

Issue 17 (June 2023)



PEN-CP

Pan-European Network of
Customs Practitioners

MAGAZINE



Editorial

Dear Readers

PEN-CP has been in full action during the second quarter of 2023, as all consortium partners would well recognize. During the last week of April, PEN-CP partners and several external experts met in Tirana, Albania, for the Year 4 Annual event. Full of interesting content and busy three days we had there – warm thanks to the Director General, to the Head of International Affairs, and to other experts of Albanian Customs Administration for hosting this memorable event.

In parallel, our partners have been busy in finalizing the Reporting Period 3 person month effort and financial claim submissions, which all will hopefully be soon approved by the Research Executive Agency; and then the administrative focus to be shifted towards the final Grant Agreement Amendment.

Exciting voting and announcements during April-June timeline included selecting the winners of the 1st PEN-CP Innovation Prize (PIP-2022/23) competition (published also in this Magazine 17),

as well as voting for the winners of the 2nd Global Customs Innovation Award (GCIA-2022/23)

competitions (to be published in Magazine 18). Also, a new information sharing pilot partnership about useful and promising innovations between Customs and pharmaceutical sectors was announced recently, in an industry event in Geneva, Switzerland.

The PEN-CP community of customs officers was stroke also by sad news, as the PEN-CP Advisory Board member Gillian Castle passed away just few days before the Year-4 event started in Tirana. Gill is and will continue to be dearly missed among the European and global Customs families.

Juha Hintsa

The PEN-CP Magazine:

The official magazine of the PEN-CP, the Pan-European Network of Customs Practitioners - EU Horizon 2020 funded Customs security practitioner project

Available at <https://issuu.com/pencpmagazine>

Can be downloaded at <https://www.pen-cp.net/download-pen-cp-magazine>

Editor:

Juha Hintsa (CBRA Switzerland)

Editorial Team:

Mike Ellis (UK)

Toni Männistö (Finland)

Johan Ponten (Sweden)

Valentina Scioneri (Italy)

Layout:

Susan Wilander (Finland)

Copyright:

PEN-CP

Photographs: Shutterstock

Contents

Editorial	2
Pencast with Ricardo Treviño Chapa, the World Customs Organization (Part 2 of 2).....	3
PEN-CP YouTube Channel Milestone.....	8
Customs and Pharma Sectors - a New Information Sharing Partnership	10
In Memoriam Gillian Castle.....	12
Winners announced in the 1st PEN-CP Innovation Prize	14



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement n° 786748.

Pencast with Ricardo Treviño Chapa, the World Customs Organization



Part 2 of 2

The PEN-CP podcast has been recently rebranded and relaunched with the punchline “Pushing the Envelope - Life at the Cutting Edge of Customs Innovation”. On the show, we explore the frontiers of customs, creativity, and conversations with customs and logistics experts, technology innovators, research scientists and other leaders in the field. Industry insiders call the show the Pencast, because it’s part of PEN-CP, a network for boosting customs innovation, funded by the European Union under the Horizon 2020 program.

Published in YouTube on 14 March 2023:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zp4DIfgPRbw>

Tom Mueller

What do you see as the WCO’s role in fostering customs innovation? In helping to discover and apply new technologies, data tools, management approaches? How does the WCO help to create these new tools?

Ricardo Treviño

Well, the WCO has also evolved, together with customs administrations’ role. The organization is celebrating 70 years of existence this year – on the 26th of January, when we celebrate the International Day for Customs. 70 years ago we had our first session of council here at the WCO, and that’s why we’re celebrating 70 years this year.

Back then, 70 years ago, the WCO was created by 13 members, all of them European, and the purpose was to start exchanging some ideas, discussions, collaborating among customs, in the framework of, or in the margins of, reconstructing Europe after the Second World War. Now, the organization has evolved, it has become a truly

global organization; we have 185 members now, with almost 99% of trade. So, the organization has grown. But again, it has grown dramatically in tasks, in objectives, in work, yet not as much as in budget and resources we have available.

And within the evolution of our role and becoming global, I think we have defined very clearly what our main objectives are: assisting our members in their tasks of revenue collection, protection of society, and facilitation, through three main processes, I would say. The first would be international cooperation: facilitating and fostering international cooperation among our 185 members. The second one is establishing, developing and maintaining global standards in order to harmonize customs procedures, trying to really facilitate both – not only facilitating the flow of goods or trade, but also facilitating the compliance actions for customs. If we harmonize our procedures, it’s better to exchange information. And the third is delivering capacity-building. And this third one, building capacity, is the one that goes more into the action, as we assist our members in developing their capacities. Of course, you would imagine, within our 185 members, there are very different levels of maturity of development, and this is quite a task, trying to reduce that gap of capabilities is one of our main concerns.

Now, these three main processes established in our strategic plan – capacity building, international cooperation and standard setting – are supported by two other missions. One is effective communication: because we have been mandated to be the international single voice for customs in the world, we are the only international organization 100% focusing on customs, and we represent them throughout the world. And the

other mission is research and innovation. And here this aspect of research is quite important, because it helps us identify new trends, it helps us identify threats, opportunities, and how to, to have a more proactive and not reactive organization.

Here is where we are now focusing our efforts: in technology and innovation, in the greening of customs. And also through a strong modernization, after 70 years, of our governance, and the way we're structured within the organization, to be much more effective and assist our members. So we have a strong, clear mandate to assist our members in identifying emerging trends and innovating. And we try to do it through this cooperation, this coordination and our research.

Tom Mueller

Again, bringing everyone to the table and making sure there's a good sense of harmony, a good sense of common goals, at the end of the day. It's not "us versus them," it's all of us, moving towards the same ultimate aims.

What technological innovations have you seen over the last decade or so that you are most excited by? That could be data, actual physical scanning technology, or that could be management techniques. What do you see as the most exciting new developments?

Ricardo Treviño

Let me add a little bit to what you just said, because I think it's an effort, as you mentioned, from many stakeholders, not only the World Customs Organization. Actually, one of our main tools or elements to identify innovation and emerging trends is by developing compendiums of best practices. So we actually go to our members and ask, "What are you doing?" Because sometimes we don't have to reinvent the wheel, or other administrations are stuck trying to reinvent something, when someone else is already implementing a good solution. Gathering this information, developing compendiums of best practices, presenting them and making them visible for the rest of our members, is a way of promoting this innovation.

We also work closely with academia, of course, and with other international organizations as well. And we also have a mechanism to work closely with the private sector. Here, because when you

were talking about "This is a task for everyone," in many countries, and in many aspects, we see how private sector and public sector customs authorities are working divided, and not together. I mean, we have to acknowledge that they are our main clients. If you want to facilitate trade, if you want to increase revenue collections, you need to work with the private sector. This is important – I just wanted to mention that, and build on your comment.

But now going to your question on technologies. We developed a report on new disruptive technologies, and we made an analysis – and all of them I find fascinating. Of course, there is artificial intelligence (AI), big data, all around data analysis. We studied the impact on customs of blockchain, drones and other technologies that were analyzed in this report. We also worked together with the World Economic Forum, and did a survey of the private sector active in trade, to tell us which technologies they would expect will influence the most in the coming years. The number one technology was the Internet of Things, which is already being used also in several customs administrations. The second one was digital payment. Then we had AI, and we had blockchain.

We can find several examples around the world where such technologies are already in use. But I must say that, in conclusion, we have around 40% to 50% of our customs administration still not even piloting a solution on any of these technologies. And that is also something that we need to tackle. As an organization, we want to promote digital customs, we want to promote the use of technology. And it's been one of the challenges that we're still facing. That's why it's one of our focus areas currently: to keep working on innovation and technology, and reducing this technological gap among our membership.

Tom Mueller

Your point about making a compendium of best practices – I'm reminded of a wonderful book by Dr. Atul Gawande called The Checklist Manifesto. And it basically says, "Listen, you need to codify the best practices in all areas of human activity, in order to reach the best results." And that doesn't stultify creativity – it actually enhances creativity, because you put into the hands and into the minds of people working on these things, some of the

age old wisdom that they should be aware of, but [instead] may be reinventing the wheel each time.

When you talk about working across the public and private divide, working with academia, I'm reminded of some meetings with public and private entities I've taken part in, where there was a lack of trust among the public and private stakeholders around the table. How do you personally, and WCO as an institution, go about building this trust between public and private stakeholders? Is trust an important part of the collaborative effort?

Ricardo Treviño

Sure. Well, it's a tough one, because on the one hand, trust most of the time is built among people, and specific people that are leading, or in charge of, certain efforts. And in this case, I think we've been trying to build this trust by getting closer and strengthening communication and coordination. But it's a process that takes time, again, and that we need to build with a certain patience, but strongly looking for it. And once the benefits are there, I think people need to notice, and build on that.

Definitely, I see, from many experiences, on the part of customs administrations the perception that business, many companies, are trying to abuse the system, but many others are not. And that's what we need to really benefit from. So from the customs administration side, especially the people very much focused on protection of society and compliance, it's difficult to change their mindset, but we need to work together with them.

From the private sector side, as well, there is mistrust in the way that if they provide more information, they feel that customs will share it with someone else – within the government for fiscal purposes, for other purposes, or even outside the government, that this information might reach business competitors, even criminals. And this fear is understandable, because there have been cases of this.

But I think we need to focus on the benefits of sharing information and growing trust. Because in the end, legal businesses are also interested in protecting their own families, in protecting their societies. They're interested in the government having enough resources, and in contributing

fairly to the government, for their expenditures and their budget. And of course they're very interested in the flow of goods – of legal goods. So if we all have these three same objectives, why not build on that? We need to find the right strategy to build on these objectives.

Tom Mueller

I noticed that you, among the many things you do – you're a very busy man! – you take part in a number of conferences. For instance, the recent IBMATA conference in San Diego (and IBMATA stands for "International Border Management and Technologies Association"), before a very multidisciplinary audience. And I can imagine that not only the speech or the panel that you took part in, was helpful for building that kind of trust, but also what you did after – you know, having a drink with someone, having conversations in and around the speech. Is that part of your job and the WCO mission?

Ricardo Treviño

Sure, absolutely. I mean, we can use the technology now, and have virtual meetings and meet by Zoom or Teams or so on. But still, you have to have social contact, in many cases. And here I'm going back to the word "balance" – here I'm trying to find the right balance. Of course, having the opportunity to do part of the work through a virtual environment would reduce costs to the organization and to the members, and that's why we follow this strategy of also having meetings virtually. Also, sometimes members cannot travel to Brussels, and we have to give them access online. This trend, which has grown since the pandemic, is something positive that we need to keep.

But on the other hand, as you just mentioned, I think that social, personal contact is important. And WCO, as part of our objective of raising the profile of what customs is doing in the world, raising the profile of WCO – you need to have these personal contacts, visiting and meeting with the right people. Ever since since I was Director General of Customs in Mexico, the most valuable things that I found while coming to meetings at WCO, was on the sidelines, while really having these conversations with other colleagues, Directors General, commissioners of customs, to build this trust in order to exchange information, exchange experiences, having this direct communication

when we had something to coordinate.

So having these meetings and personal discussions on the sidelines, is, I think, what is most valuable about this type of event. IBMATA was not the exception. I had a very good time presenting what the WCO is doing in technologies and innovation on the one hand, and then participating in a very interactive panel with other colleagues from the World Bank and Dutch Customs, as well as private sector, and discussing a little bit on the coordination that we need to have, and how to help private sector to strengthen their communication and relationship with their own local customs administrations. But you're right, the sidelines were as important as those official public presentations, because I met with many people and shared so many experiences, things that I was not even aware of that are happening in the industry. For instance, in noninvasive technology with scanners, and other aspects that were happening back there in the border, and the collaboration between Mexico and the US – because this was held in San Diego. So there was a lot of added value on the sidelines.

Tom Mueller

Yeah, once you've broken bread with someone, once you've actually looked them in the eye, been in the same room with them, so many of the potential misunderstandings disappear, or at least you give them the benefit of the doubt. As you know, this podcast is part of PEN-CP, and one of the central goals of PEN-CP is to create this network environment, where multidisciplinary people from public and private, from research institutions and governmental organizations, can share their data, pool their resources, and combine their efforts. Not to reinvent the wheel, as you pointed out earlier, but to create compendia of best practices and share them. How important do you think projects of this sort are in the broader challenge of creating trust and creating a unified push for technological improvement?

Ricardo Treviño

Well, as a strong believer in coordination and cooperation, I think this goes hand in hand with our strategic objectives at the organization. Having this type of project like PEN-CP complementing what we do, and complementing it with concrete actions, a concrete network, I think is quite positive. So of course WCO is looking at this

project in a very positive way. Creating these networks – I mean, it's not only about how you can innovate and produce new ideas, and then try to develop them among a network of experts or practitioners of customs who share the same challenges and try to solve these challenges through the use of new technologies. It's not only about that, which is quite important, but also about building this network and this cooperation among these practitioners or these experts of customs, for the moment in which you might need to have that connection. And it's linked to the previous point that we were just discussing regarding trust. These types of networks might not have an immediate impact. You might just build a relationship and have a conversation, and share ideas and experiences. And it will take time to develop an idea. But not only that, when you have an emergency, an urgent matter, you have already built a network that you can go back to and consult, and see if there is any solution that you can apply to your emergency. So building networks and communication is also, let's say, a forward-looking action, to have the right elements when you need them in the future.

Tom Mueller

That sounds very much like the voice of experience. Do you have an experience in your past – without naming names or specifics – where you built a relationship, and then later, in the heat of the moment when you needed it, you were able to draw on that relationship?

Ricardo Treviño

Yes, in many professional and even personal experiences, we've had this. Particularly, for instance, during COVID. At the beginning of the pandemic, nobody knew what was going to be the impact or how long it would last, we were all confined in our houses, and nobody could get out. But the WCO needed to keep working and moving, we couldn't just close our doors and say, "We cannot do any more." So I reached out to most of the people that we have built a good relationship with years before, colleagues from customs but also from the private sector. And we started working on some of the challenges that we had identified.

Back then, for instance, with the Private Sector Consultative Group at the WCO level, we met at least once a week virtually, to identify where we

could find some bottlenecks in the supply chain. I talked to people from the air, land and sea supply chains, to see where the main challenges were that we needed to face. And of course, at the same time, we were in touch with our members in customs administrations, sometimes in an informal way, sometimes in a formal way, trying to tackle these challenges at the supply chain level, trying to get the organization moving, and trying to implement. Okay, we couldn't come to the office anymore, but we quickly reacted and started working online, and doing all the meetings virtually. It was through the help of many people, with whom we had built networks before.

Tom Mueller

Yes, some of the worst events in history also force a level of collaboration and creativity, that represent the good side of the bad event. What do you think, from the customs innovation point of view as well as from the WCO's perspective,

are the silver linings to the dark, dark cloud of the pandemic? What are the key lessons we have learned in customs, that we should continue to implement, or that we need more work on?

Ricardo Treviño

First of all, more automation. Many procedures were established – in record time, by the way, because I think one of the lessons must be that we are able to make changes, and good changes, in a quicker or a shorter timeframe than we usually had before the pandemic. So it was demonstrated that we could adjust quicker than planned, and that we could do better or simpler automatic procedures, with enough efficiency to keep them. So more automation is one of them, absolutely.

I think also, life balance. The working situation has changed completely. Now we have people balancing their work at home work, their work at the office, people having time to dedicate to their



families. So work balance was another one.

I'd particularly like to talk about a success story that happened during the pandemic, which was this strong collaboration with the World Health Organization, among other organizations that we collaborated with. This also showed us a way forward in how to efficiently use our Harmonized System Convention, which is one of our main tools here at the organization. And the Harmonized System basically classifies commodities for them to be traded. It's like a common language for customs administrations. We talked to the World Health Organization, and they gave us the list of essential goods that needed to be facilitated in their flow around the world, to tackle the spread of the pandemic: medicines, medical equipment, food, and so on.

We published a list of these essential goods, already classified with a Harmonized System Code, and made it public, for customs administrations to identify and facilitate their trade, but also for private sector businesses, for them also to classify and present as a declaration for customs administrations. And this had big support and success among stakeholders. I think that showed us a way of collaborating and doing things better, by sharing these efforts between these two international organizations, and having a real, concrete deliverable for the people, for society.

Tom Mueller

That's an excellent example. In the heat of the moment, two major organizations cut through any bureaucratic drag there may have been, and urgently produced something that was useful to millions of people.

Ricardo Treviño

Exactly. So another lesson learned is that international cooperation works. No single, isolated country would have been able to stop the pandemic by themselves. We needed international cooperation. This international cooperation is one of the lessons learned, throughout the pandemic.

Tom Mueller

In very general terms, what do you perceive as the key challenges for the next generation of customs officers?

Ricardo Treviño

Well, I think the role of customs will keep evolving, and probably will evolve faster than it has evolved in the last decades. One of the challenges will be, how to adjust to these new roles expected from this new way of doing business, from this new global digital economy. I think customs needs to take into account that trade is growing in a way that, if we keep doing things as we have been doing them for many years, it will not be enough.

E-commerce is just an example. When e-commerce started – and it has been booming, it's a megatrend – customs administrations capabilities were really not enough, with millions of small, medium, large packages traveling from all over the world. Customs just didn't have enough capability to review them all. So we need to put in place the right technology to have again enough compliance, enough facilitation, for e-commerce. E-commerce will keep growing – it's here to stay.

And at some point, I think we need to analyze the role of customs itself, because it's not only about tangible goods anymore – it's also intangible goods. There are services flowing, and there are digital goods flowing, through the network. What is customs really going to do in the future? Maybe we shouldn't be stuck on the borders anymore. I think we have to migrate to a position in which we are a more strategic, comprehensive organization, that has visibility over the flow of goods and commodities and services from a different perspective, and not necessarily stuck on the borders.

Tom Mueller

That's very well put. Not stuck on the borders anymore. And that means changing the mindsets of customs workers, but it also means changing the perception of customs among the general public.

Ricardo Treviño

Absolutely. A main challenge which has been there for years, and is still relevant, is precisely how society, how people, regard customs. We're usually seen as the bad guys, stopping the flow of goods. For most people, the first experience of customs is at the airport, when their luggage is checked and so on. And usually this is not a good experience, right? People arrive tired from a long flight, they just want to get home, and this

guy is saying, “Stop here, I want to check your luggage.” How people see customs is important. How to communicate our objectives, how to communicate the benefits that customs provides to society, is still something that we need to work on.

Tom Mueller

Definitely. There’s clearly an appreciation of how customs protects us from massive shipments of drugs, or from weapons of mass destruction. But at the same time, there’s that sense of inconvenience, of bureaucratic intervention into our lives, that’s a challenge to change. So from the WCO’s perspective, can you speak to some of the key future challenges and opportunities for your organization?

Ricardo Treviño

Sure. According to our map of opportunities, challenges and risks, one thing we see very clearly: we need to raise awareness of the role of customs administrations, not only for society in general, so that we can effectively communicate the benefits of having customs administrations, but also raising awareness at the political level. If you compare customs administrations with other border agencies, or other authorities, usually customs administrations do not have enough political weight in the decision-making process, although customs is usually in the center of the implementation. And this is because, I think, customs does not have a positive perception by society, in many cases.

That’s why I think many political leaders, ministers, do not invest enough of their time or efforts in customs in many cases. If you go to other international organizations that have more political weight and more resources than WCO – for instance, OECD, you see ministers going to OECD, you go to WTO, you have ministers of trade going to WTO, you have Interpol, you have ministers of security or police, heads of police going to Interpol. At the WCO, instead, we usually have heads of customs. Which is good, and we appreciate it, but usually the head of customs is not at the minister level. That’s why we need to gain more political support as well.

Our other challenges include what we mentioned: digitalising customs; and reducing

the capability gaps among our membership, not only in technology, but also in human skills and institutional capabilities as well. And as I was saying, another big opportunity and focus area that we see is the greening of the supply chain, and how customers can contribute to this global effort to protect our environment and our planet.

Tom Mueller

That’s a tall order, but it sounds to me like you’re equipped mentally and from an energy level to take it on!

Ricardo Treviño

I would just say that the WCO is in the middle of a modernization plan, that’s consistent with my previous positions and with my career. I’ve been tasked by the Council once again to lead this process of change within the organization. It’s a big effort from the secretariat, the Secretary General, the directors and the rest of the staff at the Secretariat – all are working very hard to fulfill this task of modernizing the organization. I’m sure that with this modernization plan, we will be able to, first of all, assist our members far better, and assist society in our objectives. But we’ll also strengthen our collaboration and our position with other stakeholders, such as academia, private sector, and so on. So we’re looking forward to working together with these stakeholders, and really finding a positive way that benefits the organization, and stakeholders as a whole, for better results in the future.

Tom Mueller

I’m sure many of our listeners will be watching closely the development of this modernization plan, which obviously is a critical thing for us all going forward. So best of luck to you in your future work. Ricardo Treviño Chapa! Thank you very much for a fascinating conversation, and for joining us on the Pencast.

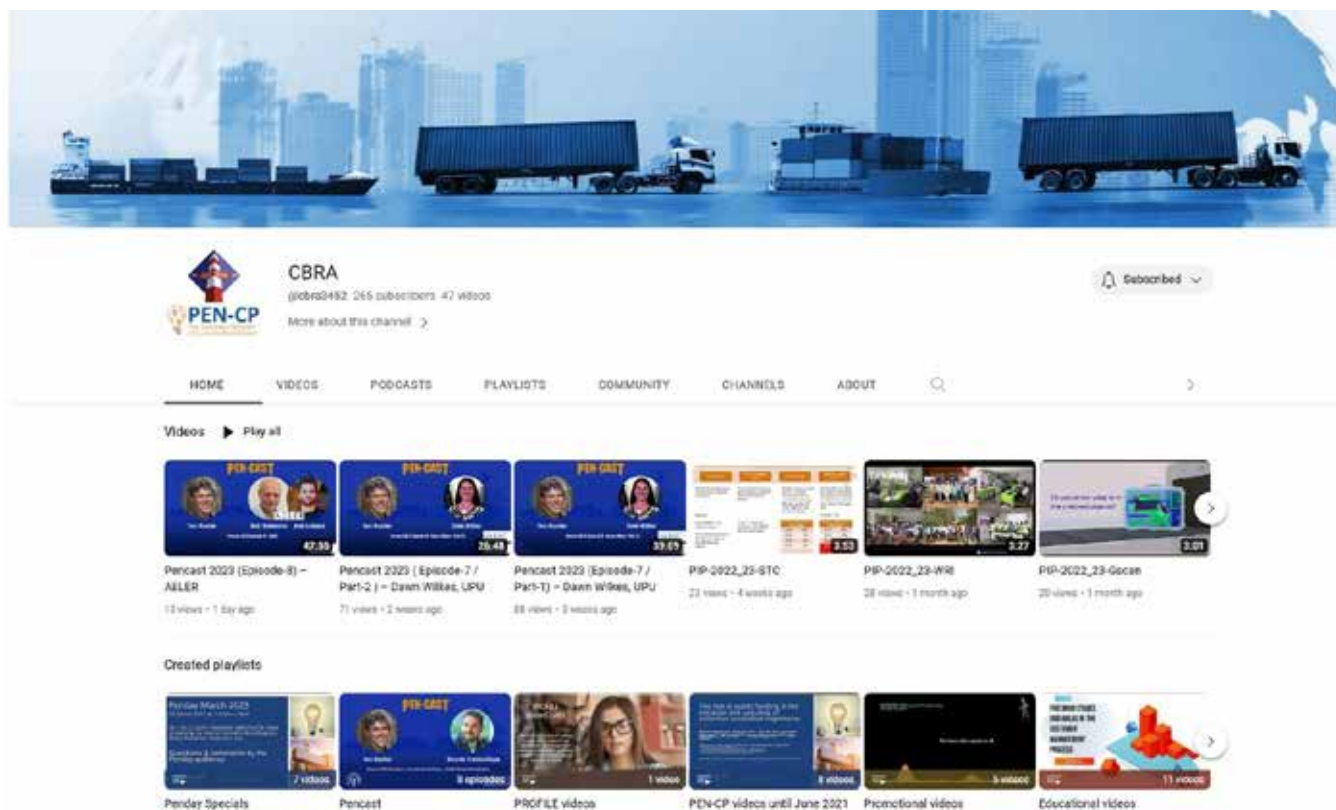
Ricardo Treviño

It’s been my pleasure, Tom. I look forward to seeing you again having much more conversations like this. And I look forward to hearing more about PEN-CP in the future. Thank you very much for the opportunity today.

Tom Mueller

Thank you very much.

PEN-CP YouTube Channel Milestone: 30.000 Views



The PEN-CP YouTube channel, originally launched by the Cross-border Research Association (CBRA) in December 2017, reaches the 30.000 views/listens milestone.

The PEN-CP YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/@cbra3452, launched originally by the Cross-border Research Association (CBRA) in December 2017, has reached the milestone of 30.000 views & listens. The channel currently offers 45 videos, animations and podcasts, with new content added weekly.

The Pan-European Network of Customs Practitioners (PEN-CP, www.pen-cp.net) is a Customs innovation-boosting network funded by the EU under the Horizon 2020 program. PEN-CP fosters creative ideas and strengthens ties among innovation-oriented customs officers, Europe-wide and globally. The project focuses on data and risk management innovations, detection technologies and laboratory equipment. It employs a range of knowledge instruments, including technology grants, challenge competitions, innovation awards and prizes, annual studies and expert reports.

The most popular category is the 'educational animations on customs and supply chain security, whose ten animations account for over 2/3 of all the visits and views at the channel to date. The "Potential Benefits with the Authorised Economic Operator (AEO)" program [www.bit.ly/3WR9m2Z], offered in English, Spanish and Macedonian languages, has the most views of any videos produced so far.

Another category with a fast-growing European and global audience is the recently re-launched PEN-CP podcast, widely known as "Pencast." In just 2.5 months, seven new episodes have garnered nearly 1000 YouTube visits / listenings. The most popular Pencast so far features Ricardo Treviño Chapa, Deputy Secretary General of the World Customs Organization: www.youtube.com/watch?v=zp4DlfgPRbw

The PEN-CP YouTube channel is by now well-positioned as the world's leading customs innovation and supply chain security video, animation and podcast channel. Our target is to grow to 40.000 views, 60 videos and 1000 subscribers by year-end 2023.

Customs and Pharma Sectors - a New Information Sharing Partnership about Useful and Promising Innovations

PHARMAP 2023



12-13 June, 2023 Geneva, Switzerland

Pharmaceutical Manufacturing & Packaging Congress

An 18-month pilot program begins between European Customs administrations and Pharmaceutical companies, aimed at sharing information and learning from each other on innovations particularly in material anomaly detection, anti-counterfeit measures, and risk assessment tools and databases.

On June 12-13, 2023, and during the Pharmap 2023 Congress (<https://pharmap-congress.com/>), PEN-CP launches a reciprocal outreach action between European Customs Administrations and the pharmaceutical industry. This joint pilot program will continue with reciprocal site and field visits (to be completed by February 2024), during which participating Customs officers will visit two pharmaceutical companies and observe their technology and process innovations in a range of areas, including quality monitoring (in manufacturing and in laboratories), anti-counterfeiting measures (distribution and sourcing perspectives), and risk management (product integrity, business partner credibility etc.). Pharmaceutical experts will likewise visit a border crossing point and a Customs laboratory, to liaise with specialists in targeting, detection, inspections, seizures, and material analysis of potentially illicit pharmaceuticals (counterfeits, substandard medicines, parallel trade, smuggling, etc.)

After the site visits are completed, the pilot program will continue with a Customs/ Pharma technical workshop (target date September-October, 2024). This workshop will focus on recent advances in anti-counterfeiting strategies

and product authentication techniques (including producing, exploiting and maintaining Raman spectral and other possible reference libraries); as well as the latest trends in the illicit pharma trade. The pilot program's closing presentations and panel discussions will take place in January, 2025, to summarize the key findings across the 18 months - both actual innovation related ones as well as Customs/Pharma collaboration related ones - and to discuss options to continue further as a permanent partnership program.

This pilot project is being organized by the Pan-European Network of Customs Practitioners (PEN-CP, www.pen-cp.net), a Customs innovation-boosting network funded by the EU under the Horizon 2020 program. PEN-CP fosters creative ideas and strengthens ties among innovation-oriented customs officers, Europe-wide and globally. One of PEN-CP's initiatives aims to create systematic interaction between Customs experts and specific industry sectors, including pharmaceuticals; company and logistics data platforms; material identification instruments; and the security and defense sectors. All in all, the project focuses on Customs innovations in (i) data and risk management, (ii) detection technologies and (iii) laboratory equipment. It employs a range of innovation and knowledge instruments, including technology grants, challenge competitions, innovation awards and prizes, annual studies, expert reports and industry outreach actions.

Interested? Please email us by 31 July 2023: pen-cp@cross-border.org or send a whatsapp message to: +41765890967

In Memoriam Gillian Castle



Departure of a respected colleague and dear friend

PEN-CP annual meetings are such a pleasure. And there is always a lot of energy emanating from seeing partners and friends. The buzz resulting from those conversations within meetings and afterwards over dinner is always tangible. The pandemic and remote working was hard on many of us, which is why in person events are so very much appreciated.

This 2023 annual meeting was tinged with sadness for us, with one chair empty. Gillian Castle, for many years part of HM Revenue and Customs, and one of the original PEN-CP partners, had succumbed to cancer and passed away, just couple days before we started gathering in Tirana,

Albania on 25th April. Gillian had kept news of her declining condition very private.

Originally, Gillian Castle had only intended to join Customs for a short time, like a 'gap year', but somehow found the work to be engaging enough to remain for 40+ years. Few might realise that she was the first female Boarding Officer at the Port of London, an area that is 95 miles in length and covers all the jetties, wharves and docks along the tidal Thames. As an Officer she was responsible for boarding vessels arriving from outside the UK, and checking validity of ships safety certificates, the crew declaration and sealing the bonded stores. Gillian had to deal with Captains

and crew of all nationalities, dock workers and port authorities. Her career also included other operational roles, such as in anti-smuggling team and responsibilities for the control of Common Agricultural Policy goods.

Most people will have met Gillian as an UK representative at the World Customs Organisation, and through her involvement in various EU Commission committees. She was a much loved and valued contributor to the World Customs Organisation, taking a leading role in activities that have benefited the global customs community. Included in this, was her founding and leading role within the EU-China Safe and Secure Trade Lanes Programme, using innovation and technology to improve trade flows between these two major markets. Recognising her impact and our loss, at the plenary to the Permanent Technical Committee of the World Customs Organisation, a minute's silence was held in Gill's memory: she was truly an excellent ambassador for the UK, the EU, and the Global Customs Family.

Gillian willingly agreed to be an HMRC partner with Border Force when the PEN-CP proposal was first drafted in the period between 2016-17. She attended the kick-off meeting in Thun,

Switzerland in 2018 and the second one we had in Budapest, Hungary in 2019. Gillian retired from HMRC, but the desire to use that knowledge and travel led to her continued association with CBRA and the PEN-CP Advisory Board. She also supported CBRA with various projects, including the H2020 PROFILE project. Moments of laughter were numerous and we fondly remember her intentional and unintentional jokes that would often fly over the table during banter with colleagues at CBRA, at the PEN-CP Advisory Board, and with consortium partners.

It was touching that during our Tirana annual meeting the consortium held a moment of silence for Gillian – a gesture that was also echoed at other customs events within the global customs family. Two of the UK PEN-CP team attended Gillian's funeral and it was evident that despite her planning the details of the service close to the end of her life, her humour was very much on form given the choice of music she wanted. Gill is and will continue to be dearly missed among the European and global Customs families.

Trevor Francis, UK Border Force
Darren Hart, UK Border Force
Juha Hintsa, CBRA Switzerland



Winners Announced in the 1st PEN-CP Innovation Prize

Prize winners are innovators in cargo scanner image analysis, subatomic particle scanning and smart container technology.

The Pan-European Network of Customs Practitioners (PEN-CP) announces the winners of its first PEN-CP Innovation Prize (PIP-2022/23), a contest that celebrates creative, paradigm-shift ideas and solutions in customs. After a tight competition among 8 contestants, of which some have previously benefited from EU security research funding, decided by a vote among participants in the PEN-CP Annual Event in Tirana, Albania, 3 winners were selected.

First Prize was awarded to INTA (www.inta.it), for a service involving “advanced cargo scanner image analysis and threat object recognition training”.

Second Prize was won by GScan (www.gscan.eu), for their “digital scanning technology that uses data provided by muons and other subatomic particles”.

Third Prize went to Aeler (www.aeler.com), for “smart containers with real-time track-and-trace and cargo monitoring, and software that identifies normal and atypical cargo behavior”.

PEN-CP (www.pen-cp.net), a Customs innovation-boosting network funded by the EU

under the Horizon 2020 program, fosters new innovative ideas and strengthens ties among innovation-oriented customs officers throughout Europe, as well as globally. The project focuses on innovations in data and risk management, detection technologies and laboratory equipment, and employs a range of innovation and knowledge instruments, including technology grants, challenge competitions, innovation awards and prizes, annual studies and expert reports.

Summaries of all 8 PIP-2022/23 submissions will be published later at the PEN-CP website. Regarding practical PIP-2022/23 arrangements, PEN-CP worked in close cooperation with the European Start-up Network (www.europeanstartupnetwork.eu).



PEN-CP social media channels:

<https://open.spotify.com/show/1MPDj8vhTBgPV0vStZS7vp>
<https://www.youtube.com/@cbra3452>
<https://issuu.com/pencpmagazine>
https://twitter.com/PENCP_NET
<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/8183667/>
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/pencp>

All open calls (Experts Reports, Open Innovation instruments etc.) by PEN-CP:
<https://www.pen-cp.net/calls>

For more information on PEN-CP, please visit:

www.pen-cp.net

or email to:

pen-cp@cross-border.org

