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EU expected to ban products made with forced labour

EU Forced Labour Regulation

Today, Members of the European Parliament will debate the “Regulation on Prohibiting products made with forced labour on the EU market”. The plenary vote will take place tomorrow. This new legislation marks a crucial step towards putting human rights at the core of the EU’s trade policy and the single market. The new regulation will block goods linked to forced labour from accessing the EU market and ensure that those products that are already on the market have to be removed. This EU ban will complement other efforts to address the root causes of forced labour in EU value chains, including the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive.

Anna Cavazzini, Greens/EFA MEP, Chair of the Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee, and Greens/EFA shadow rapporteur on the file, comments:

“We will finally no longer have products made with forced labour. A total of 27.6 million people worldwide are victims of forced labour, and the solar panels or T-shirts they produce often end up in our stores and then in our homes. This is now over. The EU will use its market power to fight forced labour around the world. This new law is a milestone for sustainable supply chains. This is good news for consumers, and also for European companies, which are currently suffering from imports dumping from regions with forced labour.”

Saskia Bricmont MEP, Greens/EFA shadow rapporteur in the International Trade Committee, comments:

“This regulation is a huge victory in the fight against human exploitation. For years now, the Greens/EFA Group has been at the forefront fighting for a law to ban forced labour. Despite the very difficult negotiations with the Member States, we managed to ensure that the ban fully applies to products made with state-imposed forced labour. Unfortunately, we did not succeed in imposing that remediation should be a condition to lift a ban on a product. But the regulation at least acknowledges the relevance of taking meaningful action against forced labour through remediation for victims.”

Background:

Around 28 million people are estimated to be in forced labour worldwide and almost half of them in Asia and the Pacific. Forced labour is the most extreme form of human exploitation and often affects the weakest and most marginalised groups. Women and girls, for example, are more at risk than boys and men, and children make up a quarter of forced labour. In June 2022, the Greens/EFA Group called on the

Commission to develop a legal instrument banning products made with forced labour from the EU market. In order to accelerate the process, the Greens/EFA Group also published a model EU law inspired by the United States trade instrument. In September 2022, the European Commission proposed a legislative instrument to ban products resulting from forced labour. The EU-Forced labour regulation is led by INTA and IMCO committees under Rule 58.

Greens-EFA's Campaign against forced labour: <https://www.greens-efa.eu/en/forced-labour>

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