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New EU e-commerce rules risk causing disruption without phased rollout, industry warns

Brussels — Europe’s push to tighten controls on low-value imports could disrupt supply chains unless the EU’s Member States roll out the changes in stages, the [European Express Association \(EEA\)](#) has warned.

The EU’s plan to scrap the €150 duty-free threshold for small consignments is due to take effect on July 1, 2026, earlier than initially planned. While industry backs the objective of stronger enforcement, companies say the timeline is no longer realistic.

With key rules being confirmed only a month before the planned implementation, businesses have been forced to prepare based on incomplete and evolving legislation.

“The reform has become significantly more complex than initially presented,” the European Express Association said, pointing to new data requirements, shifting liabilities and tight interlinkages with VAT and customs systems that would require major operational changes.

Those changes, the group argues, cannot be delivered within weeks. Customers, shippers and importers need to be informed of the new terms and need time to adapt accordingly.

The concern is not limited to e-commerce. Express delivery networks — critical for fast-moving goods such as medical supplies and industrial components — risk facing bottlenecks if shipments are held at EU borders due to unclear requirements or inadequate preparation.

The EEA warns this could lead to wider supply chain disruption, including delays in healthcare deliveries and manufacturing inputs.

There is also a growing risk of fragmentation, as Member States advance at different speeds, potentially creating legal uncertainty and uneven implementation across the EU’s Single Market.

Instead, the association is calling for a phased approach: proceed with a €3 flat-rate duty per item from July and delay the more complex elements until systems are ready and the rules are clear — potentially aligning them with the broader EU customs reform expected in 2027.

“Without legal certainty, operational feasibility and adequate preparation time, the reform risks undermining the smooth functioning of the Single Market,” the EEA said.

The EU’s Finance Ministers are called on now to opt for a more pragmatic rollout.

About the European Express Association

The European Express Association (EEA) represents the interests of the express industry in Europe. The express industry provides door-to-door transport and delivery of next-day or time-definite shipments, throughout Europe and the world. According to a 2020 Oxford Economics [study](#) on the impact of the express industry on the EU economy, the European express industry directly supported 330,000 jobs and an estimated 1.1 million indirect jobs in the EU in 2018, while generating €24 billion in tax revenues for EU Member States’ governments that same year. EEA’s EU Transparency Register number is 1894704851- 83.