

## **European Community and Department of Homeland Security Sign Landmark Agreement to Improve Container Security and Expand CSI**

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The European Community and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) today signed an agreement that among other things, calls for the prompt expansion of Customs and Border Protection's (CBP) Container Security Initiative throughout the European Community.

The agreement was signed by Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge and Irish Finance Minister Charlie McCreevy at the Ronald Reagan Building in Washington, DC.

"This agreement sets the stage for enhanced cooperation between the United States and the European Community on CSI and other important security programs of common interest," said Secretary Ridge. "This agreement will lead to enhancements in our mutual efforts to prevent terrorists from exploiting the international trading system."

The agreement will intensify and broaden Customs cooperation and mutual assistance in customs matters between the European Community and the United States. The objectives of the agreement include expanding the Container Security Initiative, establishing minimum standards for risk-management techniques, and improving public - private partnerships to secure the logistics chain of international trade.

"The European Union and the United States are the two largest trading blocs in the world. We therefore have the strongest possible incentive for ensuring that transatlantic sea container traffic is subjected to the highest practical level of security checks without impeding the expeditious flow of trade so carefully and successfully developed over many years," said Irish Finance Minister McCreevy.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection is the agency within the Department of Homeland Security charged with the protection of our nation's borders. CBP unified Customs, Immigration, and Agriculture Inspectors and the Border Patrol into one border agency for the United States.