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Germany Accepts Belgium's New Digital Customs Workflow with AEC Leading the Response

Cross-border clarification resolves registration delays and supports a smoother, fully digital import process across Europe.

- AEC played a key role in resolving the alignment issue between the two countries
- The change supports faster, smoother, and fully digital vehicle imports industry-wide
- Port of Antwerp-Bruges, the world's largest automotive RoRo port, serves as Europe's primary gateway for vehicle imports

Munich | 2 December, 2025 | AEC, part of the AEC Group and a leading importer of US-manufactured vehicles, announces that German registration authorities have officially confirmed acceptance of Belgium's new fully digital customs workflow. The confirmation follows a period of uncertainty after Belgium's nationwide transition to digital customs documentation.

Port of Antwerp-Bruges handled 3.3 million new cars in 2024, making it the world's largest automotive RoRo port and a critical entry point for vehicles destined for Germany and other European markets. Its central role in automotive logistics highlights why clear alignment between Belgian and German digital systems is essential.

As a European authorized distributor for General Motors Specialty Vehicles (GMSV) brands Chevrolet, Cadillac, and GMC, AEC relies on smooth and predictable import processes across all markets it serves. This makes cross-border digital alignment particularly important for the company and its OEM partners.

The port handles vehicles from all major global automotive brands, underscoring its central role in Europe's import and logistics infrastructure.

Belgium's shift to a digital system meant that traditional stamped customs documents were no longer issued. Instead, digital customs data was shared directly with importers as part of the new automated process. Several Belgian freight forwarders and customs agents generated internal supporting documents based on the underlying IDMS customs data, but these were initially not recognized by German registration offices because they did not originate directly from the Belgian customs authority.

This led to registration documents temporarily being held at German registration offices, despite all vehicles having cleared customs properly in Belgium.

Resolving the Cross-Border Documentation Gap

AEC's internal team worked closely with both Belgian and German parties, coordinating communication between customs offices, registration offices, and logistics partners to clarify the validity of the new digital process. On November 20, 2025, German authorities confirmed in writing that the Belgian digital customs data is fully valid and can be used for registration purposes. This decision now applies industry-wide, not only to AEC.

"This is a great example of how important it is to stay proactive, adaptable, and deeply engaged with our partners across borders," said Andrew Pilsworth, CEO of AEC. "Digitalization is transforming our industry, and I'm incredibly proud of how our team stepped up to solve this issue quickly and collaboratively. These are exactly the kinds of challenges we excel at. Whether supporting GM brands or other OEM partners, AEC brings together expertise, resilience, and a problem-solving mindset to keep complex import processes running smoothly."

As Europe's key automotive hub, the Port of Antwerp-Bruges depends on clear alignment between Belgian and German digital systems to maintain efficient vehicle flow across the continent.

Following this confirmation, German registration offices now accept both the digital customs documentation issued under Belgium's new system and the supporting templates generated by Belgian freight forwarders based on official IDMS digital data.

AEC will continue to monitor developments in cross-border digitalization and remains committed to supporting transparent, efficient, and compliant vehicle importation processes throughout Europe.

About AEC

AEC, part of the AEC Group and a leading importer of US-manufactured vehicles, is a global automotive and mobility solutions provider specializing in distribution, homologation, fleet services, and logistics. Founded in 1996 in Canada, the company now operates across seven international locations with a team of over 150 experts and a network of more than 550 dealers

and partners. With nearly 30 years of experience and advanced in-house capabilities, AEC develops tailored solutions that help automakers and partners expand into new markets. For more information visit www.aecsolutions.com.

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