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Commission proposal welcome but more needed to protect ecosystems & human rights

Deforestation

Today, the Commission published its legislative proposal on reducing the risks of deforestation and forest degradation associated with all products on the EU market. The proposal is part of the package on soil, waste shipment and deforestation and it will require companies to ensure that their products sold in the EU do not come from areas where forests have been degraded or cleared entirely for agricultural production.

The Greens/EFA group, while welcoming that Commission's initiative for the first time includes a due diligence system, considers this proposal insufficient and calls for it to be strengthened to ensure the protection of ecosystems and human rights.

Heidi Hautala MEP, Vice President of the European Parliament, member of the Human Rights committee and International Trade committee, comments;

"In the fight against deforestation, it is important to take into account not only nature conservation but also respect for human rights, especially the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities. With regards to human rights, the Commission proposal requires compliance with the laws of the country of production, but if the laws do not include a sufficiently high level of respect for human rights, it will make little difference. International human rights norms have to be the starting point.

"Another very important question is which commodities and products are covered by the law. Currently only beef, cocoa, coffee, palm oil, soya and wood products are on the list, but there are several other products that have a negative impact on deforestation. We have long called on the Commission to include meats other than beef, rubber and maize in the proposal."

Ville Niinistö MEP, member of the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety committee, comments;

"The destruction of the Amazon rainforest has made many aware of the need to protect the world's forests. During COP26 more than 100 countries made a commitment to halt deforestation by 2030 and it is important that this new EU law contributes to that agreement. But the Commission's proposal contains too many loopholes. To preserve biodiversity on our planet, it is not enough to focus only on forests, but other ecosystems such as savannahs, wetlands and peatlands must also be protected. The Commission falls short in this respect.

"Deforestation is not only a problem for tropical countries, we must also take good care of our own forests. European countries have no credibility to demand that deforestation be stopped elsewhere if we are not prepared to do our part to defend our own nature."

More:

The EU is the world's second largest driver of tropical deforestation and associated emissions after China. Currently, the European Union is responsible for 16% of deforestation induced by the consumption of products such as soy.

Read the Commission's Proposal for a Regulation on deforestation-free products.

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Responsible MEPs



Heidi Hautala

EP Vice-President, Member



Ville Niinistö

Member

Contact person



Helena Hellstrom

Harassment Prevention and Response Officer

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