



EORI number usefulness and necessity

If you are an importer, exporter, consignor or consignee of goods or are otherwise involved in goods coming from or destined for a country outside the European Union, you are dealing with an EORI number. Practice has shown that there is a lot of ignorance about the use of the EORI number.

What is an EORI number?

On 1 July 2009, European legislation came into force which allows customs authorities to efficiently and effectively identify economic operators involved in international trade and transport. The means to serve this purpose is the Economic Operators Registration and Identification number (EORI).

Who ought to have an EORI number?

European customs legislation prescribes that economic operators should have an EORI number. In this connection, an economic operator is a legal entity engaged in activities that cause it to be directly or indirectly related to Customs.

No EORI number is assigned to private individuals and to branches/secondary establishments that are no independent legal entities. In performing their activities, branches/secondary establishments must use the EORI number of the principal establishment.

Mandatory use of the EORI number

Economic operators are obliged to use the number for all customs transactions and activities in the EU if an identification number is requested. This applies to applications for a customs authorisation, the AEO status and to filing all customs declarations. Things often go wrong with the latter in particular.

Your logistics service provider may ask for your EORI

In practice, forwarding agents and customs agents are often engaged in order to perform customs formalities. In addition, carriers are responsible themselves the moment they have to cross the external borders of the European Union.

When filing a declaration or performing other formalities, logistics service providers are obliged to identify the parties in the chain. In the past, your name and address details were stated, but due to the arrival of EORI, this will therefore no longer be allowed, save for a few exceptions. Nevertheless, most Member States use a period of adjustment. This is going to change. As from **1 July 2012**, Dutch Customs will enforce the rules more strictly. The failure to state a mandatory EORI number will then be regarded as an incorrect declaration and may be subject to a penalty. This is the reason why logistics service providers may ask you for your EORI number.

The EORI number also offers advantages for businesses

An important factor in international trade is the handling of all kinds of customs and inspection formalities. Dutch Customs tries to do this as efficiently as possible, with the least possible inconvenience to the business sector.

Customs uses various methods to carry out supervision, including the (physical) inspection of the goods. In order to do this properly, Customs is dependent on the information obtained. If any data are missing, it will be more likely for a consignment to be subject to an inspection. The consequences of this could be additional administrative acts, delays and possibly additional costs. The EORI number ensures better information, resulting in parties suffering less nuisance. So it is very important to share your EORI number with other parties in the chain.

As far as AEO companies are concerned, only the EORI number can be used by Customs to determine whether an economic operator has this status and therefore the right to certain benefits and facilities.

What does an EORI number look like and who issues it?

The EORI number is a unique number that is assigned to an economic operator and is valid throughout the EU. It is possible to apply for the EORI number to Customs or other designated authorities in the country of establishment of the economic operator. In any case, this number consists of a country code followed by a unique code. In the Netherlands, the EORI number is assigned by the Belastingdienst / Centrale Administratie in Apeldoorn and consists of the country code 'NL' and the 'fiscal number'.

The European Commission has published an overview stating for each Member State the authority assigning the EORI number, its structure and the procedure for its issue ([download](#)). Upon its introduction, most Member States automatically assigned an EORI number to registered economic operators.

More information about the EORI number:

- the European Commission ([English](#))
- Dutch Customs ([Dutch](#) or [English](#))