

## Editorial



This edition of the *World Customs Journal* represents a significant milestone in the *Journal's* history and that of the International Network of Customs Universities (INCUI). At the first Partnership in Customs Academic Research and Development (PICARD) conference, which was jointly launched by the World Customs Organization (WCO) and INCUI in 2006, there was considerable debate about how the PICARD initiative should be progressed. One thing in particular that I remember clearly was a message we received from a number of delegates – that the development of an international academic journal dedicated to Customs matters was simply too hard to achieve and excessively ambitious. Undeterred, at our 2007 conference, the first edition of the *World Customs Journal* was launched – and the current edition marks a full ten years of publication. So much for the critics!

The purpose of producing such a journal was to provide customs professionals, academics, industry researchers and research students with an opportunity to share and draw upon research, academic commentary and practical insights to enhance its readers' knowledge and understanding of all aspects of the roles and responsibilities of Customs. At the time of the *Journal's* launch, Secretary-General Mikuriya (who was at that time Deputy Secretary-General of the WCO), announced that, in his view, the *Journal* would serve as a valuable source of reference for Customs to meet the requirements of its new strategic environment, and would also serve as the flagship of the cooperative effort being made by the WCO and the academic world. So, as you can see, the Secretary-General has been a strong supporter from the early days of the partnership – and we thank him for his ongoing commitment and support.

In the intervening ten years, the *Journal* has adhered closely to its original purpose, and has lived up to all expectations as it continues to raise the academic standing of the customs profession. To mark the *Journal's* tenth anniversary, we will be producing a commemorative edition of bound volumes, the details of which will be available shortly.

The current edition includes a variety of articles that examine the issue of regulatory compliance management from the perspective of both government and industry, all of which highlight in some way the increasing compliance burden that regulators are placing on the international trading community. One wonders to what extent the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement will serve to reverse this trend in its efforts to expedite the cross-border movement of goods and reduce the cost of trade through the introduction of simplified and more efficient regulatory procedures. In order for the Agreement to enter into force, two-thirds of the WTO's 164 members are required to complete their domestic ratification process, with 90 member countries having completed this process at the time of writing. In future editions, the Editorial Board would particularly welcome research into the way in which the Agreement is implemented, and the extent to which it achieves its ambitious aims.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D. Widdowson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

David Widdowson  
Editor-in-Chief