approach. In her speech as Chair of the EUCAB Steering Committee, Malgorzata KROK, Deputy Head of the Polish National Revenue Administration, stressed the importance of coordination, operational cooperation and deep trust among national customs administrations, to face drug trafficking, ever-growing volumes of e-commerce, and other fiscal and non-fiscal challenges. She insisted that *security is not a product, but a process, and that customs play a major role in this process*.

More than ever, customs are united in their purpose, and EUCAB is the answer to that call. Several heads of Member States' customs administrations highlighted this message in recorded welcoming speeches. Customs Directors General from the host country but also from Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Romania, Slovenia, and the

Netherlands, encouraged the experts, highlighting that customs administrations put trust into EUCAB's cooperation framework and are closely following its achievements.

Expectations for EUCAB's results are high because this is a unique comprehensive cooperation framework, bringing together all Member States' customs administrations to improve the flow of goods and enforce controls at all kinds of EU borders. Many participants stressed that EUCAB is in a position to build a stronger, smarter Customs Union of the future. This is especially true since EUCAB is building on achievements from previous cooperation initiatives such as CELBET. As stated by Mathias PETSCHKE, Director of Customs (DG TAXUD), *EUCAB represents the missing link between CELBET\* and the future European Union Customs Authority (EUCA)*. Its broadened scope is *a necessary step to ensure that customs continue to act as the first line of defence in terms of security*.

After two days of dialogue and exchange of experience, experts converged towards a shared objective: unity is strength and, by working together as a team, EUCAB is committed to amplifying the visibility of EU customs and their role in protecting EU borders and securing EU's markets and citizens. Tasks, priorities and working methods were devised to ensure that the group really makes a difference. In this course for more smart and efficient customs, EUCAB's experts are already acting to exchange knowledge on good practices through networks building, collect cooperation needs expressed by different Members States, organize study visits, improve control measures collectively, and boost innovation to address customs challenges in an uncertain environment.

As Martin REUTER sums up, *EUCAB's expert team is there to bring the idea of acting as one to life*.

\* Customs Eastern and South-Eastern Land Border Expert Team, an initiative of eleven EU Member States, under the Customs 2020 programme, to strengthen customs operational co-operation at the EU Eastern and South-Eastern border.