

DIGITALIZATION OF THE ROMANIAN CUSTOMS SYSTEM: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL IMPORT SYSTEM

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Abstract

The complete digitalization of various public systems is a target objective of the European Union, for the fulfillment of which actions have been initiated for a very long time. The entity is an essential pillar of world trade, occupying the 2nd place in international trade in goods. The main mission of the customs authorities is the supervision of the Union's trade, and in this context, the development and implementation of electronic customs systems, capable of streamlining trade flows, represents an objective necessity. In this general context, Romania is in the process of complete digitalization of foreign trade formalities, putting into operation numerous customs IT systems.

Keywords: digitalization, electronic systems, international trade, surveillance, customs formalities

1. Introduction

According to the Union Customs Code, "all exchanges of information, such as declarations, applications or decisions, between customs authorities and between economic operators and customs authorities, as well as the storage of such information, in accordance with customs legislation, shall be carried out using electronic data-processing techniques"[1]. This requirement, which is over a decade old, has started to be implemented through cooperation between Member States and the European Commission, establishing operational data and requirements for the security and availability of systems, as well as for data storage. The efforts were carried out on the basis of a work programme, which set the following priorities:

"- harmonised exchange of information based on internationally accepted data models and message formats;

- redesign of customs and related processes with a view to increasing their efficiency, effectiveness and uniform application and reducing compliance costs;

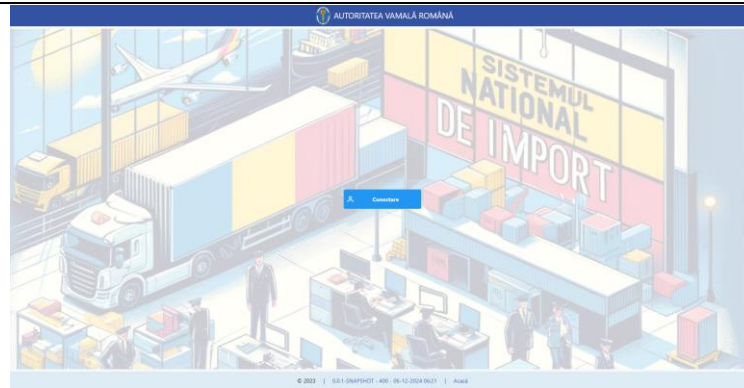
- providing a wide range of electronic customs services to economic operators, allowing them to interact in the same way with the customs authorities of any Member State".[2]

As part of this joint effort, Romania has managed to develop, implement and use, starting with August 1, 2025, a new IT system dedicated to import customs formalities, called the National Import System (SNI). We aim to present some of the functionalities of this digital tool and identify its advantages and the positive effects brought to our country's foreign trade.

2. Paper body

In the legislator's understanding, "the national import system is a system based on an IT application,...which ensures the electronic transmission of data, structured in accordance with the Union provisions in the field of import"[3]. In our opinion, the national import system is a set of elements (rules, procedures, documents, processes, solutions, etc.) in internal interaction and managed in an electronic environment, by the subjects of the customs legal relationship, in accordance with the applicable legal rules, for the purpose of rapidly granting the Union status to goods presented to the customs authorities.

The first step to using this tool in customs flows is to connect to the electronic application. This is done by accessing the link <http://snibalv.anv.ro/ucc1-web/welcome.xhtml>, which leads to the authentication page:



Both economic operators and customs authorities have connection rights. The former prepare and submit customs declarations, send and receive applications and documents, which they transmit with an extended electronic signature to the import customs office, which follows the procedural steps provided for by the legislation for the release of goods into free circulation.

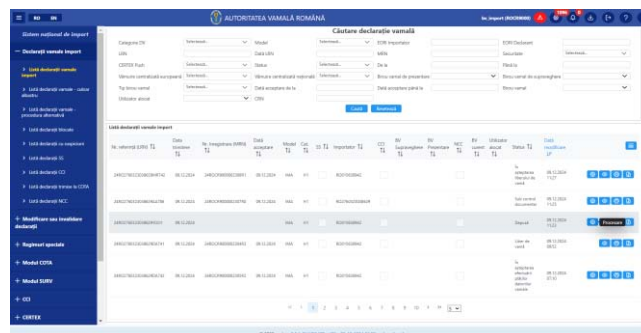
First, the customs worker logs into the system in the authentication module:



and navigate to the main page, which looks like this:



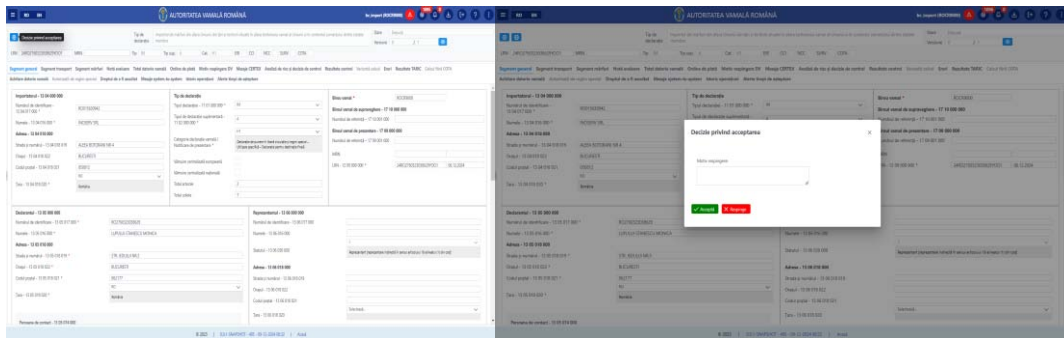
where to access the Import customs declarations menu - List of import customs declarations



Then, select the declaration to be processed and complete the following steps:

1. Accept

- in the Import Customs Declarations - List of Import Customs Declarations menu, click the Process at Customs Declaration Level button
- in the Customs Declaration Details screen, click the Acceptance Decision button, then the Accept button



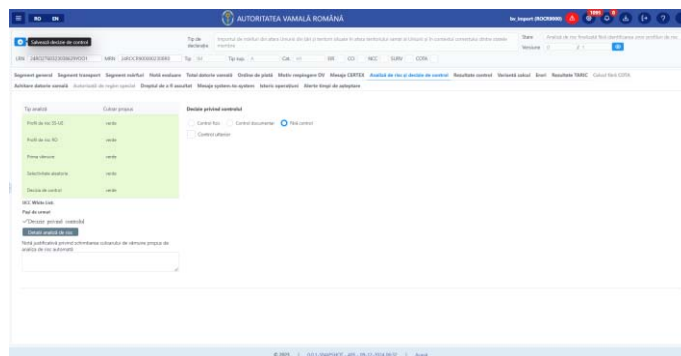
2. Risk analysis

- the application performs risk analysis and places the declaration in a specific control lane. This is symbolized by three colors:

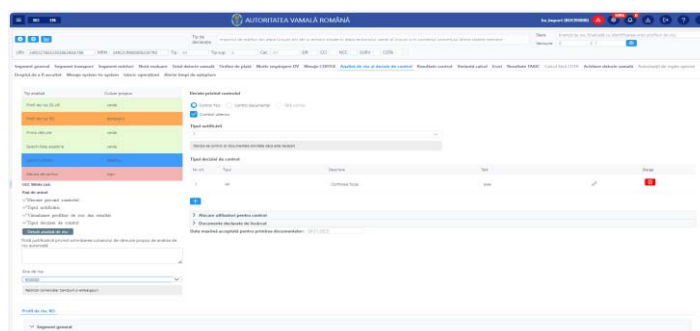
- green (no control);
- orange (requires documentary control);
- red (documentary and physical control).

3. Control decision and control performance

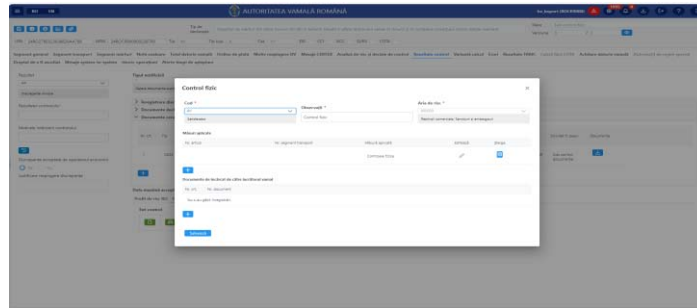
In the green scenario, no control decision is issued and the "Save control decision" button is directly pressed.



In the version where the system identifies certain risks, it places the declaration in the documentary control lane (orange).



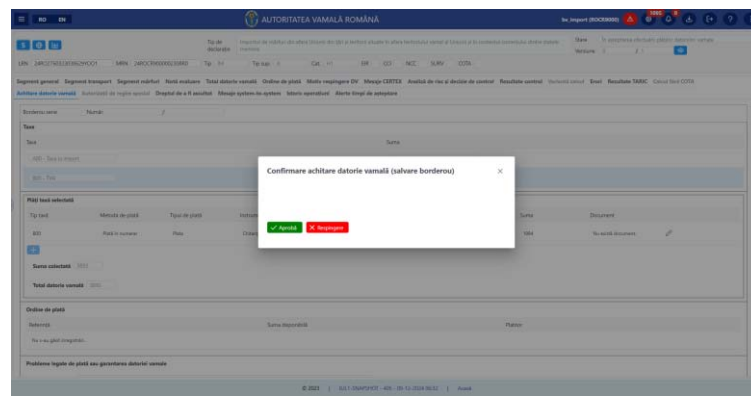
Subsequently, the final control result is downloaded into the application and processing continues for payment.



4. Management of customs debt and other taxes

The declarant's payment of the customs debt and other taxes due and/or, as the case may be, the provision of a guarantee (depending on the particularities of the respective operation) is verified.

If the payment is made in cash or by bank transfer, it is approved electronically.

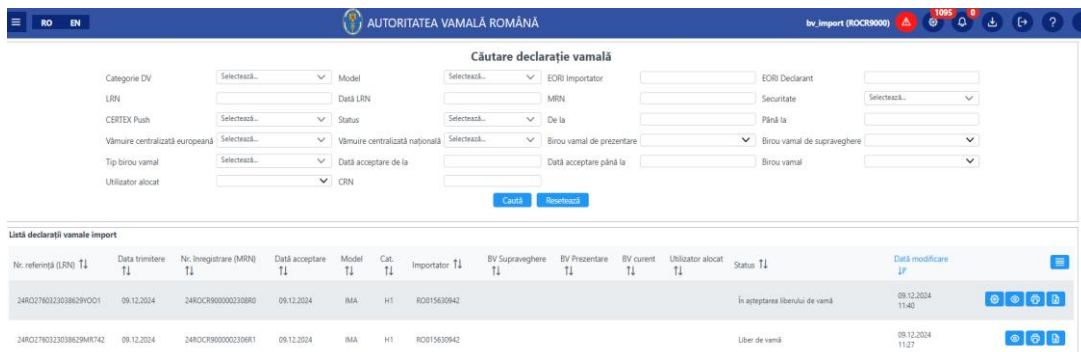


If, however, the economic operator decides to place a deposit at the disposal of the customs authority, prior to processing the declaration, the electronic system approves the payment, eliminating human intervention.

The declaration now appears in the status “Awaiting customs release”.

5. Customs clearance

This is the last stage of the formalities and is granted automatically by the National Import System (SNI), the operating time being approximately 10 seconds. The goods have now become Union goods and can be introduced into the common market.



During its processing, in real time, the customs declaration may undergo changes or be invalidated. Invalidation can also be carried out after customs clearance has been granted, in an electronic environment, all under certain conditions clearly stated by law.

3. Conclusions

Although it had the possibility, stipulated by European customs legislation, to modernize the import system in operation, Romania opted for configuring a new IT application, the advantages of such a solution, from a technical perspective, being superior. From the point of view of the specific tasks of the customs authority and of the supervision and facilitation of European foreign trade, through its architecture and functionalities, the National Import System generates multiple benefits, such as:

- ✓ elimination of physical documents in the entire customs flow (all types of declarations, notifications, commercial, fiscal documents, etc. are communicated exclusively in the application);
- ✓ much more secure identification of users through the use of extended electronic signature (this requirement eliminates the possibility of virtual identity transfer and even theft of this identity);
- ✓ eliminating the human factor from some stages of the customs clearance process and carrying them out exclusively by the system (payment with advance deposit, granting customs clearance, etc.);
- ✓ significant reduction in the time required to complete formalities, a result of both the digitalization of processes and new types of document circuits;
- ✓ full transparency of the services provided by the customs institution (the declaring economic operator visualizes each stage of the flow, knowing at any time the status of his declaration);
- ✓ interoperability with the European Commission systems, a function that allows the automatic validation of the information required within certain processes;
- ✓ standardization of electronic procedural algorithms with those applied by other member states;
- ✓ reduction of bureaucracy and elimination of possible subjective influences on the customs worker, as a result of the absence of physical interaction with the economic agent.

4. Bibliography

[1] Regulation (EU) No. 952/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down the Union Customs Code, Article 6, paragraph 1;

[2] Regulation (EU) No. 952/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down the Union Customs Code, Article 280, paragraph 2;

[3] OPAVR No. 2.478/2025 for the approval of the Technical Rules for the use of the National Import System, Article 2, paragraph 1.