

APPEAL OF THE CHAMBER OF DIGITAL ECONOMY

for the introduction of an EU-wide EUR 7 handling fee on e-commerce consignments imported from third countries

The Chamber of Digital Economy calls on the European Commission to support the introduction of an EU-wide EUR 7 handling fee on e-commerce consignments imported from third countries and delivered directly to consumers in the European Union.

The reform of the EU Customs Union is now entering a decisive phase. Under the framework currently being implemented, an EU-wide handling fee is to be introduced no later than 1 November 2026, with its level to be determined by the European Commission. At the same time, the reform strengthens the responsibilities of online platforms and businesses engaged in distance sales into the EU by treating them as importers responsible for customs formalities and the payment of applicable charges.

The Chamber of Digital Economy believes that this is a crucial opportunity for the European Union to adopt a solution that reflects not only the administrative costs generated by the unprecedented volume of low-value e-commerce imports, but also the broader need to safeguard a level playing field and fair competition within the European Single Market.

European businesses should not bear the cost of an enforcement gap

Businesses established and operating in the European Union are subject to an extensive and increasingly complex regulatory framework. They bear the costs associated, among other things, with product safety, traceability and product liability, consumer protection, customs and tax compliance, environmental requirements and obligations arising from EU digital regulation.

These requirements are an essential part of a well-functioning Single Market. However, a structural imbalance arises when the cost of complying with EU rules is borne predominantly by businesses established within the Union, while effective enforcement of equivalent requirements in relation to billions of individual consignments entering the EU from third countries remains considerably more difficult and resource-intensive.

This creates a clear enforcement gap and a structural distortion of competition.



European businesses internalise the cost of compliance throughout the entire product lifecycle — from product design and conformity assessment to placing products on the market, warehousing, distribution and sales. In the case of direct imports of individual products from third countries, a significant part of the cost and responsibility associated with verifying compliance is instead transferred to customs authorities and market surveillance bodies.

The regulatory burden associated with ensuring compliance with EU standards should not fall disproportionately on businesses that are established in the EU and fully comply with European law.

The handling fee should help restore a level playing field in the Single Market

According to data from the [European Commission](#), almost 5.9 billion products entered the European Union in low-value consignments in 2025. These products represented nearly 97% of all imported items, while accounting for only around 2% of the total value of imports.

This unprecedented volume of individual consignments creates a substantial operational and financial burden for customs administrations, market surveillance authorities and the wider enforcement system.

The handling fee should therefore not be perceived as an additional fiscal measure or as a protectionist instrument.

Its purpose should be to ensure that the costs generated by a specific import model are appropriately attributed to the economic operators and business models that generate those costs.

In this context, the Chamber of Digital Economy considers that a EUR 7 handling fee would more adequately reflect both the scale of the administrative and enforcement burden and the broader objectives of the customs reform than a purely symbolic charge.

EUR 7 as an element of the EU competitiveness agenda

The debate on the handling fee should not be limited to the operational efficiency of customs clearance.

It is equally a debate about the competitiveness, resilience and long-term sustainability of European retail, industry and SMEs.



If the European Union continues to impose increasingly comprehensive regulatory obligations on businesses operating within its jurisdiction, it must simultaneously ensure effective and equivalent enforcement of those standards in relation to products entering the Single Market from outside the EU.

Without effective enforcement, compliance risks becoming a competitive disadvantage rather than a factor that strengthens trust, safety and quality within the European market.

Such an asymmetry is neither sustainable nor compatible with the objective of strengthening European competitiveness.

For years, through its **Taki Sam Start** initiative, the Chamber of Digital Economy has consistently argued that the key challenge is not the presence of non-EU businesses on the European market as such. The challenge arises when companies competing for the same European consumer effectively operate under different regulatory, enforcement and cost conditions.

Open markets remain essential to the European economy. However, market openness must go hand in hand with equal rules, effective enforcement and fair competition.

The EUR 3 customs duty does not replace the handling fee

Since 1 July 2026, a temporary EUR 3 customs duty has applied to products contained in consignments with a value of up to EUR 150. This measure, however, is separate from the EU handling fee. The Council of the European Union has explicitly recognised that the two instruments serve different purposes.

The customs duty addresses the preferential customs treatment previously applicable to low-value imports.

The handling fee, by contrast, should address the costs generated by the specific way in which these goods enter the Single Market — at massive scale, through billions of small consignments requiring customs processing, data analysis, risk assessment, controls and market surveillance.

The introduction of the temporary customs duty should therefore not be used as an argument for setting the handling fee at a minimal or merely nominal level.

The two instruments address different market failures and different policy objectives.

The Chamber of Digital Economy therefore calls on the European Commission to establish an EU-wide handling fee of EUR 7, as a proportionate and effective instrument supporting stronger enforcement, fairer competition and a more level playing field within the European Single Market.

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President of the Board
Chamber of Digital Economy

poświadczenie złożenia podpisów i pieczęci elektronicznych

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