

## EDITORIAL



The primary focus of this edition is the theory and practice of international trade facilitation, and I am pleased to have received some excellent contributions which serve to enhance the growing body of knowledge in this important area of study and research. These include articles by Andrew Grainger, who examines the topic from its basic concepts through to implementation; Carolin Eve Bolhöfer, who provides us with an informative examination of its impact on WTO law; and two insightful articles on issues and implications for Africa, by Edward Kafeero and Creck Buyonge & Irina Kireeva.

Other topics addressed by our academic contributors include Rob Preece's analysis of critical factors in the management of excise compliance, and some compelling valuation arguments by Santiago Ibáñez Marsilla. In addition, Michael Wolfgang and Talke Ovie complete their comprehensive coverage of emerging issues in European customs law.

Our practitioner contributions in this edition provide some excellent insights into the way in which the profession of Customs is seeking to address current and future challenges. Firstly, Yukiyasu Aoyama provides us with a critical evaluation of the complex mission of Customs and the increasing need for global cooperation among customs administrations. This is followed by a strategic commentary by Doug Tweddle on the way in which the AEO concept and data management can serve to enhance security, compliance and logistics management. Thirdly, Clay Kerswell provides a comprehensive overview of the reform process that is being progressed in the Middle East. This edition also includes a systematic examination by Carsten Weerth of the complexity of notes associated with HS 2007.

I would like to thank all our contributors for their valuable input, and invite contributions of an equally high standard for the next edition of the Journal, which will focus on the increasingly important issue of capacity building. That edition will also include a summary of outcomes from the WCO PICARD Conference which will be held in Shanghai, China from 14 to 16 May (see [www.wcoomd.org/event.htm](http://www.wcoomd.org/event.htm)). For those of you who are attending, I look forward to seeing you there!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Widdowson'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

David Widdowson  
Editor-in-Chief