

UCC Reform

Granting the EUCA powers to use financial resources to achieve its missions

Amendment to Articles 208 and 222 of the reformed UCC



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The undersigned are 19 universities and institutions with recognised expertise in the research and teaching of customs law, located in 11 Member States of the European Union. Collectively, we account for most of the Union's capabilities in customs learning. Each year, we train thousands of customs officials and practitioners operating in dense customs ecosystems near the airports, ports and key trade corridors of the European Union. We work in close collaboration with the EU Member States and the European Commission, as well as with each other.

We are hubs of legal excellence where customs law is subject to in-depth and innovative research, issues are being discussed and solutions proposed and designed in collaboration with the authorities and the private sector. A lot has been done since the entry into force of the UCC in 2016 to advance customs learning and compliance and to understand the mechanics of effective enforcement. But a lot more is needed to bring about a true pan-European customs culture, and an effective EU external border that is both permeable to compliant goods and a hard stop for illegal and non-compliant trade.

On 17 May 2023, the European Commission presented its Proposal to reform the EU Customs Union. The text of the European Parliament's first reading amendments was published on 13 March 2024. On 27 June 2025, the Council adopted its negotiating mandate. The trilogue negotiations on the final text of the regulation have started and are expected to be completed in the first quarter of 2026.

The undersigned fully support the efforts of the Commission and of the co-legislators to modernize and overhaul the UCC.

One of the core elements of the reform is the establishment of the **European Union Customs Authority ("EUCA")**. The creation of the EUCA will be key to strengthen the efficiency and coherence of the EU Customs Union. This is also highlighted in the EUCA's tasks, with Article 208(3)(f) of the Council's text (which is identical to the Commission's proposal) stating that the EUCA shall 'facilitate and coordinate research and innovation activities in the customs field'. We believe that academic institutions have an important role to play in this regard.

What the EUCA misses in the Council's amendments is the ability to swiftly deploy and flexibly use resources to achieve its missions. The text of Article 208(3) reformed UCC adopted by the Council stands in stark contrast for instance with the spending powers of Europol, notwithstanding striking similarities between the latter's mission and that of the EUCA (e.g. data management, threat/risk analysis, to make recommendations, to support and provide specialised training, to support the creation of and develop centres of specialised expertise, etc.). The EUCA will need sufficient autonomy to seek and obtain advice and guidance from experts in customs law, practices and enforcement, of which there are very few in the Union.

With this in mind, the undersigned call for the inclusion in Articles 208 and 222 of the reformed UCC of a provision equivalent to Article 61 (2) and (3) of the Europol Regulation, that is **the ability to give grants, including without calls for proposal. This is essential**

to ensure that the EUCA can perform its missions effectively, in the very fluid and dynamic environment of today's internal trade flows.

This will foster technical expertise by enabling the EUCA to seek the support of excellence centres in customs laws and practice throughout the Union. This will in turn strengthen the coordination and exchanges between the public and private sectors everywhere in the EU, in places where goods enter the territory of the Union, and where the understanding of the practical challenge to compliance and enforcement in customs is probably the best.

The amendments we are calling for are the following:

Article 208 (3c) rUCC (Council's text)	Proposed amendments to Article 208 (3c)
The Commission may task the EU Customs Authority to support it with the development and implementation of an operational strategy for activities related to customs control equipment and other customs-related programs. In that case, the EU Customs Authority shall cooperate with the Commission and may carry out the role of grant coordinator. This role may include tasks such as assessing needs, securing funding, coordinating joint procurement, purchasing equipment and facilitating its co-sharing.	3ca The Commission may task the EU Customs Authority to support it with the development and implementation of an operational strategy for activities related to customs control equipment and other customs-related programs. In that case, the EU Customs Authority shall cooperate with the Commission and may carry out the role of grant coordinator. This role may include tasks such as assessing needs, securing funding, coordinating joint procurement, purchasing equipment and facilitating its co-sharing. The Commission may task the EU Customs Authority to support it with the development and implementation of an operational strategy for activities related to customs control equipment and other customs-related programs. In that case, the EU Customs Authority shall cooperate with the Commission and, may carry out the role of grant coordinator and may award grants. This role may include tasks such as assessing needs, securing funding, coordinating joint procurement, purchasing equipment and facilitating its co-sharing.

Article 222 rUCC (Council's text)	Proposed amendments to Art.222rUCC
General provisions The financial rules applicable to the EU Customs Authority shall be adopted by the Management Board after consulting the Commission. They shall not depart from Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2019/715 unless such a departure is specifically required for the EU Customs Authority's operation and the Commission has given its prior consent.	General provisions (a) The financial rules applicable to the EU Customs Authority shall be adopted by the Management Board after consulting the Commission. They shall not depart from Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2019/715 unless such a departure is specifically required for the EU Customs Authority's operation and the Commission has given its prior consent. (b) The EU Customs Authority may award grants without a call for proposals to Member States related to the fulfilment of its objectives and tasks as referred to in Article 208.

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