

About Us



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How to - understand the EORI



Chamber International 'How to Guide'

What is EORI?

An EORI is the Economic Operator Registration Identifier, which is the successor to the TURN (Trader's Unique Reference Number).

It applies to traders involved in international business, i.e. importing from and exporting to countries outside the EU, as well as trading within the EU, and is based on the trader's 9-digit VAT registration number.

It adds three digits to that number in the same way that the TURN was also the trader's VAT number and also had three digits at the end of it.

However, the EORI is a number which is recognised throughout the European Union, and traders can request information through the EU about the EORI of another EU trader.

Unlike the TURN, each trader has a single EORI regardless of how many premises they have; the TURN was different in that each trader who had more than one premises could have a different TURN for each premises, for example a freight forwarder, which had offices in various places and thus had an individual TURN for each office.

With the EORI, there is one single EORI number for the whole organisation in a specific country.

However, companies such as freight forwarders with offices in several EU countries may apply for an EORI specific to the country where they operate.

For example:

One-Stop-Shop (Forwarders) Ltd. had a TURN number GB123456789 000 with three branches ending with suffixes 001, 002 and 003. On the implementation of the new EORI system in June 2009, these numbers changed to the new single EORI number GB123456789 000 which is used by the forwarder in all of its offices.

The EORI number is a number, unique throughout the European Community, assigned by a customs authority to the Economic Operator (EO), i.e. the trader. The trader will use their EORI number when involved in customs related activity, e.g. on pre-arrival/departure and customs declarations.

EORI numbers can only be issued to legal entities – sole proprietor, partnership, company or individual. It therefore cannot be allocated to individual branches or divisions within a legal entity. Only one number can be issued per legal entity.

When was it introduced and why?

In July 2009, the European Commission implemented an Economic Operator Registration Identification scheme (EORI). The scheme is designed to enhance the security measures introduced by the Security Amendment to the Modernised Customs Code by introducing a unique common identifier number for all traders within the EU who are involved in Customs related activities.

How does the EORI work?

Once issued, the EORI is the only reference number used on declarations made to any customs authority within the 27 member states. Thus the EORI is now the chief mechanism to identify a trader or trader's supply chain and inform administrations of the validity of a trader's authorisations. As such traders should regulate the issue and use of EORI to ensure that agents acting on their behalf are aware of the implications of its use.

EORI data can be exchanged between member states and the EU Commission only. There is an intention that limited data will be disclosed on a general public database but this will only happen with the express consent of the economic operator concerned.

Any economic operator, i.e. trader doing international business in the form of importing, exporting or intra-EU transactions, may check in the European Union database whether an EORI number exists or not. If the economic operator under the EORI number has also given his consent to publish his name, address and place of residence, then the trader will be given access to these details when verifying the EORI number.

This initiative is also in preparation for a more extensive implementation of the Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) regime, which is also being established across the European Union (EU). New traders will have to apply for an EORI by submitting an application using form C220 downloadable at www.hmrc.gov.uk

Now is the time for traders to understand the implications of the EORI system, and how it affects them. HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) have automatically changed to the EORI system from the TURN regimes, and have sent letters to traders explaining the change. It may be, however, that many traders did not read these letters or did not understand their implication.