

Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the upcoming elections in Tanzania



The citizens of the United Republic of Tanzania will elect on 28 October their President, Members of the parliaments of the Union and Zanzibar, as well as local councillors. The European Union would like to reiterate its support to the development and prosperity of the people of Tanzania and, in line with Article 4 of the Southern Africa Development Community treaty establishing the principles of human rights, democracy and the rule of law, its attachment to this process towards the consolidation of democratic institutions.

Reports of incidents and limitations in the run-up to the elections are of concern. The EU encourages all parties to work together diligently to enable inclusive, transparent, peaceful and credible elections. Democracy thrives from freedom of expression and assembly, and a political environment that values citizen engagement, equal participation, impartiality of state institutions, and upholds human rights. We look forward to our next steps for constructive, full cooperation between the EU and Tanzania.

Article – Sustainable forestry: Parliament's work to fight deforestation



Parliament has voted on a number of reports calling on the European Commission to do more to [promote sustainable forest management within the EU](#) and to [protect forests abroad](#) by removing products which contribute to [deforestation from EU supply chains](#). This comes ahead of the presentation of the Commission's forest strategy due in early 2021.

Parliament's reports highlight the link between the sustainable management of forests and reducing deforestation with achieving the objectives of the EU's [Green Deal](#), the [Farm to Fork Strategy](#) and the [Biodiversity Strategy](#).

Why are forests important?

Forests have significant social, economic and environmental value. They account for 43% of the EU's land area and contain 80% of its terrestrial biodiversity. Healthy [forests are crucial for fighting climate change](#) as they capture carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. EU forests absorb the equivalent of 8.9% of total EU greenhouse gas emissions each year, and as carbon sinks, they are crucial to achieving the [EU's goals of carbon neutrality](#). Therefore, it is vital to protect them and the communities that rely on them.

What are the causes of deforestation?

Deforestation is occurring at an alarming rate across the world, leading to the release of greenhouse gases and loss of biodiversity. It is estimated that over half of the tropical forests worldwide have been destroyed since the 1960s.

There is a clear link between reducing forest cover and the international

demand for commodities whose extraction or production contributes to global deforestation and degradation. The EU is a substantial importer of these commodities, and therefore has the capacity to address deforestation through its trade policy.

Illegal logging exacerbates the problem and despite EU measures such as the [Action Plan for Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade](#), this is still a major cause of deforestation in the EU and around the world.

Climate change and loss of biodiversity bring about more intense droughts, floods and fires that also contribute to deforestation, further exacerbating climate change. The scale of the [2019 Amazon forest fires](#) highlighted the need for an international response.

What are the solutions to deforestation?

Sustainable forest management balances the economic and social impacts of forestry with the need to improve forest health and increase adaptability to changing climate conditions. Forests represent a promising green economic sector, with the potential to create an additional 10 to 16 million sustainable forest jobs worldwide.

Using satellites for better early warning detection of natural disasters such as drought and wildfires can help mitigate risks and improve the protection of forests.

How can the EU support sustainable forestry and protect forests?

In the EU, over 60% of productive forests are already certified as sustainably managed. The forestry industry supports [500,000 people directly and 2.6 million indirectly](#).

The Parliament recognises that sustainable forest management can help mitigate climate change while supporting a crucial economic sector, and MEPs are calling for more funding from the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) for sustainable forestry.

Parliament wants better measures against illegal logging and more checks at EU borders to prevent access to unsustainably produced wood and other products that contribute to forest loss. Members also want to ensure that the impact of trade agreements on the state of forests and biodiversity is systematically evaluated.

MEPs have called for sustainable forestry to be promoted globally and for EU satellites (Copernicus and Galileo) to be used to help monitor deforestation and forest fires outside the EU. They also call for proper funding for research and innovation to make forests more climate-resistant.

Parliament wants binding targets to protect and restore forest ecosystems, especially primary forests (those that have not been subject to major human impacts in recent times).

Travel restrictions: Council reviews the list of third countries for which restrictions should be lifted



Following a review under the recommendation on the gradual lifting of the temporary restrictions on non-essential travel into the EU, the Council updated the list of countries for which travel restrictions should be lifted. As stipulated in the Council recommendation, this list will continue to be reviewed regularly and, as the case may be, updated.

Based on the criteria and conditions set out in the recommendation, as from 22 October member states should **gradually lift the travel restrictions at the external borders for residents of the following third countries:**

- Australia
- Japan
- New Zealand
- Rwanda
- Singapore
- South Korea
- Thailand
- Uruguay
- China, subject to confirmation of reciprocity

Travel restrictions should also be gradually lifted for the special administrative regions of China Hong Kong and Macao, subject to confirmation of reciprocity.

Residents of Andorra, Monaco, San Marino and the Vatican should be considered as EU residents for the purpose of this recommendation.

The **criteria** to determine the third countries for which the current travel restriction should be lifted cover in particular the epidemiological situation and containment measures, including physical distancing, as well as economic and social considerations. They are applied cumulatively. Reciprocity should also be taken into account regularly and on a case-by-case basis.

Schengen associated countries (Iceland, Lichtenstein, Norway, Switzerland)

also take part in this recommendation.

Background

On 16 March 2020, the Commission adopted a communication recommending a temporary restriction of all non-essential travel from third countries into the EU for one month. EU heads of state or government agreed to implement this restriction on 17 March. The travel restriction was extended for a further month respectively on 8 April 2020 and 8 May 2020.

On 11 June the Commission adopted a communication recommending the further extension of the restriction until 30 June 2020 and setting out an approach for a gradual lifting of the restriction on non-essential travel into the EU as of 1 July 2020.

On 30 June the Council adopted a recommendation on the gradual lifting of the temporary restrictions on non-essential travel into the EU, including an initial list of countries for which member states should start lifting the travel restrictions at the external borders. The list is reviewed every two weeks and, as the case may be, updated.

The Council recommendation is not a legally binding instrument. The authorities of the member states remain responsible for implementing the content of the recommendation. They may, in full transparency, lift only progressively travel restrictions towards countries listed.

A Member State should not decide to lift the travel restrictions for non-listed third countries before this has been decided in a coordinated manner.

Malicious cyber-attacks: EU sanctions two individuals and one body over 2015 Bundestag hack



The Council today imposed restrictive measures on **two individuals** and **one body** that were responsible for or took part in the **cyber-attack on the German Federal Parliament** (Deutscher Bundestag) in April and May 2015. This cyber-attack targeted the parliament's information system and affected its ability to operate for several days. A significant amount of data was stolen and the email accounts of several members of parliament, including that of Chancellor Angela Merkel, were affected.

Today's sanctions consist of a **travel ban** and an **asset freeze** imposed on the individuals, and an asset freeze imposed on the body. In addition, EU persons and entities are forbidden from making funds available to those listed.

The Council's decision means that a **total of 8 persons and 4 entities and bodies** have been targeted by restrictive measures in relation to cyber-attacks targeting the EU or its member states.

Sanctions are one of the options available in the Union's framework for a joint diplomatic response to malicious cyber activities (the so-called **cyber diplomacy toolbox**), and are intended to **prevent, discourage, deter and respond to continuing and increasing malicious behaviour in cyberspace**.

The relevant legal acts, including the names of the individuals and the body concerned, have been published in the Official Journal.

Background

The legal framework for restrictive measures imposed in response to cyber-attacks was put in place by the Council in May 2019 and first used in July 2020. The application of the sanctions regime is reviewed by the Council on a yearly basis, and was last extended until **May 2021**.

The EU remains committed to a global, open, stable, peaceful and secure cyberspace and therefore reiterates the need to strengthen international cooperation in order to uphold the **rules-based order** in this area.

2018 discharge – EESC reiterates its commitment to fighting harassment and misconduct in the workplace



The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) takes careful note of the European Parliament's vote not to grant the 2018 budget discharge and, whilst regretting the situation that led to this refusal, reiterates its firm commitment to fighting harassment and misconduct in the workplace.

The EESC attaches great importance to the discharge procedure and is taking this strong signal from the European Parliament very seriously. The EESC is aware that the discharge has been refused for reasons that are not directly linked to the implementation of its 2018 budget. Indeed, the EESC is pleased to see that the EP welcomes its overall prudent and sound financial management as well as the good collaboration between the two institutions.

The Committee regrets the findings of the OLAF investigation, with which it fully cooperated. The OLAF report in this respect was very clear and its recommendations have been accepted in their entirety by the EESC bureau in a specific decision on 9 June 2020.

The Committee continues to work on a zero-tolerance policy towards any behaviour that is likely to undermine human dignity, and is strongly committed to remedying any shortcomings that may still exist in the current system. The EESC is aware of the suffering and distress experienced by the victims and is therefore keen to continue offering them all possible support (both in terms of legal assistance and in the workplace) in full confidentiality, as provided for by the rules.

In addition, the EESC has initiated a revision package concerning the decisions on harassment, whistleblowing and disciplinary procedures in order to improve the robustness of the legal and administrative tools where necessary, to increase synergies between these instruments and to reinforce the Committee's ethics and integrity framework. The new political leadership of the EESC is fully committed to this process and will devote all the time and resources necessary to ensuring that the incidents of the past cannot take place again.

The next steps will be the revision of the Members' Code of Conduct, with a view to establishing harsher sanctions in the event of any breaches. This is a top priority of the EESC's new political leadership and will be actively reported on to all stakeholders involved.