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Commission postpones groundbreaking deforestation legislation

Deforestation

Today, the Commission announced a postponement of the implementation of the EU regulation to combat deforestation by 12 months. The regulation, which lays down due diligence obligations for companies importing raw materials and products into the internal market to ensure that they no longer contribute to deforestation, is a key element of the European Green Deal.

Anna Cavazzini, Greens/EFA MEP, Chair of the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO) and European Parliament IMCO Rapporteur on the file, comments:

“The events surrounding the law on deforestation-free supply chains are a tragedy. First, Ursula von der Leyen has been holding back the implementing provisions, namely key guidance documents, that are important for companies for months. This was irresponsible, as it fed into the narrative that the regulation needed to be delayed. And now, because the time until the implementation date is becoming ever shorter and the pressure ever greater, she is proposing a postponement of the important law.”

“The postponement is taking place in the context of the greatest destruction of forests on the Latin American continent in recent years. It is a frontal attack on the Green Deal.”

“We must now ensure that the postponement does not open Pandora's box and that the law is not weakened. The EPP, who initially voted in favour of the law by a majority and have now called for its postponement, have a particular responsibility here.”

Virginijus Sinkevičius, Greens/EFA MEP and former Commissioner responsible for the file, comments:

“Delaying the deforestation regulation is a setback in the fight against climate change. It puts 80,000 acres of forest at risk each day, contributes to 15% of global carbon emissions, undermines trust with our international partners, and weakens our credibility on climate commitments.”

More:

The outcome of negotiations on the EUDR enjoyed a large majority (522/44/43) when adopted in the Parliament in April last year.

This regulation is necessary to tackle deforestation worldwide and is a major step forward in the fight

against environmental destruction caused by EU consumption.

Forests worldwide are threatened by deforestation and the consequences of climate change. They are our lungs and life-support system, sustaining most terrestrial biodiversity and acting as major carbon sinks. Forests also play a crucial role in providing clean air, regulating the water cycle and preventing soil erosion.

Around 80% of deforestation is currently driven by the expansion of agricultural land. The EU is one of the main importers of the resulting agricultural commodities, the second biggest importer globally after China, and a recent study found that the European Union is responsible for 16% of deforestation associated with international trade.

Deforestation also often leads to human rights violations against local and indigenous populations and contributes to massive biodiversity loss. About 10% of the world's forests, an area larger than the European Union, have been lost through deforestation between 1990 and 2020.

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