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2017: Form A certificates to be replaced by self-certification from registered exporters

As of 1 January 2017, the EU will progressively switch to a new self-certification system to prove origins from countries benefiting from the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) including GSP + and Everything But Arms (EBA). National authorities will no longer be able to issue GSP *Form A* certificates. Instead, 'registered exporters' will be entitled to issue a *statement on origin*. According to many views, this new system will widely open the possibilities of fraud to which in the end EU importers will probably be liable.

Registered exporter system (REX)

From 2017 onwards, exporters will directly provide their customers with *statements on origin*. By submitting basic information (e.g. name, contact details) an exporter will notify its national authorities, via internet, of the intention to become a *registered exporter*. The national authorities will then verify the basic information and submit the notification to the European Commission which will allocate a specific registration number to the exporter. As of this moment, the *registered exporter* will be entitled to issue a *statement on origin* which is the only valid proof of GSP/EBA origin for EU customs. The European Commission will establish a central data-base of registered exporters.

Timeline

The new system will be introduced within three periods, each of one year length. From 1 January 2017 until 31 December 2017, the first set of GSP/EBA beneficiary countries will start applying the new system. During this period, the GSP *FORM A* as well as the *statement on origin* will both be valid to prove origin of the relevant GSP/EBA beneficiary country. As of 1 January 2018, the *Form A* will no longer be valid to prove origin from one of these countries. The second set of GSP/EBA beneficiary countries will switch to the new system in the same manner, in the period of 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2018. The remaining GSP/EBA beneficiary countries will transfer to the new system from 1 January 2019 until 31 December 2019. However, countries of each period can request an extension of up to six months during which the GSP *FORM A*, as well as the *statement on origin* are both valid to prove origin of the relevant GSP/EBA beneficiary country. Consequently, after 30 June 2020, *Form A* certificates will be no longer recognised by EU customs and *statements on origin* issued by registered exporters will be exclusively required to prove GSP/EBA origin. The Commission also plans to launch a test of the new system in the fourth quarter of 2015.

Origins

For the time being, the system of self-certification by registered exporters will be used to prove origin of countries benefiting from GSP, GSP+ and EBA. However, the Commission envisages to introduce this system also for countries benefiting from bilateral agreements and currently using *EUR 1* origin certificates.