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Media Information

Customs Affairs Institute Meeting at FIATA's Headquarters Session of March 17th, 2012

Keeping the pace of changes

The Customs Affairs Institute (CAI) meeting during the FIATA Headquarters session this year, one of its largest audiences ever, gathered to distil the essence of the important changes that have invested the Customs representation activity since the adoption of the SAFE Framework of Standards. Two review-cycles have already taken place and none without important consequences for freight forwarders and Customs representatives.

Mr Van de Perre, Senior Policy Advisor of CLECAT is FIATA's dedicated representative in various WCO subgroups dealing with the review of the SAFE. He referred to the CAI work in his comprehensive presentation on the Review of the WCO SAFE Framework Standards, where he announced that the EU showed the intention not to insist on their proposal for amendment which would permit cargo and goods declarations for security purposes to be merged. There were clear signs of appreciation in the audience of nearly 100 delegates from all over the world.

The CAI Chairman Mr Stephen Morris stressed that having a clear distinction between transport and trade related information seems to be the logical choice. The dual filing process is meant to ensure timely, accurate data from the parties that are best placed to provide such information. The security and confidentiality of clients' data was a key aspect of the international freight forwarder/client relationship

The CAI Deputy Chairman Mr Jean-François Auzéau touched the heart of most of those attending by reflecting on: "How could or would Customs representatives survive in the future?" which was the title of his thought-provoking presentation.

Mr Auzéau said that in recent years, as a result of different WCO initiatives, the efforts to rationalise Customs activities put in place by many an administration has been colossal. The scope and methods of Customs Authorities were enlarged into the Security and Safety domains de facto making the Customs the reference authority in the international trade, with competency over counterfeit, quality and compliance of import and export goods.

Mr Auzéau said, in the margins of the meeting: : "The enlarged scope of Customs is challenging for FIATA members, especially where capacity building does not go hand in hand with the requirements of the political agenda. However we see that Customs require the accurate work provided by our members more and more. CAI and its members will keep pace with the broad changes required by the Customs Authorities around the world and continue providing excellent service for their customers in the foreseeable future."

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The International Federation of Freight Forwarders Associations (FIATA) was founded in Vienna in 1926. Today it is the largest and leading non-governmental organization in the field of transportation, representing 40'000 forwarding and logistics companies employing up to 10 million people in 150 countries. FIATA has consultative status with several United Nations bodies and is recognized by many governmental and private organizations worldwide. The Federation's main objectives are to promote and protect the interests of the freight forwarding industry, to improve the quality of freight forwarding services, to assist with vocational training and to familiarize the business world in particular and the public in general with the wide range services rendered by the industry.

