

## Press release – Legislation with binding measures needed to stop EU-driven global deforestation



There is currently no EU legislation prohibiting products that contribute to the destruction of forests outside the EU from being placed on the EU market. Subsequently, European consumers do not know whether the products they buy contribute to deforestation, including of irreplaceable tropical forests that are crucial for fighting climate change or protecting biodiversity.

Therefore, the European Parliament on Thursday adopted a report with 377 votes to 75 and 243 abstentions calling on the Commission to present an EU legal framework to halt and reverse EU-driven global deforestation. MEPs made use of their [prerogative in the Treaty](#) to ask the Commission to come forward with legislation.

### **Mandatory measures needed to halt deforestation**

MEPs say that voluntary initiatives, third-party certification and labels have failed to halt global deforestation and are calling on the Commission to present EU legislation with binding measures to halt and reverse EU-driven global deforestation.

They call for a new EU legal framework based on mandatory due diligence for companies, meaning they must perform a risk assessment of their products to identify, prevent, mitigate, and account for how they address the issue of deforestation throughout the supply chain. All operators on the EU market must ensure that their products can be traced to be able to identify their origin and ensure the rules are enforced. However, the administrative burden for SMEs must be minimum and operators with large numbers of suppliers should focus on those where the risk of detrimental impacts is most significant

based on a risk assessment. Companies that fail to do so and place products on the EU market derived from commodities that endanger forests and ecosystems should face penalties.

The legislative initiative refers to several studies showing that prohibiting the entry into the EU of products linked to deforestation will have no impact on volume and price and that any extra costs incurred by operators would be minimal. It would also benefit businesses, as it would level the playing field by holding competitors to the same standards.

MEPs state that such an EU legal framework should also be extended to include high-carbon stock and biodiversity-rich ecosystems other than forests, such as marine and coastal ecosystems, wetlands, peatlands or savannahs, to avoid pressure being shifted onto these landscapes. The Commission should also provide definitions of what constitutes deforestation and forest degradation. They also believe that ancient and primary forests should be considered global commons and protected as such, and that their ecosystems should be granted legal status.

Members finally underlined how EU trade and investment policy should include binding and enforceable sustainable development chapters that fully respect international commitments and regretted that such provisions have not been fully included in the EU-Mercosur agreement.

## **Quote**

After the vote, the rapporteur [Delara Burkhardt](#) (S&D, DE) said: “Everyone agrees that voluntary measures to halt and reverse global deforestation have failed. The adoption of this report gives us the chance to create a functioning and fair framework, based on mandatory due diligence. It is another important step towards halting and reversing EU-driven global deforestation.”

## **Background**

Since 1990, 1.3 million km<sup>2</sup> of forests have been lost – an area larger than South Africa. Reversing deforestation is key to protecting biodiversity, creating carbon sinks and sustainably supporting local communities. It is estimated that [EU consumption represents around 10% of global deforestation](#) with palm oil, meat, soy, cocoa, eucalyptus, maize, timber, leather and rubber among the main drivers of deforestation.