



HARMONIZED SYSTEM
COMMITTEE

-
27th Session
-

NC0348E1

O. Eng.

Brussels, 3 April 2001.

REPORT ON THE MEETING OF THE POLICY COMMISSION

(44TH SESSION)

(Item II.2 on Agenda)

Reference documents :

NC0340E2 (HSC/26 - Report)
SP0048E1 (PC/44)
SP0060E2 (PC/44 - Report)

I. REPORT OF THE POLICY COMMISSION

1. The Policy Commission held its 44th Session in Baku (Azerbaijan) from 5 to 8 December 2000. The discussions relating to the Harmonized System took place under Agenda Item II (Interim Report of the Secretary General).

Interim Report of the Secretary General

2. This interim report of the Secretary General (Doc. SP0048E1) contained an account of the activities undertaken during the early months of financial year 2000/2001 (i.e., from July to October 2000) in order to implement the WCO Strategic Plan. As usual, Focus Area B concerned updating, promoting and uniformly applying the HS. Activities relating to this Focus Area were reported under three goals, namely, to secure uniform application and interpretation of the HS; to update and improve the HS, reflecting changes in technology and trade patterns; and to promote the use of the HS by Customs administrations and other government agencies, international organizations and the private sector.

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3. In his oral presentation, the Secretary General drew attention to a major review of the Harmonized System Explanatory Notes which was to commence shortly, but added that one area of particular concern to the trade was the length of time it took to amend the Harmonized System itself, particularly in an age when new high-technology products were constantly coming on the market, often only for a very limited period of time before being superseded. He also raised the question of whether, for the sake of transparency, a public Web site might be created containing the HS Committee documents and reports. This would however need careful consideration, as such an initiative would have legal and other implications for some countries.
4. During the discussions, the suggestion was made that a shorter HS review cycle might be envisaged and that the Director of Tariff and Trade Affairs should make recommendations to the Policy Commission and the Council to address the issues raised by the Secretary General in that regard. The need for countries to implement the 2002 version of the HS was emphasized.
5. The Policy Commission took note of all the points raised in the written and oral reports of the Secretary General.
6. The relevant part of the Policy Commission's Report concerning the above can be found in Doc. SP0060E2, paragraphs 10, 11 and 33 (PC/44 – Report).

II. CONCLUSION

7. The Committee is invited to take note of the developments in the Policy Commission (44th Session).
