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УДК811.111:336.24

Customs and its meaning in the world

Таможня и ее значение в мире

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Custom, in English law, is an ancient rule of law for a particular locality, as opposed to the common law of the country. It has its origin in the Anglo-Saxon period, when local customs formed most laws affecting family rights, ownership and inheritance, contracts, and personal violence. The Norman conquerors granted the validity of customary law, adapting it to their feudal system. After the great transformations of the 13th and 14th centuries, when English law was given statutory authority under the crown, the “customs of the realm” became England’s common law.

Customs are duties paid to a nation’s government on items that people bring in from another country. Each nation has its own regulations regarding the quantity and kinds of articles that may be imported. All articles acquired abroad must be declared – that is, they must be identified and their value given to an inspector. If a person fails to declare an article or understates its value, the article may be taken away and the individual may be fined.

The main functions of Customs are: taking measures to protect the rights and interests of citizens, companies, establishments and organizations during customs clearance procedures; protecting the economic interests of the country; providing customs services to regulate trade-economic relations; participating in the development of economic measures with regard to the goods transported through the customs border; ensuring the due observance of administrative procedures of transportation of goods and vehicles through the customs border; taking measures to protect the intellectual property rights when goods are transported through the customs; collecting customs duties, taxes and other customs payments.

Customs union is a trade agreement by which a group of countries charges a common set of tariffs to other countries while allowing free trade among them. It is a partial form of economic integration, intermediate between free trade zones, which allow mutual free trade but lack a common tariff system, and common markets, which, in addition to the common tariffs, also allow free movement of resources such as capital and labour between members.

Other forms of economic integration include *economic unions* and *federations*. Economic unions closely coordinate national economic policies of members. Federations such as the United States or the Swiss Federation coordinate policy generally through the agency of the federal government. The best-known customs unions have included the Zollverein, Benelux, and the European Economic Community (EEC). The Zollverein was formed by German states in the 1830's. These states became the German nation in 1871. Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg established Benelux in the 1940's. Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and West Germany set up the European Economic Community in 1957. Britain, Denmark, and Ireland joined the EEC in 1973, Greece joined in 1981, and Portugal and Spain joined in 1986. From 07/01/2010 the Republic of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan are formed the Customs Union.

Tariff, also called CUSTOMS DUTY, a tax levied on a commodity traded across the border of a country or that of a group of countries that have formed a customs union.

The purpose of imposing a tariff is generally revenue collection, the protection of local industry, or both. By driving up the price of the imported item, tariffs allow domestic competitors to charge a higher price for their goods and increase their revenues. If such domestic competitors can be expected to expand their output and become more efficient, the tariff may be defended as favouring "infant industries". Often, however, tariffs are also proposed to protect older, established industries that for various reasons are unable to function profitably at the prices that would prevail in the absence of the tariff.

Customs transit is a customs procedure used to facilitate the movement of goods between two points of a customs territory, via another customs territory, or between two or more different customs territories. It allows for the temporary suspension of duties, taxes and commercial policy measures that are applicable at import, thereby allowing customs

clearance formalities to take place at the destination rather than at the point of entry into the customs territory.

The World Customs Organization (WCO), established in 1952 as the Customs Cooperation Council (CCC) is an independent intergovernmental body whose mission is to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of Customs administrations. Today, the WCO represents 176 Customs administrations across the globe that collectively process approximately 98% of world trade. As the global centre of Customs expertise, the WCO is the only international organization with competence in Customs matters and can rightly call itself the voice of the international Customs community.

The United Kingdom ranks as a leading trading nation. Manufactured goods now account for about three-fourth of British imports and also about three-fourth of its exports. Most of the United Kingdom's trade is with other developed countries. Main trading partners are France, Germany, the Netherlands, and the United States.

Canada signed the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with the USA and Mexico. It also retains strong ties with EEC and other traditional European trading nations. Besides, exports to China, South Korea, and Australia have increased since the mid-1970s.

About three-fourths of belonging to the USA unions are affiliated with the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO), the nationwide federation of unions. Most unions in manufacturing bargain on a plant- or companywide scale, although the older unions, such as those of the carpenters and the electricians, bargain by crafts.

The main instruments of the Republic of Belarus customs policy are: tariff and non-tariff measures of the state customs regulation; state customs control over Belarusian customs bodies; participation in customs unions and other forms of economic integration with other countries.

Customs Service of the Russian Federation has always targeted smuggling. But the trafficking of contraband was not the only thing to be prevented by Russian Customs. In the XVth and XVIIth centuries visiting foreigners were often found to be smuggling out of Russia secret maps of its territories and its fortresses. Even Russian Tsars and Emperors were subjects to the rules of the Customs Authorities.