

# ECA: Deficiencies in Customs Control Hamper EU's Financial Interests

## News

**Thomas Wahl**

According to the European Court of Auditors (ECA), customs control in the EU still considerably varies, thus hampering the protection of the EU's financial interests. In its [Special Report 04/21](#) of 30 March 2021, the ECA examined whether the current EU regulatory customs financial risk framework was appropriately designed and has been applied in a uniform and consistent way. The ECA found that the framework was not designed well to ensure a harmonised selection of import declarations for control. In addition, the implementation of the framework by the Member States differs. The main shortcomings of the framework are:

- Poorly defined concept of risk and insufficiently detailed norms;
- Lack of important features, e.g., appropriate data-mining techniques and appropriate methods to counter financial risks resulting from e-commerce;
- Member States have not significantly changed their control selection procedures;
- No uniform way of interpreting risk signals among Member States;
- Ineffective sharing of information on importers;
- Procedures for reducing the number of controls to a feasible level differ, which is why similar risks are not addressed in a consistent way.

The auditors recommend that the Commission enhance the uniform application of customs controls and establish a full-fledged analysis and coordination capacity at the EU level. They stress, however, that progress can only be made with the support of the EU Member States.

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ISSN: 1862-6947

<https://eucrim.eu>

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The project is co-financed by the [Union Anti-Fraud Programme \(UAFP\)](#), managed by the [European Anti-Fraud Office \(OLAF\)](#).



**Co-funded by  
the European Union**