



WCO and GS1 join forces in the fight against counterfeiting and launch the new mobile IPM

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Press Release

The World Customs Organization and GS1 will be present at the upcoming 7th Global Congress on Combating Counterfeiting and Piracy, to be held in Istanbul, Turkey from April 24-26. On this occasion, both organisations will introduce the new mobile version of IPM (Interface Public-Members), the WCO's online tool serving as an interface between front-line Customs officers and the private sector.

In an ongoing effort to tackle the illicit trade in counterfeit and pirated goods, the WCO and GS1 are committed to providing Customs with the best available technologies. IPM was first launched by the WCO in 2010 to foster cooperation between Customs and right holders by facilitating the exchange of information and strengthening Customs' capacity to better combat counterfeiting. Since then, over 50 countries have joined and around 3,000 Customs officers are now connected to IPM.

Following a cooperation agreement signed between the WCO and GS1 aimed at optimizing their fight against counterfeits, GS1 identification standards were introduced to IPM, enabling reliable and clear authentication of items thereby enhancing IPM's legitimacy as the only global tool in the fight against counterfeiting and piracy.

Building on IPM's initial success, the WCO and GS1 are pleased to present the new mobile version of IPM. This version offers new features such as the possibility to use mobile devices to scan industry standard GS1 barcodes found on millions of products, enabling to search the products database in a more time-efficient manner. The unique product identifier embedded in the GS1 bar code will facilitate access to multiple databases providing trusted sources of product information. Furthermore, scanning the barcodes will enable automatic connection to any authentication services linked to the product controlled. Customs officers will now have access to more detailed product information and additional right holders will be encouraged to join IPM.

"Faced with the growing trade in counterfeit goods, the WCO and its Members are determined to work with GS1 and other concerned organizations to fight this menace in order to protect the health and safety of consumers across the globe," said WCO Secretary General, Kunio Mikuriya.

Secretary General Mikuriya added, *"IPM's usefulness is now globally recognized by our private sector partners. Our cooperation with GS1 has enabled us to further develop IPM's functionalities making it even more accessible and reliable. IPM is undoubtedly an essential tool to help Customs officers distinguish between genuine and fake products."*

"With the GS1 System of Standards and our overall expertise in supply chain management, GS1 can help Customs agencies improve their capacity to detect counterfeit products" said GS1 President and CEO, Miguel Lopera.

"IPM's new mobile version integrating GS1 bar codes and authentication services, gives brand owners from all sectors the opportunity to work directly with Customs to protect both their brand and consumers alike" added President Lopera.

GS1 and the WCO's continuing cooperation on Customs related issues, aims to provide concrete identification and traceability solutions to help Customs identify potential counterfeit merchandise. The relationship between the two organizations was further strengthened by the Memorandum of Understanding signed in November 2007.

About the WCO

The WCO is the only international intergovernmental organization that deals with Customs procedures and regulations governing trade between countries. Its work aims to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of Customs administrations across the globe, and to help them fulfil their dual role of facilitating trade whilst ensuring its security. It is a setting in which governments can compare policy experiences, seek answers to common problems, identify good practices and standards, and coordinate Customs policies. It is also noted for its work in areas covering the development of global standards relating to commodity classification, valuation and rules of origin, as well as compliance issues, the promotion of integrity, and sustainable Customs capacity building initiatives. For more information: www.wcoomd.org

About GS1

GS1 is a neutral, not-for-profit, international organisation that develops global standards and solutions to improve the efficiency and visibility of supply chains across industries. It engages a global community of trading partners, industry organizations and technology providers to understand their business needs and develops global standards in response to those needs. GS1 is driven by close to two million user companies, which execute more than six billion transactions daily in 150 countries using GS1 standards. GS1 has local Member Organizations in over 110 countries. Its head office is in Brussels. For more information: www.gs1.org or email TL@gs1.org.