

10 QUESTIONS to ask

BEFORE **IMPORTING**



- Streamline your customs procedures
- Manage risk and plan your transactions in advance
- Grow your business and become more competitive internationally



1 WHICH COMPANY STATUS SHOULD YOU CHOOSE?

If you opt for **EURL, SARL or SAS (limited company) status**, you will be allocated a tax ID number and can make tax-exempt purchases within the European Union (EU) and claim back any VAT paid on imports. Ask your accountant for further details.

If you opt for **autoentrepreneur (freelance) status** you must pay VAT on all imported goods and cannot claim any of it back.

To find out more, go to: - lautoentrepreneur.fr
- cci.fr

2 WHAT IS THE EORI (Economic Operator Registration and Identification) NUMBER FOR?

The **EORI** number is a unique number valid throughout the European Union. All traders are assigned an EORI number which they **must** use when carrying out international transactions.



To obtain an **EORI** number, contact your Regional Customs and Excise Economic Action Centre (PAE).

3 WHAT IS MEANT BY THE CUSTOMS CONCEPT OF INTRODUCTION*?

This concept applies to goods traded between EU member states.

The trade of goods declaration (DEB) is the only form you need to fill out in this case. You must fill it out if the transaction exceeds a certain amount.

You can sell goods tax-free to a company in another EU member state or make tax-free purchases of commodities, products or equipment from a company in another EU member state.

To find out more, go to: douane.gouv.fr > Professionnel > Opérations au sein de l'UE - Déclaration d'échange de biens (DEB).

4 WHAT PROCEDURES MUST BE FOLLOWED WHEN IMPORTING GOODS FROM A NON-EU COUNTRY?

Importing* refers to purchases made within the EU of a good or product from a non-EU country.

An entry summary declaration (ENS) containing safety and security information must be sent to the first EU point of entry for all goods imported from non-EU countries.

All goods imported from a non-EU country must be declared to customs and are subject, where applicable, to customs duties* (up to 17%) and VAT.

The applicable rate of customs duties varies depending on the description of the goods and their country of origin. The applicable rate of VAT varies depending on the type of goods.

5 WHAT IS THE TARIFF CLASSIFICATION OF GOODS?

Each good has a trade description and for customs purposes is assigned an international tariff classification number under the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (Harmonized System or HS).

This system is crucial for your business as it determines, for example, the applicable customs duties, applicable trade policies, and which technical standards must be complied with.

HS code: this is the tariff code applied to goods. The first six digits are common to all countries.

You should ask your supplier for the first six digits of the HS code of the good you are purchasing.

RITA: French customs application that enables you to find an HS code and specific additional requirements or regulations.

To access RITA, go to: douane.gouv.fr > Pro.douane > Accueil > RITA Encyclopédie

6 WHY IS A GOOD'S ORIGIN IMPORTANT?

When the EU signs a free-trade agreement with a non-EU country, a product complying with the rules of origin of said agreement may, where applicable, qualify on import for reduced or zero customs duties upon presentation of a valid Certificate of Origin.

7

WHICH STANDARDS ARE APPLICABLE TO THE GOODS I AM IMPORTING?

The goods you are importing may be subject to CE marking* standards and may have to comply with certain regulations.

8

WHICH DUTIES AND TAXES ARE LEVIED ON THE GOODS THAT I IMPORT?

- **Customs duties***: these are calculated on the value of the good plus all fees incurred (insurance, transport, etc.) up to the EU entry point.
- **VAT**: this is calculated on the value of the good plus all shipping and insurance costs incurred up to the final delivery point, and any customs duties payable.

9

WHY IS THE CHOICE OF INCOTERM (INTERNATIONAL COMMERCIAL TERMS) RULE SO IMPORTANT?

The Incoterm rule selected is important as it outlines the obligations of the buyer and seller when drawing up an international commercial contract.

For customs purposes, Incoterm:

- allocates responsibilities between the buyer and the seller.
- plays a key role in determining the customs value of the good on import.

To find out more, go to: douane.gouv.fr > Professionnel > Déclaration en douane - Fondamentaux

10

WHO CAN GIVE MY GOODS CUSTOMS CLEARANCE?

In most cases, the shipping company, express courier service, postal service, haulage firm or similar can deal with all customs clearance procedures and pay on your behalf any customs duties and/or VAT due to the customs authorities. They will then bill you as the receiver of the goods for the amount paid in addition to any fees that may be owed. These fees are sometimes mistakenly described as customs fees, but have nothing to do with the sums received on behalf of *Trésor Public* (French tax authorities).

* see Glossary

GLOSSARY

OF CUSTOMS TERMS

CE Marking: part of the EU legislative framework, the appearance of the letters CE on a product shows that it complies with EU standards. Responsibility for product compliance lies with the manufacturer. The marking should be placed on a product before it is made available for sale on the EU market.

Customs duties: a tax levied on imported goods at the customs territory point of entry. It may be levied as a lump sum or calculated as a percentage of the price of the good being imported.

Importing: action of bringing goods or services into an EU country from a non-EU country that may or may not be subject to a customs tariff.

Introduction: arrival of EU goods or services on national territory.

Non-EU country: country that is not a member of the European Union.

Non-preferential origin: rules of origin that determine the marking attributed to a product on import and the various trade policy measures that should be applied accordingly.

Preferential origin: rule of origin which, if conferred on a product, enables it to benefit from preferential customs duty rates within the framework of certain free-trade agreements or unilateral concession agreements with some non-EU countries.



A **comprehensive glossary** of customs terms is available online at:

douane.gouv.fr > homepage > Missions et organisation > Rôle de la douane > Lexique des termes douaniers

TO FIND OUT +

- You can contact the **Infos Douane Service** help desk to speak to a customs officer who can answer any general customs questions you may have:

— **Telephone:**

0 811 20 44 44 *Call this number if you are in France.
Calls cost €0.06 per minute plus call set-up fee*

+33 1 72 40 78 50 *Call this number if you are outside
Metropolitan France or abroad*

— **Email:** ids@douane.finances.gouv.fr

— **Twitter:** **#IDS**

- In your region: for free advice, contact the **Business Consulting Unit** of your Regional Customs and Excise Economic Action Centre:



- **Location-based directory of customs offices:**
<http://bit.ly/Annuaire-Géolocalisé>
- **Website addresses of partner ministries/government departments** (for specific regulatory matters)
 - Directorate General for Enterprise: entreprises.gouv.fr
 - Ministry for Social Affairs and Health: sante.gouv.fr
 - Ministry for Agriculture, Agrifood and Forestry:
agriculture.gouv.fr



www.douane.gouv.fr



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