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**Report Highlights:**

This report contains summaries of relevant decisions and developments between June 15 and July 30 from the meetings of the supreme regulatory body of the Russia-Kazakhstan-Belarus Customs Union (CU) - the Council of the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC), as well as regular weekly meetings of the EEC working body - the EEC Collegium, that impact the CU food and agriculture policy. The highlights include publication of a revised CU tariff schedule, adjusted for Russia's WTO commitments, and adoption of the Technical Regulation of the Customs Union "Safety Requirements for Food Additives, Flavorings, and Technological Aids" that will come into force as of July 1, 2013.

## **General Information**

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The documents below are hyperlinked via Google Translate for readers seeking further details. Select "refresh" on your browser if the page does not translate to the end. Please note that the CU is often delayed when publishing attachments to decisions. If there is an attachment in a decision that is not yet linked, please check back again.

## **Vietnam Interested in Customs Union Membership**

During his visit to Russia, the president of Vietnam, Dr. Truong Tan Sang, announced at a July 29 press conference that his country is interested in joining the Customs Union of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan. He said that Vietnam's membership in the CU would greatly benefit its bilateral trade turnover with Russia, assessed at USD 3 billion in 2011. The announcement came despite the fact that Vietnam has no common borders with any of the CU countries. The Vietnamese President also said that Russia and Vietnam may announce the start of talks on a free trade agreement as early as the September 2012 APEC Summit in Vladivostok.

## **6<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE EURASIAN ECONOMIC COMMISSION COUNCIL June 20, 2012**

***Publication Date: June 22, 2012***

**[EEC Council Decision No. 42.](#)** *About Negotiations with New Zealand on Conclusion of a Free Trade Agreement* - original in [Russian](#)

**Summary:** The decision calls for consultations between the CU Parties and the EEC Collegium on the prospects of concluding free trade agreements by the next meeting of the EEC Council. The EEC Collegium is instructed to include the issue of the FTA with New Zealand on the agenda of the next meeting of the EEC Council.

**[EEC Council Decision No. 43.](#)** *On Activities of the Eurasian Economic Commission in the sphere of International Trade Negotiations* - original in [Russian](#)

**Summary:** The EEC Council effectively postponed approval of a draft documents on the issue drafted by the EEC Collegium until the next meeting of the EEC Council. The draft documents, in particular, defined the scope of involvement of the EEC Commission in the trade negotiations of the CU Parties launched before February 1, 2012. According to the drafts, the EEC Commission will be engaged in the development of negotiating positions for all such trade talks on issues of its competence, including customs, TBT, SPS, and trade remedies regulation, as well as free trade agreements.

**EEC Council Decision No. 45.** *On Organization by the Parties of Talks about Harmonization of Excise Rates on Alcohol and Tobacco Products* - original in [Russian](#)

**Summary:** The EEC Council instructed the EEC Minister of Economy and Financial Policy and the authorized bodies of the Parties to develop a road map on harmonization of excise duty rates on alcohol and tobacco products and requested a report on the progress at the next EEC Council meeting in September 2012.

**EEC Council Decision No. 48.** *On the Regulation about the Procedure of Development, Adoption, Amending, and Cancellation of a CU Technical Regulation* - original in [Russian](#)

**Summary:** The EEC Council approved an updated version of the above Regulation, which will replace the current one that was approved by the CU Decision No. 453 of November 18, 2010. The change is largely aimed to reflect the development of the Single Economic Space and the Eurasian Economic Commission, as well as refine the language of the regulation. The key provision about the public comment period for draft CU Technical Regulations of no less than 60 days is preserved in the new version of the regulation. One of the novelties of the updated regulation is that in addition to the authorized bodies of the CU countries, the EEC Commission may be put in charge of drafting CU TRs, in which case it may hire a contractor for drafting a TR.

***Publication Date: June 25, 2012***

**EEC Council Decision No. 51.** *On the Issue of Studying the Feasibility of Concluding a Free Trade Agreement in the Framework of a Joint Research Group between the Customs Union Member-States and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam* - original in [Russian](#)

**Summary:** The EEC Council took note of the information about the progress of the CU-Vietnam FTA talks and instructed the EEC Collegium to prepare a draft document on agreed approaches for the next meeting of the EEC Council.

***Publication Date: July 12, 2012***

**EEC Council Decision No. 56.** *On Amending the Customs Union Commission Decision No. 130 of November 27, 2009, "On the Common Customs and Tariff Regulation of the Customs Union of the Republic of Belarus, Republic of Kazakhstan, and the Russian Federation" Regarding Application of the Import Customs Duties of the Common Customs Tariff of the Customs Union* - original in [Russian](#)

**Summary:** According to the amendments, the import customs duties of the CU Common Customs Tariff shall apply to goods imported to the CU from any country, except for cases of granting tariff preferences and application of a free trade regime. Previously, according to the CU Commission Decision No. 130, such duties applied to goods depending on the country of origin and the terms of their import in accordance with the legislation of the CU member-states, unless otherwise established by the CU Agreement on the Common Customs and Tariff

Regulation of January 25, 2008, the CU Commission Decision No. 130, and other decisions of the CU Commission.

**7<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE EURASIAN ECONOMIC COMMISSION COUNCIL**  
**July 16, 2012**

***Publication Date: July 23, 2012***

**EEC Council Decision No. 54.** *On Approval of the Unified Commodity Nomenclature of the Foreign Economic Activity of the Customs Union and the Common Customs Tariff of the Customs Union - original in [Russian](#)*

**Summary:** The decision approves a revised version of the CU tariff schedule, which was adjusted to reflect Russia's WTO tariff commitments. The decision will come into force 30 days after its publication.

**8<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE EURASIAN ECONOMIC COMMISSION COUNCIL**  
**July 20, 2012**

***Publication Date: July 20, 2012***

**EEC Council Decision No. 58.** *On Adoption of the Technical Regulation of the Customs Union "Safety Requirements for Food Additives, Flavorings, and Technological Aids" - original in [Russian](#)*

**Summary:** The document adopts the Technical Regulation (TR) of the Customs Union "Safety Requirements for Food Additives, Flavorings, and Technological Aids" (TR TS 029/2012.) According to the Decision, the TR shall come into force as of July 1, 2013.

**EEC Council Decision No. 61.** *On Amendments to the Regulation on the Single Mark of Circulation of Products on the Market of the Customs Union Member-States - original in [Russian](#)*

**Summary:** The EEC Council has amended the above Regulation to ensure that not only producers (suppliers) of goods, but also authorized representatives of the producer and importers have the right to mark products with the CU's Single Mark of Circulation. In addition, a clause prohibiting the use of markings that can be confusing for consumers, have been added.

**14<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE EURASIAN ECONOMIC COMMISSION COLLEGIUM**  
**June 13, 2012**

***Publication Date: June 26, 2012***

**EEC Collegium Decision No. 93.** *On Amendments to the Customs Union Commission's Decision No. 769 of August 16, 2011 "On Adoption of the Technical Regulations of the Customs Union "On Safety of Packaging"" - original in [Russian](#)*

**Summary:** The decision clarifies some transitional provisions regarding entry into force of the Technical Regulations of the Customs Union “On Safety of Packaging”. The decision will come into force 30 days after its publication but will affect business as of July 1, 2012.

**16<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE EURASIAN ECONOMIC COMMISSION COLLEGIUM**  
**June 28, 2012**

*Publication Date: July 3, 2012*

**EEC Collegium Decision No. 96.** *On the Reference List of Checkpoints at the External Border of the Customs Union* - original in [Russian](#)

**Summary:** The EEC Collegium approved a form of the above List, which will contain reference information on the location, name, functionality (i.e. SPS capability), and working hours of the checkpoints at the CU border.

**17<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE EURASIAN ECONOMIC COMMISSION COLLEGIUM**  
**July 5, 2012**

*Publication Date: July 6, 2012*

**EEC Collegium Decision No. 100.** *On Designation by the Republic of Belarus of White Sugar Exporters* - original in [Russian](#)

**Summary:** The EEC Collegium took note of the information from Belarus about designating its official white sugar exporters for the period from May 20, 2012, through November 20, 2012.

**19<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE EURASIAN ECONOMIC COMMISSION COLLEGIUM**  
**July 19, 2012**

*Publication Date: July 20, 2012*

**EEC Collegium Decision No. 113.** *About the Consultative Committee on Agricultural Sector* - original in [Russian](#)

**Summary:** The decision establishes the Consultative Committee on Agricultural Sector, appoints Sergey Sidorsky, member of the EEC Collegium, as Head of the Committee, and approves its Regulations. According to the Regulations, the Committee will be in charge of the following issues:

- setting priorities for development of the agricultural sector in the Single Economic Space (SES);
- establishment of efficient mechanisms and tools of a coordinated agricultural policy in accordance with the WTO requirements;
- development and implementation of interstate agricultural programs and projects within SES;

- contents of international agreements and decisions of the Eurasian Economic Commission in the area of agricultural policy and domestic support to agriculture;
- development of industrial and technical cooperation and market forms of industrial integration in agricultural sector;
- consideration of uniform rules for forming forecast balances of demand and supply on major agricultural products and food in the CU and SES;
- development of scientific and technical cooperation in order to make the agricultural sector more competitive and raise its innovation and export potential;
- other issues within the competence of the EEC Collegium.

Russia will be represented in the Committee by two Deputy Ministers of Agriculture, Ilya Shestakov and Dmitry Yuriev, and the Head of the Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance Sergey Dankvert.

## **20<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE EURASIAN ECONOMIC COMMISSION COLLEGIUM July 26, 2012**

***Publication Date: July 26, 2012***

**EEC Collegium Decision No. 120.** *On Amendments to Section 1.8 of the Unified List of Goods, which are Subject to Bans or Restrictions for Import or Export by Member-States of the Customs Union within the Framework of the Eurasian Economic Community in Trade with Third Countries* - original in [Russian](#)

**Summary:** The decision eases the restrictions for imports of seals from Greenland if they are produced as a result of hunting by indigenous peoples and are imported by physical persons for personal use.

***Publication Date: July 27, 2012***

**EEC Collegium Decision No. 121.** *On Changes in the Composition of the Subcommittees of the Advisory Committee on Trade* - original in [Russian](#)

**Summary:** Three old members of the Subcommittees are replaced by five new representatives of all three CU countries.

## **RECOMMENDATION No. 1 OF THE EURASIAN ECONOMIC COMMISSION COLLEGIUM of June 20, 2012**

***Publication Date: June 25, 2012***

**EEC Collegium Recommendation No. 1.** *On the Rules for Checking the Influence of the Relationship between a Seller and a Buyer on the Value of Transaction* - original in [Russian](#)

**Summary:** The EEC Collegium approved the above Rules, which shall be recommended for use by the CU Parties as follows:

- a) by the importer – for the choice of a method of customs valuation
- b) by customs authorities – for control of the customs value of imports

The customs value as declared by the importer shall be accepted if during control of the customs value of imports the customs authorities:

- a) found no signs of influence of the relationship between the seller and the buyer of the goods on the value of the transaction, and
- b) there were no other signs that the value of the transaction is unreliable.

The Rules also define the following:

- a) information/documents that should be considered by the customs authorities in order to determine if the relationship between the seller and the buyer influenced the value of the transaction;

information/evidence that should be provided by the importer in order to show that the value of the transaction was close to one of the “check values” determined by the rules.