



Kazakhstan amends customs code and improves conditions for EU exporters

After concerns were pressed by the European Commission and Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson, Kazakhstan has this week repealed a customs law introduced in August which imposed unreasonable obligations on EU companies exporting into the country.

European Commission services were alerted during summer 2007 that Kazakhstan's new requirement that importers produce original export declarations was acting as a significant barrier to trade for European companies. Such practice is incompatible with international commercial standards and modern customs practice. The Commission pressed the customs authorities of Kazakhstan to suspend this new regulation until a workable solution could be found. The issue was also raised by Commissioner for trade Peter Mandelson in September during a meeting in Brussels with the Minister of Energy of Kazakhstan and was discussed at the EU-Kazakhstan trade and investment subcommittee meeting held in Astana in October.

Commission officials in Astana worked closely with the Parliament of Kazakhstan's Customs Committee as it produced new legislation. An amended version of the customs law reverting to the situation existing before August 2007 was presented to the Kazakh Parliament at the end of September. The amendments to Kazakhstan's customs code were signed on 27 November 2007 by the President of Republic of Kazakhstan and have entered into force.

They will make it easier for EU exporters to access Kazakhstan's market, where EU companies exported € 5 billion worth of goods in 2006. The authorities of Kazakhstan have committed themselves to review their customs code to bring it into line with international practice. Kazakhstan is the EU's largest trade partner in the Central Asian region with bilateral trade totalling €18.9 billion last year. The EU has a trade deficit of €8.9 billion with Kazakhstan and increased opportunities for EU exporters in Kazakhstan is an EU priority in the region.

DG TRADE E1 – Bilateral trade relations – Europe (non EU) and Central Asia, in coordination with EC Delegation in Kazakhstan. For further information: TRADE-G1-MARKET-ACCESS@ec.europa.eu

Produced by

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