



Press release

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Meeting of ASEM Customs Directors-General in Berlin

Berlin Declaration adopted

The 12th meeting of ASEM Customs Directors-General took place in Berlin on 16–17 October 2017. The meeting brought together the Customs Directors-General from the European and Asian member states of ASEM along with representatives from the European Commission. The World Customs Organization also attended as an observer. Today the delegations adopted the Berlin Declaration, a joint statement that sets out future targets and actions for customs cooperation among ASEM members.

The meeting of ASEM Customs Directors-General was held in the historic Erzberger Hall at the Federal Ministry of Finance and chaired by Uwe Schröder, Director of Germany's Central Customs Authority. Parliamentary State Secretary Michael Meister opened the meeting. Representatives from 45 European and Asian member states engaged in joint discussions with the European Commission and the World Customs Organization, focusing in particular on specific measures to facilitate trade, safeguard supply chains, combat piracy and counterfeiting, and promote environmental and consumer protection.

Commenting on the meeting, Mr Schröder stated: *“The meetings of ASEM Customs Directors-General are of great importance. Customs authorities in both Asia and Europe face the same challenges in connection with processes of globalisation: How can we facilitate and expedite the movement of goods while simultaneously ensuring safety and security for businesses and private citizens? We held in-depth discussions on these issues, and the Berlin Declaration now gives us plenty of homework to do in the coming two years.”*

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The talks resulted in the Berlin Declaration, which outlines the targets and priorities of European-Asian cooperation and, in particular, sets out a specific plan of action for 2018 and 2019. Key actions for the coming two years will focus on a customs trade facilitation action plan, paperless cargo processes, cross-border e-commerce trade lanes, border enforcement in connection with international postal items.

The opening speeches of the Parliamentary State Secretary Dr. Meister and of the Director General of Germany's Central Customs Authority will be available in video format on www.zoll.de.

Further information:

The Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) is an international forum established in 1996 to foster dialogue and cooperation. Today ASEM encompasses 53 members. ASEM focuses on a variety of policy fields. In the area of customs, participating countries work on the alignment, streamlining and harmonisation of customs procedures. They also coordinate strategies to combat illegal activity, including terrorist activity.

ASEM Customs Directors-General gather for joint talks every two years, and the meetings rotate between Asia and Europe. The previous meeting took place in Goa, India, in autumn 2015. The Goa Declaration specified a number of European-Asian projects to be carried out in 2016 and 2017 as part of the ASEM action plan on customs matters. In 2015, Germany offered to host the 12th meeting of ASEM Countries in October 2017.