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## AEO CONCEPT IN EU CUSTOMS REFORM

*This research is focused on the evolution of the concept of Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) within the framework of the EU customs system reform in 2023. It was focused on the concept of Trusted and Verified Traders proposed by the reform, which is based on the principles of the AEO program and aimed to further simplify customs procedures, improve transparency and enhance trade security. The hypothesis is that implementing of this concept in Ukraine could additionally simplify customs procedures for Ukrainian foreign economic operators who meet established criteria, as well as improve the efficiency and transparency of customs system management, facilitate Ukraine's integration into the European economic area, and strengthen economic ties with the EU. Based on an analysis of European legislation and academic literature, it has been found that, while Ukraine already possesses certain*

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## AEO В РЕФОРМІ МИТНОЇ СИСТЕМИ ЄС

*Проведено аналіз еволюції концепції Авторизованого економічного оператора (АЕО) у рамках реформи митної системи Європейського Союзу 2023 р. Увага авторів зосереджена на запропонованій реформою концепції Довіренних і перевірених трейдерів, що базується на принципах програми АЕО та спрямована на подальше спрощення митних процедур, покращення прозорості й підвищення безпеки торгівлі. Гіпотеза полягає в тому, що впровадження цієї концепції в Україні може додатково спростити митні процедури для українських суб'єктів зовнішньоекономічної діяльності, що відповідають встановленим критеріям, а також підвищити ефективність і прозорість управління митною системою, сприяти інтеграції України в європейський економічний простір і посилити економічні зв'язки з ЄС. На основі аналізу європейського законодавства та наукової літератури зазначено, що, хоча*



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*prerequisites of implementing the AEO programme, it faces challenges, including insufficient integration of information systems and the need to strengthen the institutional capacity of customs authorities. The results of the research indicate that implementing the Trusted and Verified Traders' Concept could expand opportunities for automation and enhance transparency in customs procedures, which is an important step towards integrating Ukraine into international economic processes.*

*Keywords:* customs reform, AEO, trade security, customs procedures, EU, Ukraine.

**JEL Classification:** F13, F15, K33, L81.

*Україна вже має певні передумови імплементації програми АЕО, перед нею стоять виклики, зокрема недостатня інтеграція інформаційних систем і потреба у зміцненні інституційної спроможності митних органів. Результати дослідження свідчать, що впровадження концепції Довіrenих і перевіrenих трейдерів (ДПТ) може розширити можливості для автоматизації й підвищення прозорості митних процедур, що є важливим кроком на шляху до інтеграції України в міжнародні економічні процеси.*

*Ключові слова:* митна реформа, АЕО, безпека торгівлі, митні процедури, ЄС, Україна.

## **Introduction**

In the context of globalization and the accelerated development of international trade, institutions that facilitate the simplification of customs procedures have become a necessary condition for increasing competitiveness and security. One such instrument is the institution of Authorized Economic Operator (AEO), which has been introduced in many countries of the world as a response to the need to strengthen the security of supply chains and reduce the administrative burden on business. In world practice, the AEO institution is one of the most important instruments for simplifying customs procedures for foreign economic operators that meet certain standards of reliability and security.

In 2023, the European Commission presented "the most ambitious reform of the Customs Union since its creation in 1968"<sup>1</sup> (European Commission, 2023a), which expands the AEO concept by introducing a new Concept of Trusted and Verified Traders. The latter provides for the introduction of simplified procedures for traders that meet strict criteria of financial stability, compliance with security measures and proper documentation.

The AEO global concept, its development and impact on international trade, as well as the advantages and problems of implementation in different countries of the world have become the subject of numerous studies by both foreign (Chen & Ma, 2015; Świerczyńska, 2018; Romans, 2022; Gwardzińska, 2023) and domestic scientists, in particular Kanygina et al. (2022). The problem research of implementation and features of the AEO development in Ukraine, as well as their compliance with international standards, was carried out by Verbytskyi et al. (2021), Mykytenko et al. (2023), Vargulyak (2023). Lux (2023) and Muñiz (2023) devoted their works to the study of reforms of the EU customs system. Plohuta (2024a, 2024b) examines the features of the implementation of the EU customs reform in Ukraine and its prospects and challenges for Ukrainian customs. The prospects and challenges of

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<sup>1</sup> All quotes from foreign sources are translated by the authors of the article.

implementing the new Concept of Trusted and Verified Traders in the EU were the subject of research by Fruscione (2023), Lux (2024).

Second part of the article is devoted to a substantive analysis of recent publications and research, which necessitates an in-depth study of key areas, challenges, and prospects for implementing AEO simplifications for foreign economic entities in international supply chains. Particular attention is paid to the understudied problems of implementing the Trusted and Verified Traders (TVT) Concept, which includes an analysis of the conditions, risks, and prospects for its adaptation to the realities of the Ukrainian customs system.

The aim of the research is to study the evolution of the AEO concept in the context of the EU customs reform, identify the main prospects and challenges for Ukraine, as well as study the prospects for integrating the TVT concept into the practice of Ukrainian foreign economic activity and assess its possible impact on simplifying customs procedures, increasing trade security, and facilitating Ukraine's integration into international economic processes.

The problem of the research is to determine the assessment of Ukraine's readiness to harmonize its customs system with new EU standards and the possibility of implementing the TVT concept to simplify and strengthen trade relations with the European Union. The relevance of this issue is growing in light of Ukraine's integration course into the European Union and its role in regional trade.

The main hypothesis is that the introduction in Ukraine of the Trusted and Verified Traders Concept, which is an improved version of the concept of Authorized Economic Operator, can further simplify customs procedures for Ukrainian entities of foreign economic activity that meet the established criteria, as well as increase the efficiency and transparency of customs administration, promote Ukraine's integration into the European economic space and strengthen economic ties with the EU.

The research methods were an analysis of European customs legislation, a review of scientific publications on the AEO program and its evolution, as well as a qualitative analysis of the prospects and challenges associated with the implementation of the TVT concept in Ukraine. To assess Ukraine's readiness to implement reforms, comparative analysis methods, a review of legislative initiatives, and interviews with experts in the field of customs were used.

The main part of the article consists of three sections. The first presents a reform overview of the EU customs system in evolution terms of the AEO program, its role in trade security, and its impact on international supply chains. The second section is devoted to a review of recent scientific research and publications on the main elements of the EU customs system reform, the functioning of AEO in Ukraine and the world, and the new TVT concept. The third section considers an assessment of the prospects for the implementation of the TVT concept in Ukraine, identifies potential barriers, and recommends ways to overcome them.

## **1. Reform of the EU customs system: what will change for AEOs**

The 2023 reform of the European Union customs system (European Commission, 2023a) is one of the most ambitious and comprehensive measures aimed at modernizing customs procedures, improving risk management and facilitating international trade. The reform is based on three key principles: increased efficiency, geopolitical relevance and the ability to adapt to new challenges. These principles reflect current global trade trends, the changing economic environment and the need to strengthen risk control, in particular in the context of the growing role of e-commerce.

### *1.1. EU Customs Data Centre*

One of the central elements of the reform of the EU customs system is the creation of the EU Customs Data Hub, which will become an important tool for integrating national customs systems into a single digital platform. This platform will allow foreign economic operators to submit data on goods for customs clearance only once for all EU member states through a unified interface, which will significantly reduce the administrative burden and minimize duplication of processes. Data centralization will not only simplify customs procedures, but also strengthen the analytical capabilities of customs authorities, which will contribute to more effective customs risk management and the fight against smuggling and fraud in international trade.

### *1.2. Creation of a single EU customs authority*

Another important aspect of the reform is the creation of a single EU Customs Authority, which will be responsible for centralised risk management within the EU customs union. This authority will play a key role in coordinating the activities of national customs administrations and ensuring a common approach to risk management, which is particularly important in the context of today's global challenges. Centralised risk management will allow resources to be focused on high-risk entities and operations, while bona fide economic operators will be able to benefit from significant simplifications under the new AEO concept. This concept expands the AEO programme and allows entities that meet high standards of compliance with customs rules and procedures to benefit from simplified procedures, such as reduced customs checks, accelerated declarations, the use of a single simplified declaration for multiple transactions and automated customs clearance procedures.

### *1.3. New risk management mechanisms*

The reform will introduce a new risk management model in the European Union, involving Member States, the European Commission, the EU Customs Authority and other relevant authorities, including market

surveillance authorities. An important element of this new governance model is the partnership with business, which will become the basis for the implementation of effective risk management.

The reform will establish a new EU government structure responsible for implementing risk management aimed at protecting the EU's common border for goods. First, a Central Risk Analysis Capability will be created on the basis of the EU Customs Authority, which will use new data from the EU Customs Data Hub. It will also develop a mechanism to ensure a more harmonised implementation of risk management and control at the EU's common border and establish a framework for cooperation between the different authorities managing the single market and the customs union. This process will be completed by creating a mechanism for developing a shared vision for risk prioritization, which will help focus efforts on the most critical aspects of risk management in the European Union.

#### *1.4. Unified interface for submitting customs declarations*

The reform pays special attention to the development of digital tools and the introduction of a single interface for submitting customs declarations (Single window), which will ensure harmonized compliance with customs legislation requirements throughout the EU. This system will significantly reduce logistics costs and speed up the time for moving goods across customs borders, ensuring faster and more efficient service for foreign economic operators.

In addition, the reform is aimed at simplifying customs procedures for e-commerce, which is gaining increasing importance in the global economy. E-commerce platforms, such as large online stores and marketplaces, will receive the status of conditional importers and will be responsible for customs clearance of goods sold through their services and moved across the EU customs borders. This implies that such platforms will be obliged to submit customs declarations on behalf of their sellers and buyers, which will contribute to increasing the transparency of customs operations. Such a change will simplify the process for end consumers, reducing bureaucratic obstacles for them, and at the same time will increase the effectiveness of control over compliance with customs rules by government authorities.

#### *1.5. Reform implementation stages*

The reform envisages a phased implementation of the described new tools and systems. According to the plan, the roll-out of the reform will continue over the next 10–15 years, which will allow for the gradual introduction of new elements without disrupting the existing process of the EU customs authorities. The European Customs Data Centre will be deployed in several stages, with e-commerce platforms starting in 2028 to use the new customs clearance regime. By 2032, businesses will be able to use the European Customs Data Centre on a voluntary basis, and from 2038 this will become a mandatory requirement for all participants in international trade.

The reform of the EU customs system is an important step towards creating a single customs area that will allow the European Union to respond more effectively to modern challenges in trade, increase the security and transparency of customs procedures, and promote the development of international cooperation in the field of customs.

## **2. Review of recent scientific research and publications**

The reform of the EU customs system, which introduces the concept of Trusted and Verified Traders as an extension of the AEO status, has become the subject of scientific research focused on studying the directions of modernization of customs systems and the increased use of digital tools to increase the security of international trade and the efficiency of customs procedures.

### *2.1. Innovations in the EU Customs Reform in 2023*

In Ukraine, research on the reform of the EU customs system remains limited, especially in the context of analyzing its impact on countries seeking integration into the European Economic Area. The authors of the article are among the few Ukrainian scholars studying this issue. In their research, Karavayev et al. (2024) laid the theoretical foundations for considering key aspects of the EU customs reform, highlighting the European Commission's strategy to eliminate inefficiencies through digitalization and an emphasis on e-commerce, while emphasizing the need to synchronize Ukraine's customs information systems with the future EU Customs Data Center. The authors have laid the foundation for further research in the future aimed at deepening the analysis in the context of the adaptation and possibilities of applying the AEO and TVT concepts in Ukraine, so this article is a logical continuation of such research.

Plohuta (2024b) also actively studied the specifics of the reform of the EU customs union, focusing on the challenges and opportunities for Ukraine arising from the introduction of the updated AEO and TVT concepts and emphasizing the importance of modernizing the information systems of Ukrainian customs authorities and implementing innovative IT solutions that are in line with the EU's digital initiatives.

Lux (2023) critically assesses the impact of the creation of the EU Customs Data Centre on AEO programmes, highlighting the shift from the traditional AEO model to the new TVT concept, which gives market operators more autonomy in customs clearance, in particular through the possibility of self-release of goods, while at the same time shifting more responsibility to importers and exporters. In his follow-up work, Lux (2024) analyses the implications of the proposed reform, in particular the issue of the transfer of responsibility in the implementation of customs procedures, criticizing that such approaches do not take into account the complexity of supply chains, where customs brokers and logistics operators play an important role.

Muñiz (2023) proposes a promising approach to the reform of the EU Customs Union through the introduction of artificial intelligence and data analytics, highlighting the importance of the EU Customs Data Centre for centralizing information and accelerating checks, which simplifies the customs clearance of low-risk goods.

In general, scientific research focuses on updating the AEO concept, digitalization of the customs system and risk management, as well as the need to harmonize customs procedures and technological solutions to ensure more efficient international trade. For Ukraine, the implementation of the AEO concept is both a challenge and an opportunity, requiring legislative changes and infrastructure modernization, but ultimately will contribute to integration into the EU economic space and ensure more secure and efficient trade relations.

### *2.2. AEO as a tool for compliance, security and trade facilitation*

An analysis of current research on AEO confirms the key role of this initiative in ensuring that foreign economic operators (FEOs) comply with customs requirements and enhance the security of international trade. Chen and Ma (2015) and Romans (2022) focus on the AEO importance in risk management in global supply chains. Chen and Ma emphasize that cooperation between governments and businesses is the basis for reducing risks and strengthening supply security. Romans, examining the experience of South Africa, shows that the AEO program not only reduces administrative burdens, but also increases the level of security in international trade, which contributes to the economic development of the country.

Other studies also confirm the important AEO role in stimulating economic activity and ensuring security. For her part, Świerczyńska (2018) notes the critical importance of striking a balance between simplifying customs procedures and maintaining effective controls that contribute to the security of trade flows. Gwardzińska (2023) considers AEO as a tool for verifying compliance with customs regulations, drawing attention to the lack of uniform rules on sanctions for violations within the EU, which leads to uneven conditions for program participants.

Unlike numerous foreign works, studies of international experience in implementing AEO in Ukraine remain quite limited, as does the study of individual aspects of the reform of the EU customs system. In this context, the authors of the study act as leading Ukrainian scholars, focusing on a thorough study of this topic, emphasizing the prospects and challenges for adapting the new concept in the conditions of Ukraine. Karavaev et al. (2022) conducted a thorough analysis of the experience of implementing AEO in the USA, the EU and China, emphasizing the positive impact of AEO on accelerating international logistics, which can be valuable in the context of geopolitical instability in Ukraine. Kanygin et al. (2022) examined the need to improve the screening process for AEO candidates in Ukraine, comparing

it with the European model, and recommended adapting control mechanisms. Duginets and Vdovichenko (2024) examined the complexities associated with different national requirements that complicate the mutual recognition of AEO statuses, emphasizing the importance of international harmonization of procedures to increase the effectiveness of the program.

Overall, the research confirms that the AEO program is a critically important tool for ensuring the security and efficiency of international trade. However, its implementation faces a number of challenges, in particular in the area of harmonization of procedures and establishment of close cooperation between customs authorities and business. For Ukraine, which continues its integration course in the context of geopolitical changes, it is important to adapt the AEO program to international standards. This requires not only political will, but also strengthening cooperation between state authorities and foreign economic operators, as well as the introduction of the latest technologies to increase the efficiency of customs procedures.

### *2.3. Implementation of the AEO Institute in Ukraine: challenges, benefits and ways to improve*

The issue of functioning and obtaining AEO status in Ukraine is of considerable interest in academic sphere, as this initiative is part of a broader customs reform in the context of European integration. The conducted studies demonstrate both prospects and challenges in the implementation of this institution in Ukraine.

Scientists unanimously note that the AEO introduction has significant potential for simplifying customs procedures, reducing time and money costs, and increasing the competitiveness of Ukrainian companies in international markets. Verbytskyi et al. (2021) emphasize that the adaptation of Ukrainian customs legislation to EU norms reduces administrative pressure on enterprises, facilitating their activities in the international arena. Adamiv (2022) adds that obtaining AEO status allows companies to take advantage of a number of advantages in customs control, which increases their reputation in international markets.

An important aspect is also the methodological approach to assessing enterprises applying for AEO status. Vakulchyk et al. (2023) developed a methodology that includes the use of customs diagnostic indicators, which ensures objectivity in assigning AEO status and increases the transparency of the process. This is an important element for the institute development in Ukraine, as it allows avoiding subjectivity and ensuring transparency of procedures. Researchers also note the significant role of international standards in the development of the AEO institute in Ukraine. Mykytenko et al. (2023) emphasize the importance of compliance with World Customs Organization standards, such as security standards, which allow Ukraine to more actively integrate into global supply chains and strengthen international trade.



Looking ahead, the AEO introduction is accompanied by a number of problems for both large and especially small and medium-sized businesses. As of October 30, 2024, the Unified State Register of Authorized Economic Operators includes 63 enterprises, most of which are large, while for small and medium-sized businesses, fulfilling the requirements for obtaining the status remains a difficult task. Verbytskyi et al. (2021) note that the customs clearance process remains complex and it requires the introduction of new technologies. Varhulyak (2023) emphasizes the existing gaps in national legislation that slow down the process of enterprise authorization and reduce the effectiveness of realizing the potential of AEO. This problem is also confirmed by Plohuta (2024a), drawing attention to the terminological difficulties and shortcomings in the adaptation of Ukrainian legislation to EU norms. Some researchers even doubt the achievement of the expected results from the AEO introduction. Ryndenko et al. (2023) emphasize that although the new customs procedure is designed to facilitate foreign economic activity; its real impact on business is not yet fully understood and requires additional research.

Deepening the analysis, the article by Bezrydna et al. (2024) is devoted to the legal regulation of AEO status in the context of fulfilling Ukraine's obligations under the Association Agreement with the European Union. The paper examines international standards, in particular the "Framework Standards for Security and Facilitation of International Trade" (SAFE), developed by the World Customs Organization, which became the basis for the formation of Ukrainian legislation. Particular attention is paid to the issues of implementing these standards into national customs law, which contributes to the development of the AEO institution.

Ivanchenko (2024) examines the AEO implementation in Ukraine during martial law, emphasizing the importance of maintaining European integration processes despite external challenges. The author notes that, despite the aggression from Russia, the AEO implementation is an important stage in simplifying customs procedures and increasing the competitiveness of Ukrainian companies in international markets. However, he also emphasizes the existence of significant difficulties in the process of obtaining the status, especially due to the long terms of AEO obtaining, which can be delayed up to a year.

Klyatsky et al. (2024) analyze the problems of implementing the AEO institution in Ukraine, comparing the Ukrainian experience with more developed European practices. The main obstacles include the complexity of the procedures for obtaining AEO status for small and medium-sized businesses, which often do not have sufficient resources to ensure compliance with the criteria. In addition, the low level of awareness of the benefits of AEO status among entrepreneurs negatively affects the pace of implementation of this system.

All of the above publications emphasize the importance of developing the AEO institution in Ukraine as an element of European integration, but

also draw attention to the challenges associated with the adaptation of Ukrainian customs legislation, the complexity of procedures, and the need for harmonization with international standards.

#### *2.4. "Trusted and Verified Traders" Concept: what will change for business*

Merz (2024) identifies key changes in EU customs legislation, including the transition from AEO to the new AEO status. The main changes relate to the technological readiness of operators, including integration with the EU Customs Hub platform for real-time data transmission. This will allow customs authorities to receive up-to-date information on the movement of goods, increasing the efficiency of controls and reducing the number of checks. In order to obtain AEO status, AEO operators will need to invest in new technologies, which, although opening up new opportunities, also create additional obligations and risks, especially for small businesses.

Fruscione (2023) notes that the introduction of new technologies within the AEO framework will have a positive impact on companies that are ready to innovate, but may create barriers for SMEs that do not have sufficient resources to make such changes. The author suggests considering the possibility of additional support for small market entities to ensure a level playing field for all operators.

The introduction of the TVT status, despite certain technological and financial requirements, can significantly increase the efficiency of customs control, help reduce the administrative burden and optimize processes for business. Particular attention should be paid to the challenges for small and medium-sized businesses, which may experience significant financial burdens from the need for technological modernization. In addition, the introduction of the Trusted and Verified Traders concept in Ukraine opens up new opportunities for integration into European logistics chains and improved interaction with EU customs authorities. This creates the potential for more harmonious cooperation with European partners, simplification of customs procedures and strengthening Ukraine's positions in international markets.

### **3. Advantages of introducing the concept of Trusted and Verified Traders in Ukraine**

Aligning Ukraine's customs policy with the EU customs reforms will provide significant benefits, especially within the new AEO concept. This concept is based on the principles of the AEO program and aims to further simplify customs procedures improve transparency and increase trade security.

#### *3.1. Improved trade security and simplified procedures*

One of the key benefits of implementing the TVT concept is the increased level of security in international trade, achieved through real-time

data exchange and enhanced monitoring of supply chains. By aligning its actions with this concept, Ukraine can improve customs security through the use of a centralized European Customs Data Center, which promotes transparency and reduces risks in international trade (European Commission, 2023a). Alignment with this framework will allow Ukrainian companies to obtain TVT status, which will provide access to simplified customs procedures: reduced physical checks, accelerated cargo clearance and the ability to transmit cargo data in real time. Such simplified processes will help Ukrainian companies increase efficiency, reduce transaction costs and strengthen their competitiveness in the EU market (WCO, 2021). Reducing customs intervention in the form of periodic inspections and the ability to self-monitor compliance with customs requirements will also create additional benefits for businesses in Ukraine (European Commission, 2023b).

### *3.2. Strengthening trade relations through mutual recognition agreements*

One of the main outcomes of aligning the Ukrainian customs system with EU standards is the potential for concluding Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) between Ukraine and the EU. These agreements contribute to improving trade flows, as mutual recognition of customs controls and authorizations simplifies customs procedures for both parties (WCO, 2021). This will not only enable Ukraine to simplify access to the EU market, but also lay the foundation for deeper economic integration. With the introduction of the TVT concept, Ukraine can position itself as a reliable trading partner in the EU. This will open up opportunities for concluding MRAs, which will facilitate smoother customs procedures and eliminate delays at the borders (European Commission, 2023c). This is particularly important for Ukrainian exporters, who face administrative barriers and significant delays in moving goods across the border.

### *3.3. Increasing economic competitiveness and investment attractiveness*

The introduction of the TVT concept will also contribute to increasing Ukraine's economic competitiveness by reducing the administrative burden and accelerating customs clearance processes. Optimized customs procedures reduce border crossing times and reduce administrative costs, which is especially important for Ukrainian exporters in the European market. This will allow Ukrainian enterprises to focus on improving their products rather than meeting complex customs requirements, which will contribute to increasing their productivity and efficiency.

Harmonizing Ukraine's customs procedures with EU requirements will also increase its investment attractiveness. For international investors, stability, transparency and predictability of regulatory procedures are important factors. The TVT introduction and compliance with European

customs standards will contribute to creating a favorable business climate in Ukraine, which in turn will stimulate foreign investment and economic growth (World Bank, 2023).

Therefore, harmonizing Ukraine's customs policy with the reforms of the EU customs system within the framework of the TVT concept can be an important step towards economic and full integration with the EU, contributing to both improving the security of international trade and increasing the country's competitiveness and investment attractiveness.

### **Conclusions**

The research is devoted to the analysis of the evolution of the Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) concept in the context of the European Union customs system reform in 2023 and the study of the prospects for adapting the updated concept of Trusted and Verified Traders in Ukraine.

The results of the research confirmed the hypothesis that the implementation of new approaches within the framework of the EU customs reform will contribute to increasing the efficiency of customs procedures, in particular through simplification for certified economic operators, and can become a key element for increasing the security of supply chains in the context of globalization. The proposed concept of Trusted and Verified Traders is a logical continuation of the AEO development, which is focused on strengthening the interaction between customs authorities and the private sector, which creates new opportunities for automating processes and implementing digital solutions.

In the research it has been found that, although Ukraine has already made significant steps towards adapting its customs system to EU standards, in particular through the increase in the number of AEOs, a number of challenges remain, including insufficient integration of information systems, the need to improve the institutional capacity of customs authorities and interaction with the business community. Despite these challenges, the study proves that Ukraine has significant prospects for further integration of the latest standards, and the concept of Trusted and Verified Traders can significantly contribute to this process.

The research obtained additional unplanned results related to the identification of new aspects of interaction between customs authorities and economic operators, in particular the need to harmonize the regulatory framework and increase the level of trust between all participants in customs procedures. In addition, it was found that the AEO development in Ukraine can be accelerated through international technical assistance and training of personnel in accordance with best European practices.

The scientific novelty of the research lies in the comprehensive analysis of the impact of the reform of the EU customs system on the development of the AEO concept and its potential for implementation in Ukraine. The research highlights new trends in the development of customs procedures, which are important for the future integration of Ukraine into the European Economic Area, as well as for increasing its competitiveness in world markets.

The practical value of the results obtained is determined by the possibility of their use in developing new approaches to adapting Ukraine's customs policy in accordance with EU reforms. This research can become the basis for improving the regulatory framework in the field of customs policy, which will contribute to strengthening the economic security of the state and creating favorable conditions for business.

The prospects for further research in this area are a detailed analysis of the impact of the implementation of the Trusted and Verified Traders' Concept on the development of small and medium-sized businesses in Ukraine, as well as a study of best practices in the use of digital technologies in the customs sector to ensure transparency and efficiency of control procedures. An important area of further research is also studying the impact of customs reforms on cross-border trade and cooperation between customs authorities of different countries.

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