

Position on the Draft Report with recommendations to the Commission on an EU legal framework to halt and reverse EU driven global deforestation (2020/2006(INL))

As the *EU Communication on Stepping up EU Action to Protect and Restore the World's Forests* acknowledges, the main direct driver of deforestation worldwide is land use change caused by agricultural expansion (accounting for 80% of total deforestation), with weak governance, illegal activities and lack of investment in sustainable forest management also playing a role. Timber and timber products from sustainably managed forests are not linked to global deforestation; on the contrary, deforestation prevents the future availability of wood material, whereas forests sustainably managed and with long-term economic value stay as forests.

Illegal logging is however a driver of forest degradation, which is why wood and wood-based products are already covered by the EU Timber Regulation, which ensures that products entering the EU market have been harvested and traded in compliance with the laws of the producing country. Moreover, 90% of the wood processed by the European manufacturing industry originates from the EU Member States¹, where adequate legislation against deforestation is in place. In addition to that, Member States have incorporated in their national legislation the definition of sustainable forest management as defined in the 1993 Helsinki resolution of FOREST EUROPE. **Therefore, there is no need for the adoption of additional EU legislation for what concerns wood forest products.**

Instead, the existing legislative framework on timber products should be better implemented and enforced, subject to the evaluation exercise currently undertaken by the European Commission.

CEI-Bois fully supports EU initiatives such as FLEGT (EU Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade Action Plan) and the EU Timber Regulation (Reg. EU 995/2010), that aim to improve forest governance in third countries and to prevent wood and wood-based products that derive from illegally logged forests to enter the European market.

The EU Timber Regulation is a valuable instrument in the fight against illegal logging worldwide, as it obliges operators to put in place a due diligence system on timber that is placed on the EU market for the first time. However, to be effective, the Regulation must ensure a real level playing field between operators and countries and minimize the risk of loopholes.

Two main issues can be mentioned: today not all wood-based products are included in the scope (notably, some furniture items such as chairs, printed products, and “other products”); the enforcement is not consistent across Member States, with different levels of stringency.

Improved communication to operators, e.g. through guidelines, can be helpful to improve due diligence systems. More inspections increase the effectiveness of the instrument, but only at the

¹ Source: European Commission, EIP on Raw Materials, Raw Materials Scoreboard 2018

condition that it is clear what is expected from the operators in terms of documents and risk mitigation measures adopted, depending on the species or origin country of the wood.

Finally, CEI-Bois fully supports the role of EU Trade Agreements as a leverage to promote sustainable forest management through a partnership approach and halt deforestation worldwide. Sustainable development chapters of FTAs are of paramount importance and their implementation and enforcement should be duly monitored by the EU.

CEI-Bois, the European Confederation of the Woodworking Industries, numbers 16 national organizations, 4 European Sector Federations as well as 1 Private Industrial Group. It is the organization backing the interests of the whole industrial European wood sector: close to 180.000 companies generating an annual turnover of 142 billion euros and employing 1 million workers in the EU.