

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **ADM: MAZZELLA “STRENGTHEN COOPERATION TO FIGHT AGAINST CUSTOMS FRAUD IN THE ADRIATIC”**

*Roma, 17 aprile 2024* – The Customs and Monopolies Agency hosted the kick-off meeting of the Adriacustoms project. The initiative, co-financed by the European Anti-Fraud Authority (Olaf), will be carried out throughout sixteen months and aims to strengthen customs cooperation in the Adriatic area among Italy, Albania, Croatia, Montenegro and Slovenia.

The purpose of Adriacustoms, which will be supported also by the Guardia di Finanza and the European Prosecutor's Office, is to create a common framework for customs controls, aimed at strengthening the fight against crimes and customs fraud, with particular reference to drug trafficking, smuggling, counterfeiting and violation of intellectual property rights.

The project consists of a series of specific activities such as four technical training sessions in the ports of Bari, Ancona, Durazzo and Bar. Adriacustoms will result in a technical document containing the cooperation guidelines agreed between the countries involved, which will be presented in Trieste in March 2025, during the closing event of the project.

“Adriacustoms confirms our country's attention towards a highly strategic area. Dialogue and continuous exchange of ideas are the milestones of the customs collaboration that unites the countries bordering the Adriatic sea”. Said Andrea Mazzella, Director of International Relations of the Agency”.

The conference gave the opportunity to Director Mazzella to meet Boris Kastelic, Director of the Slovenian Customs Department, Vladimir Bulajić, Acting Director of Montenegrin Customs, and Marijana Bukić, Senior Specialist Inspector of Croatian Customs. These talks focused on the possibility of extending the current customs cooperation to anti-fraud activities and to promote trade" explained Mazzella.

