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LOGISTICAL BARRIERS FOR EXPORTING ARMENIAN PRODUCTS TO THE EU AND WAYS TO OVERCOME THEM

The European integration processes open up new opportunities for Armenia to access the vast markets of the European Union. However, exporters face a number of logistical barriers that hinder the promotion of Armenian goods. Effectively overcoming these obstacles is crucial for ensuring competitiveness and sustainable exports to EU countries.

Armenia's landlocked geographic location and distance from European markets result in high transportation costs and extended delivery times due to the reliance on transit routes through third countries such as Georgia, Iran, or Russia. The country's underdeveloped transport infrastructure, with outdated roads and railways that do not meet international standards, slows down cargo flows and increases the risk of damage. The lack of modern logistics facilities, such as terminals, warehouses, and freight yards, also hinders seamless handling, consolidation, and distribution of export shipments. Limited border infrastructure capacity creates delays during customs clearance procedures.

Furthermore, the underdeveloped state of multimodal logistics in Armenia poses a significant barrier. Weak integration of different modes of transport, such as road, rail, and air, leads to inefficient coordination of logistics processes and supply chains among various transportation participants. The absence of well-organized intermodal solutions prevents the full realization of the advantages of combined transport.

Additionally, the complexity and excessive bureaucracy of customs procedures for exporting goods to the EU create challenges. Corruption and bribery at customs and border crossings cause further delays and unpredictable costs. The lack of electronic document flow also slows down cargo clearance.

Another major barrier is the technological backwardness of the logistics sector in Armenia. The low level of adoption and utilization of modern logistics technologies and IT systems hinders the efficiency and competitiveness of Armenian exporters. Outdated practices in areas such as inventory management, transportation planning, and tracking of shipments lead to increased costs, delays, and potential losses.

To address these logistical barriers, a comprehensive approach involving infrastructure, organizational, and technological changes in Armenia's logistics sector is necessary. Resolving the issue of geographic distance requires the development of multimodal transportation by utilizing various modes of transport – road, rail, air, and sea. Combining multiple delivery methods will optimize logistics chains and minimize costs. Furthermore, establishing stable transit corridors through neighboring countries and creating international logistics hubs within Armenia for cargo consolidation is crucial.

To overcome infrastructure deficiencies, significant investments are required to modernize road and rail networks in accordance with international standards. The construction of modern logistics centers, terminals, and warehouse complexes will ensure proper conditions for processing, storage, and distribution of export shipments. Expanding and optimizing the capacity of border infrastructure will also accelerate customs procedures.

The development of multimodal logistics involves the creation of specialized multimodal hubs, where seamless integration of different modes of transport can be achieved following the "door-to-door" principle. The introduction of intermodal transportation using containers and cargo grouping will enhance the efficiency of logistics operations.

Simplifying customs procedures should be a priority. Harmonizing customs legislation in line with EU norms and standards, combating corruption, and implementing electronic document flow at customs will significantly facilitate and accelerate the clearance of export shipments.

Particular attention should be paid to the application of modern logistics technologies, such as Warehouse Management Systems (WMS), Transportation Management Systems (TMS), and intelligent transportation systems for cargo monitoring. Proper training and education of logistics personnel in international practices are also critically important for effective exports to the EU.

Overcoming the logistical barriers hindering Armenian exports to the European Union is an intricate and multifaceted challenge that requires a comprehensive approach. It necessitates a concerted effort from various stakeholders, including the government, private sector, and international partners. By addressing issues related to infrastructure, regulatory frameworks, technological adoption, and human capital development, Armenia can enhance its logistics capabilities and unlock its full export potential within the lucrative European markets.