

Editorial



This year the World Customs Organization dedicated International Customs Day (26 January 2021) to the important role that customs administrations will be required to play in the wake of 2020 by “bolstering Recovery, Renewal and Resilience for a sustainable supply chain”.¹

As I describe in this edition’s Special Report, the pandemic has affected, and continues to affect, every aspect of daily life, and the role of Customs is no exception. Even the most fundamental elements of customs operations have changed, including the presumption that officers can work from their desk, regulate points of entry, attend traders’ premises, or even proceed past their own front door.

Indeed, the way we do business now and into the future is a far cry from the way things used to be. The concept of officers working remotely has to this point been anathema to many administrations and rejected outright by them. But faced with no alternative, even those administrations have accepted the need to tear up outdated policies and face the reality of our new environment. The interface between academia and Customs is similarly changing – online learning is now *de rigueur*, with many INCU-affiliated institutions now delivering their courses in this way, and countries that have to this point refused to accept online learning as a legitimate form of education are now embracing it.

Conferences and working groups, which are also being run ‘virtually’, are attracting far more participants than has been the case in recent years. Here, the feedback from INCU members is that, despite the inconvenience of time differences that can be significant, attendance at such fora has been made possible due to the considerable savings in time and resources.

Despite such disruptions to our daily lives, it is pleasing to see contributions to the Journal increase in both number and quality. In the current edition we present a broad spectrum of topics ranging from intellectual property rights to digital transformation, from rules of origin to performance management, and from the promotion of diversity to illicit trade in tobacco.

The Editorial Board would like to thank our readers and contributors for your ongoing support, and wish you the best of health during these challenging times.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D. Widdowson'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'D' and 'W'.

Professor David Widdowson AM
Editor-in-Chief

¹ The WCO Secretary General’s International Customs Day address can be found at <http://www.wcoomd.org/en/about-us/international-customs-day/icd-2021.aspx>