

## Modern History of Customs in Zakarpattia

The declaration of Ukraine's independence provided a powerful impetus for the establishment of new and the development of existing customs authorities. The legislative framework for organizing customs affairs in the country and forming the customs system included, among others, the Ukrainian Law 'On Customs Affairs in Ukraine,' adopted on June 25, 1991, the Law 'On the Single Customs Tariff,' and the Customs Code of Ukraine, which were put into effect during 1991-1992. The priority in developing customs affairs was to arrange borders and ensure proper protection of economic interests.

By the Decree of the President of Ukraine dated December 11, 1991, 'On the Establishment of the State Customs Committee of Ukraine,' the central authority for state management in the field of customs affairs was created - the State Customs Committee of Ukraine. The main tasks assigned to the State Customs Committee included ensuring the economic security of Ukraine, compliance with customs legislation, conducting customs control and processing.

During the period of Ukraine's independence formation, the customs offices in Zakarpattia played a foundational role in the development of Ukraine's customs service. It was the customs officials in Zakarpattia who facilitated the process of customs control and processing of passengers and goods through border crossing points established at the borders with Russia, Belarus, and Moldova until local personnel were trained to work independently there.



In addition to the existing customs offices in the territory of the Chop and Uzhhorod Customs, the Berehove Customs was established based on

the units of the Chop Customs located at the crossing points of 'Dzvinkove,' 'Kosino,' 'Luzhanka,' and the railway station 'Batjevo.' The Dyakiv Customs was also created, which included units at the crossing points of 'Vilok' and 'Dyakovo.'

The Rahiv Customs was established in the territory of the Rahiv and Tyachiv districts. The Uzhhorod Customs also began functioning in a new format.

The creation of new customs institutions was driven by the increase in the flow of vehicles, cargo, and passengers crossing the state border of independent Ukraine, as well as the expansion of relations with foreign countries.

The precondition for this was the state's abandonment of the monopoly on foreign trade. Consequently, the scope of customs activities expanded to cover the entire territory of the country. Therefore, specialized cargo units were established within the Zakarpattia region customs, which monitored the flow of cargo across the state border, their delivery to participants in foreign economic activity, and their dispatch to foreign counterparts.

In 1996, the Dyakiv Customs was merged with the Vinohradiv Customs, and subsequently, in the same year, the Rahiv Customs was merged with the Berehove Customs. Later, the Vinohradiv and Berehove Customs were also merged, resulting in the establishment of the Vinohradiv Customs as its legal successor.

In 1994, all customs offices located in the Zakarpattia, Chernivtsi, and Ivano-Frankivsk regions became part of the Carpathian Territorial Customs Administration: Chop, Uzhhorod, Vinohradiv, Berehove, Rahiv, Dyakiv in Ivano-Frankivsk region, and Vadul-Siret and Kelmenets in Chernivtsi region. At that time, this powerful customs institution employed over two thousand three hundred individuals across 36 customs posts on the borders with Romania, Moldova, Hungary, and Slovakia. In 1995, a new international border crossing point was inaugurated on the Ukrainian-Slovak border - 'Mali Bereznyi - Ublya.'

In the spring of 2005, a new international crossing point for pedestrians and cyclists for citizens of the Slovak Republic, Ukraine, and the states of the European Economic Area was opened on the joint Ukrainian-Slovak border - 'Mali Selmentsi - Velke Slemence'.

In 1996, by the Decree of the President of Ukraine, the Carpathian Regional Customs was established, and it began its operations in April 1996. The regional

customs initially consisted of three customs offices - Uzhhorod, Chop, and Zakarpattia. The Carpathian Regional Customs was structurally integrated into the unified system of the State Customs Service of Ukraine and operated until July 1, 2005, when it was liquidated through its merger with the Uzhhorod Customs.

During this period, Ukraine's trade relations with European countries were actively developing. In 1997, due to increased transportation flows, the transport bridge across the Tysa River was reconstructed and expanded to accommodate four traffic lanes.

From 2000 to 2002, a complete reconstruction of the 'Tysa' customs post was carried out with the support of international technical assistance under the TACIS Border Cooperation Program. The cost of the project amounted to 2.9 million euros. Following the completion of the reconstruction, the customs post acquired a modern appearance.

In October 2010, the Uzhhorod and Vinohradiv Customs were merged with the Chop Customs to optimize the structure of customs authorities located in the Zakarpattia region. This consolidation resulted in a single customs office for the entire Zakarpattia region. In April 2013, the Chop Customs was reorganized into the Chop Tax and Customs Office, and in November 2014, it was further reorganized into the Zakarpattia Customs of the State Fiscal Service of Ukraine, with its operational scope limited to the Zakarpattia region.

In 2019, the customs office underwent another reorganization and became the Zakarpattia Customs of the State Customs Service. This entity, with the same operational scope, has been in existence since July 1, 2021.

**The length of the customs border within the operational zone of the Zakarpattia Customs is 467 km, specifically:**

- With the Slovak Republic - 97.6 km, with 5 crossing points open.
- With the Republic of Hungary - 133.1 km, with 7 crossing points open.
- With Romania - 203.9 km, with 6 crossing points (4 currently operational).
- With the Republic of Poland - 32.6 km, with no currently operational crossing points.

Currently, the Zakarpattia Customs operates with 14 customs posts, of which 11 have a total of **19 crossing points**. Out of these, **18** are located on the state border with neighboring countries (Hungary, Slovakia, Romania), and **1 crossing point is designated for air traffic** and is located at the international airport 'Uzhhorod.'

Additionally, there are 3 customs posts ('Uzhhorod-Cargo,' 'Mukachevo,' 'Vinohradiv') situated within the region. These customs posts facilitate customs formalities in the cities of Uzhhorod, Mukachevo, and Vinohradiv, each with their structural units in the cities of Svaliava, Berehove, Khust, and Tyachiv.

**The customs office operates based on categories within its operational zone:**

- 18 international crossing points;
- 1 local crossing point.

**Based on modes of transportation within the customs office's operational zone, the following are in operation:**

- 9 crossing points for road transportation;
- 7 crossing points for railway transportation;
- 2 crossing points for pedestrian transportation;
- 1 crossing point for air transportation.

**Among them, 6 crossing points are designated for mixed transportation:**

- "Diakove" (for road and railway transportation);
- "Solotvyno" (for road and pedestrian transportation);
- "Malyy Bereznyy" (for road and pedestrian transportation);
- "Luzhanka" (for road and pedestrian transportation);
- "Kosyno" (for road and pedestrian transportation);
- "Dzvinkove" (for road and pedestrian transportation).

In the current reality of Russia's full-scale military aggression against Ukraine, the Zakarpattia Customs stands as a guardian of our nation's economic security and actively participates in Ukraine's Eurointegration processes and aspirations.

An important aspect of the customs' operations is combatting violations of customs regulations and smuggling. Throughout the entire period of the legal regime of martial law, the customs intensifies its efforts in this direction and utilizes all available tools and measures for effective law enforcement activities.

Here are some key indicators of the customs' activities during the period of martial law:

### **Detection of currency**

On February 17, 2023, within the customs control zone for the "entry into Ukraine" direction at the "Tysa" customs post of the Zakarpattia Customs, during customs inspection of a Ukrainian citizen, undeclared Ukrainian currency in the amount of 3,300,000 hryvnias was detected.

On May 11, 2023, within the customs control zone for the "entry into Ukraine" direction at the "Astey" customs post of the Zakarpattia Customs, during customs inspection of a Ukrainian citizen, undeclared foreign currency in the amount of 120,000 US dollars was detected.

### **Aerial vehicle**

On December 10, 2022, within the customs control zone of the "Tysa" customs post of the Zakarpattia Customs, in the "exit from Ukraine" direction, an attempt of illegal export beyond the customs territory of Ukraine was detected. This attempt involved concealing from customs control by providing counterfeit documents and documents containing false information to the customs authority as a basis for the movement of a Ka-26 helicopter, manufactured in 1975, with a residual value of 1,924,330 hryvnias.



## **Timber materials**

On July 1, 2023, within the customs control zone of the "Dyakovo" customs post of the Zakarpattia Customs, in the direction of "exit from Ukraine," an attempt of illegal export beyond the customs territory of Ukraine was detected. This attempt involved concealing from customs control by providing counterfeit documents and documents containing false information to the customs authority as a basis for the movement of oak timber materials, totaling 19,677 cubic meters, with a total value exceeding 432,069 hryvnias.

On June 14, 2023, within the customs control zone of the "Tysa" customs post of the Zakarpattia Customs, in the direction of "exit from Ukraine," an attempt of illegal export beyond the customs territory of Ukraine was detected. This attempt involved concealing from customs control by providing counterfeit documents and documents containing false information to the customs authority as a basis for the movement of fuelwood in the form of beech logs, totaling 33.99 cubic meters, with a total value exceeding 226,148 hryvnias.

On January 26, 2023, within the customs control zone of the "Uzhgorod-Cargo" customs post of the Zakarpattia Customs, while placing goods under the customs regime "export," an attempt of illegal export beyond the customs territory of Ukraine was detected. This attempt involved concealing from customs control



by providing counterfeit documents and documents containing false information to the customs authority as a basis for the movement of hazel wood for fence elements, totaling 21.5 cubic meters, with a total value exceeding 238,458 hryvnias.

### **Cultural treasures**

On June 29, 2023, within the customs control zone of the "Tysa" customs post of the Zakarpattia Customs, in the direction of "exit from Ukraine," an attempt of illegal export by a Ukrainian citizen beyond the customs territory of Ukraine was detected. This attempt involved the unauthorized movement of a painting in the genre of rural landscape, sized 32cm x 27cm, executed on a wooden board with an indistinct signature of the author in the lower left corner. The painting was in a wooden frame of golden color, sized 52cm x 46.5cm, with the author's name "E. BARBARINI" and the years of life 1855-1930.



### **Tobacco products**

On January 26, 2023, at the customs control zone of the customs post "Dyakovo" of the Zakarpattia Customs, an attempt was discovered to illegally export tobacco

products beyond the customs territory of Ukraine. This was done by concealing tobacco products without Ukrainian excise stamps in a semi-trailer tanker, heading in the direction of "exit from Ukraine." The seized items included 4 different brands totaling 107,500 packs of cigarettes (with 20 cigarettes in each pack). The tobacco products, tractor, and semi-trailer tanker were confiscated (the total value of the vehicles amounted to 2,476,625 UAH).

On July 2, 2023, at the customs control zone of the customs post "Dyakovo" of the Zakarpattia Customs, while heading in the direction of "exit from Ukraine," an attempt was discovered to illegally transport tobacco products beyond the customs territory of Ukraine. The attempt involved a Ukrainian citizen driving a "Peugeot 5008" vehicle, accompanied by her children. The tobacco products, which consisted of 2 different brands totaling 1320 packs of cigarettes (with 20 cigarettes in each pack), were being concealed without Ukrainian excise stamps. Both the tobacco products and the vehicle were confiscated (the value of the vehicle was 335,520 UAH).

On August 26, 2022, at the customs control zone of the customs post "Dyakovo" of the Zakarpattia Customs, while heading in the direction of "exit from Ukraine," an attempt was discovered to illegally transport tobacco products beyond the customs territory of Ukraine. The attempt involved a Ukrainian citizen driving a "VOLKSWAGEN CRAFTER" vehicle. The tobacco products, which consisted of 5 different brands totaling 20,610 packs of cigarettes (with 20 cigarettes in each pack), were being concealed without Ukrainian excise stamps. Both the tobacco products and the vehicle, which had a value of 548,529 UAH, were confiscated.

### **Psychoactive and narcotic substances**

During the year 2023, a total of 7 attempts of significant illegal import of narcotic and psychoactive substances into Ukraine were detected. These attempts involved more than 20 different types of substances, including a total quantity of 988 ampoules, 5,408 pills, 5 vials, 124 capsules, and 10 suppositories of various packaging.