

Impact assessment

The EU Customs Union Reform Impact Assessment indicates that specialized sectors like electronic repair and prototyping were not explicitly consulted, falling under broad SME categories, making impact on component procurement an unintended consequence, particularly due to the per-item-category fee structure. The legislation's primary focus on B2C e-commerce creates unintended, disproportionate barriers for the Right to Repair sector, as noted in assessments highlighting the lack of modeling for micro-level impacts on specialized component supply lines. For more details, visit [Copenhagen Economics](#).

The European Commission operates in silos; while the Directorate-General for Taxation and Customs Union (DG TAXUD) drafted the customs reform to stop e-commerce fraud, other DGs were simultaneously drafting laws to protect repair networks.

Here are the critical related documents

1. The Right to Repair Directive (Directive (EU) 2024/1799) This is the flagship legislation promoting the repair of goods. Studying its background reveals a massive policy contradiction: the EU is legally mandating repair access while

simultaneously taxing the micro-components required to do it. What to look for: Look at the Impact Assessment for the Right to Repair (specifically regarding the availability and affordability of spare parts).

Why it matters: It proves that the EU's explicit, high-level policy goal is to make spare parts cheaper and more accessible. You can use this to demonstrate that DG TAXUD's customs reform directly undermines DG JUST's (Justice and Consumers) consumer rights objectives.

Where to find it: Search the EU Transparency Register or EUR-Lex for the Impact Assessment accompanying the Proposal for a Directive on common rules promoting the repair of goods (COM/2023/155 final).

2. The Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation (ESPR) The ESPR dictates how electronics must be built, emphasizing modularity and the destruction of "part-pairing" (where manufacturers block third-party components).

What to look for: Look for sections detailing the "Information Requirements" and the "Digital Product Passport (DPP)". Why it matters: The ESPR explicitly models how small repair shops rely on a diverse, fragmented supply chain of micro-chips, capacitors, and specialized components.

Comparing this to the Customs Reform shows that the EU's

environmental planners understood the micro-component ecosystem, but the customs planners did not.

3. The 2022-2023 Public Consultation Responses

Before drafting the Customs Union Reform, the Commission held an open public consultation. The raw responses from industry associations are published separately from the final impact assessment.

What to look for: Feedback submissions from SMEUnited (the association of crafts and SMEs in Europe) and various European electronics trade associations.

Why it matters: You can check the literal text of the submissions to see if any electronic component distributors or repair advocates warned the Commission about the de minimis change.

If they did, it proves the EU ignored the warning; if they didn't, it proves the sector was entirely unrepresented.

Where to find it: Available on the European Commission's "Have Your Say" portal under the project title "Customs union – package for reform".

4. The EU Small Business Act (SBA) & "Think Small First"

PrincipleThe EU has a legally binding principle called the "Think Small First" tool, which requires all impact assessments

to run an "SME Test" to ensure new laws do not accidentally crush micro-enterprises.

What to look for: The specific SME Test Annex inside the Customs Union Impact Assessment

Why it matters: The SME Test is supposed to model how administrative burdens affect businesses with fewer than 10 employees (which describes most independent repair shops).

You can analyze this section to prove that their modeling only focused on "SME retailers selling goods," completely omitting "SME repairers importing specialized components."

Here is the comparative analysis framework demonstrating the structural policy clash, followed by the exact EUR-Lex citations and documentation links to aid your research.Part

1: Comparative Analysis FrameworkThis framework maps out the systemic friction between the two pieces of legislation. It shows how DG TAXUD (Customs) operates under a mandate of "fraud prevention" that directly penalizes the "sustainability and repairability" mandate of DG JUST / DG ENV (Justice and Environment).

The impact assessment covers either Customs Duty Exemption for small e-commerce parcels, or State Aid rules for public

subsidies.

The primary official document evaluating this change is the European Commission's broader Customs Union Reform Impact Assessment. However, because the Commission's report looked at the entire customs overhaul rather than treating the de minimis rule in isolation, a secondary, highly cited independent report—the Copenhagen Economics De Minimis Study—was commissioned to explicitly analyze the economic fallout of removing this threshold.

The key findings, economic impacts, and structured details established by these assessments include:

The Copenhagen Economics De Minimis Study highlights that removing the €150 limit significantly increases costs.

Compliance and customs administration expenses could jump by €2.3 billion, while individual online shoppers might pay €62 more per year in overall costs. The Official Study: Explore the European Commission's detailed report via the EU Customs Union Reform Impact Assessment page.

STUDY ON THE EU PROPOSED CUSTOMS DUTY

DE ...POTENTIAL EFFECTS OF REMOVING THE DE MINIMIS

THRESHOLD. - the isolated effect of removing the de minimis, Copenhagen Economics EU De Minimis Is Changing

1. The Core Policy Change
Elimination of the Threshold: Every single commercial package entering the EU from a non-EU country now faces customs duty, regardless of how low its declared value is.

The Transitional Flat Fee: To prevent customs systems from crashing under the weight of billions of small parcels, a temporary fixed customs duty of €3 per item category is active until July 1, 2028. After 2028, full duty calculations will be processed via a centralized EU Customs Data Hub.

Shift to "Deemed Importer": E-commerce platforms and marketplaces (like Shein, Temu, and AliExpress) are legally recognized as the "deemed importers". They bear full responsibility for collecting and paying the duty at the point of sale.

2. Economic Impact on Supply Chains & Businesses
Surgently Rising Compliance Costs: The Copenhagen Economics Study notes that removing the de minimis exemption triggers an estimated €2.3 billion increase in compliance and administrative costs shared between logistics businesses and customs authorities.

Operational Bottlenecks: Delays at border inspection points are projected to climb. Low-value shipments are no longer cleared as low-risk by default, requiring intense documentation accuracy regarding classification and

commodity codes.

E-Commerce Volume Strain: According to Commission data, billions of low-value items enter the EU annually. Processing 100% of these parcels rather than the previous 3% creates an unprecedented administrative burden for customs infrastructure.

3. Impact on EU Consumers Higher Annual Outlays: The Copenhagen Economics Assessment estimates that the average EU online shopper will pay roughly €62 more per year due to passed-down duty fees, handling costs, and higher retail prices.

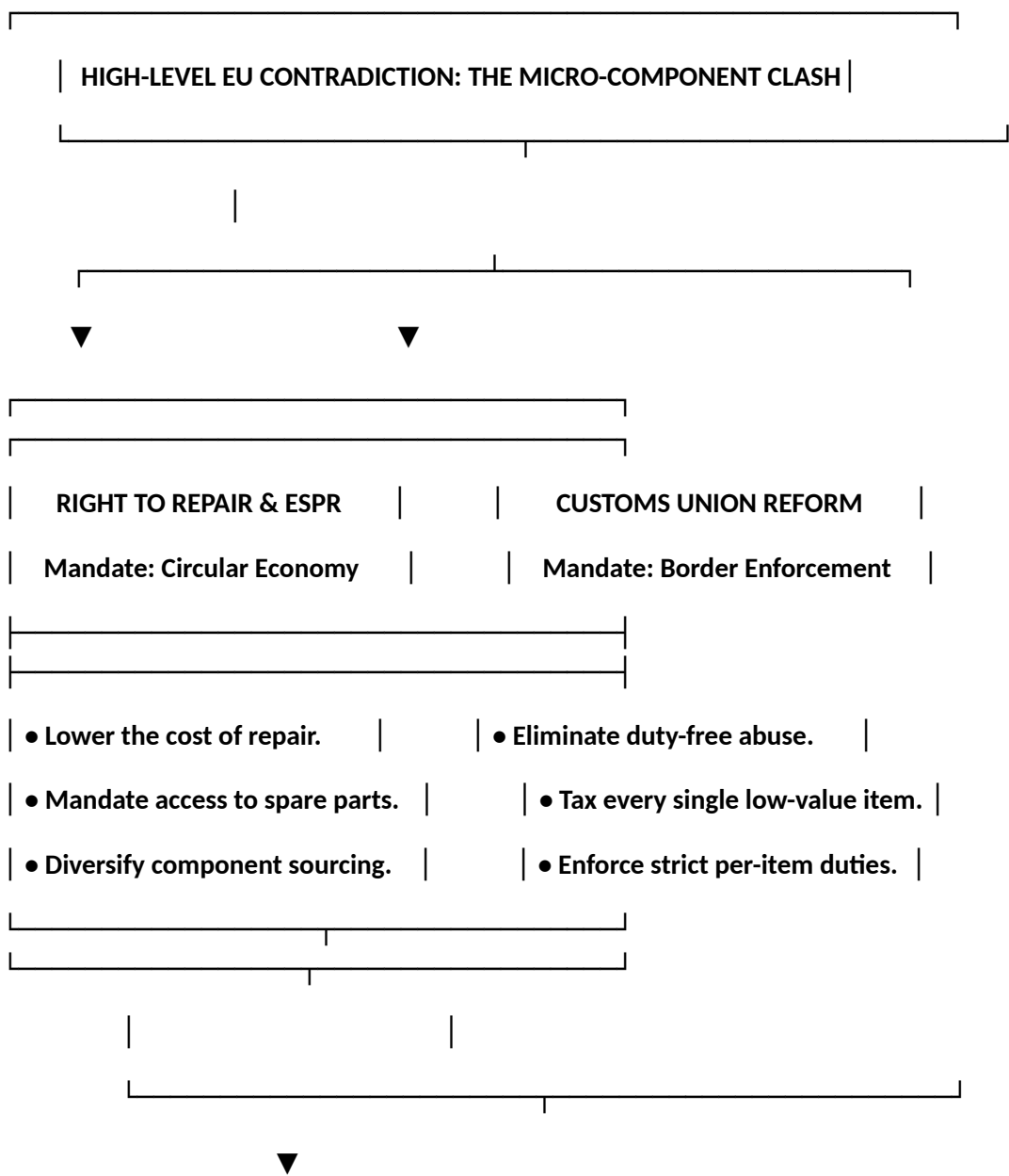
Price Compression at Low Tiers: Cheap goods (e.g., a €5 phone case) face a heavy cost distortion due to the €3 flat duty per item category plus potential local handling fees, making micro-purchases from abroad financially impractical.

4. Regulatory Justifications (Why the EU Did It)
Combating Systemic Fraud: The European Commission found that the old €150 limit was systematically abused via undervaluation and order-splitting (e.g., breaking a €300 order into three packages to bypass duties).

Fair Competition: Traditional EU-based retailers who pay full tariffs, VAT, and overhead were operating at an unfair disadvantage against direct-to-consumer non-EU platforms

leveraging duty-free loops.

Product Safety: Forcing items into the duty stream subjects them to strict EU consumer product health, safety, and regulatory conformity checks



THE SYSTEMIC CONTRADICTION

The regulatory hand forces wide
repair networks, but the tariff
hand prices out the components.