

## **Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) Program - general information**

An Authorised Economic Operator is one with special status who is deemed reliable in the context of his or her customs related operations, and therefore, is entitled to enjoy benefits. The provisions of the European customs legislation related to this status became effective from 2008 through the so called ‘security amendments’ to the “Community Customs Code” and its implementing provisions.

### **Background**

The idea behind the concept is that goods exported from and/or imported to the European Union should be secure, controlled and should not impose any threats or danger to the economy of the EU or the security of its citizens.

The SAFE Framework of Standards of the World Customs Organisation to secure and facilitate global trade is aimed at

- establishing partnership between customs authorities and the commercial sector to ensure the identification of highly trustworthy operators (guaranteed security and safety);
- providing economic operators of higher safety standards with advantage.

The aim of the status is to enhance international supply chain security and to facilitate legitimate trade through the identification of trustworthy economic operators and of their consignments.

### **AEO status**

An economic operator who is established in the customs territory of the European Union and who meets the criteria set out in the relevant European customs legislation may apply for an Authorised Economic Operator status.

The AEO program includes the following types of authorisations:

- an AEO status in the form of an AEOC is envisaged for economic operators established in the Union who would like to benefit from the various „customs simplifications” specifically provided for under the customs legislation (AEOC authorisation).
- an AEOS is envisaged for economic operators established in the Union who would like to benefit from particular facilitations related to customs controls relating to „security and safety” when the goods enter or leave the customs territory of the Union (AEOS authorisation).

Economic operators may possess both authorisations in parallel (AEOF authorisation).

The above-mentioned authorised economic operators depending on the type of authorisation they are granted have easier admittance to customs simplifications than other operators and have less rigorous customs controls in terms of physical and document based examinations. The AEO status is recognised by all the customs authorities of the EU member states.

The benefits attached to the AEO status are granted by the customs authorities also to operators or persons who are established in countries or areas outside the customs territory of the European Union and who comply with the obligations and conditions set out in the relevant rules of the countries or areas concerned, provided that the said obligations and conditions are recognised by the European Union as equal to the obligations and conditions set out for authorised operators established on the customs territory of the European Union.

Granting benefits is on a mutual basis, and should be reinforced by international agreements or by any EU legislation in the field of common trade policy unless decided otherwise by the European Union.

If operators agree through a statement in their application to be placed on the list of the European Union, their prospective and existing partners may obtain information on the fact that they possess AEO authorisation, and as such, are trustworthy partners.

The list is available at the following link:

[https://ec.europa.eu/taxation\\_customs/dds2/eos/aeo\\_consultation.jsp?Lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/dds2/eos/aeo_consultation.jsp?Lang=en)

**With regard to the AEO program additional and detailed useful information may be accessed on the homepage of the European Commission at the following link where you can find the *AEO Guidelines and its Annexes*, the *AEO eLearning* and *AEO eBook*:**

[https://ec.europa.eu/taxation\\_customs/general-information-customs/customs-security/authorised-economic-operator-aeo\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/general-information-customs/customs-security/authorised-economic-operator-aeo_en)