



***PRESS RELEASE - February 23, 2017***

**International Port Community Systems Association welcomes ratification of historic Trade Facilitation Agreement**

The International Port Community Systems Association (IPCSA) has welcomed the ratification and entry into force of the World Trade Organization's landmark Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA), which aims to streamline, simplify and standardise trade procedures and processes.

This multilateral trade deal, first drawn up in 2013, entered into force on February 22, 2017, following its ratification by two-thirds of the WTO membership.

"IPCSA congratulates the World Trade Organization for achieving such a historic agreement," said Hans Rook, chairman of IPCSA. "Now the work really starts, in terms of how countries are going to implement its content.

"Port Community Systems are there to support member states in bringing to reality the simplification that the TFA envisages. We can support and advise on the implementation of simple and efficient operational processes, the seamless transfer of information and data, and clear, simplified interfaces between trade and government systems."

The TFA contains provisions for expediting the movement, release and clearance of goods, including goods in transit, and also sets out measures for effective cooperation between Customs and other authorities on trade facilitation and Customs compliance issues. Countries will be obliged to put into place certain measures such as coordination at the border, Single Window, publishing tariffs, pre-arrival processing and transit schemes. The TFA further contains provisions for technical assistance and capacity building in this area.

IPCSA has more than 30 members around the world, and statistics demonstrate the vital role that Port Community Systems already play in effective trade facilitation. IPCSA's members operate in more than 100 ports which handle in excess of 175 million TEU and 5 billion tonnes of cargo a year, exchanging at least 10 billion messages annually based on TEUs alone.

“The TFA is designed to reduce bureaucratic delays and red tape, in order to cut trade costs and increase efficiency of trade around the world,” said Richard Morton, secretary general of IPCSA.

“With the emphasis on simplifying, modernising and harmonising export and import processes, in particular through the use of Single Window and information technology, there is a lot of work to do. Once again, members of IPCSA would emphasise – it is worthwhile not duplicating what is already out there in terms of the information flow, connectivity, services and expertise already provided by Port Community Systems.”

***Notes to Editors:***

IPCSA was originally founded as the European Port Community Systems Association in 2011, by six European-based PCS operators. It was relaunched in 2014 as an international association, reflecting its growing membership outside Europe. Today, IPCSA’s members operate in more than 100 sea and air ports which handle in excess of 200 million TEU and 6 billion tonnes of cargo a year, exchanging at least 10 billion messages annually based on TEU alone – these statistics show the growing importance and influence of Port Community Systems in supporting effective trade facilitation.

IPCSA’s membership provides representation in each of the five UN Regional Commission regions. This geographical reach enables it to address the needs of members on a regional as well as international basis. IPCSA also has consultative status at the International Maritime Organization, providing an important platform for representing the needs of its members at the highest level.

- Membership of the International Port Community Systems Association is open to Port Community System operators from the logistics, maritime and air environments as well as sea and airport authorities. For further information, please contact Richard Morton, Secretary General of IPCSA.

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