

Editorial



I commented in the last edition of the Journal that, despite being only two weeks away from the proclaimed date of the UK's departure from the EU, no resolution was in sight. With that 'deadline' having come and gone, and another 'deadline' looming, the outcome is as uncertain as ever.

Such uncertainty presents a serious threat to the prosperity of the UK trading community, given that the percentage of overseas consignments that is subject to customs requirements could increase from 25 to 100 per cent with little or no notice. In the circumstances, a good understanding of customs processes is key to business success.

A silver lining in the Brexit cloud has been the effort made by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) to strengthen the capacity of the customs profession throughout the UK in preparation for what can only be described as a new era of international trade. To achieve this, HMRC has not only supported the development of a customs academy for the private sector, but is also fully subsidising those who wish to enrol in its courses. This degree of government support for a country's international trading community is unprecedented and is something for which the administration should be commended.

Turning to the current edition of the Journal, the Editorial Board is pleased to include a section dedicated to papers based on a series of innovative WCO workshops on data analytics. This emerging area of research is focused on the need to better utilise the huge amount of information that is available to customs administrations in order to inform strategic and operational decision-making. The potential benefit of developing increasingly sophisticated analytics is obvious, and we would encourage further contributions in this relatively embryonic research field.

Finally, it is with pleasure that I announce the decision to dedicate the September 2020 edition of the Journal to papers that will be delivered at next year's WCO PICARD conference, further details of which are provided in this edition's special report. The Editorial Board looks forward to working closely with the WCO on this initiative and welcomes proposals from prospective contributors.

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

David Widdowson
Editor-in-Chief