

Resolution by the Civil Dialogue Group on Forestry and Cork

The CDG Forestry & Cork calls on the Commission to expand the scope of products covered by the EU Timber Regulation to include all wood based products

Illegal logging, including timber harvesting works, cause deforestation, greenhouse gas emissions and biodiversity loss. It undermines social standards, causes unfair competition with regular market participants and contractors and tarnishes the image of the forest sector and wood products, which are competing with products based on fossil and more carbon intensive materials.

The European forest sector is engaging with the European Commission and national governments to improve forest governance in Europe through various instruments and on different levels. The EU Timber Regulation, in force since 2013, aims to halt the trade in illegal timber on the EU market. In February 2016, the European Commission published the first review report for the EU Timber Regulation. While most recommendations are addressed to Member States on the implementation, one of the few recommendations at community level is the consideration of expanding the product scope.

The Civil Dialogue Group on Forestry and Cork believes that the ongoing impact assessment on the product scope following the review of the EU Timber Regulation should ensure that the objective of combatting illegal logging is further strengthened. It is necessary to include product groups to the annex, which so far are not covered, such as printed products and other products including related to energy use. Due to this loophole, it is possible to source illegal wood, manufacture finished products from it in third countries and export products containing illegal wood to the EU. This causes social and economic damage to European forest owners, companies, contractors and their workers, while the objective of combatting illegal logging in the countries of origin is not achieved. Expanding the scope to all wood products would ensure a level playing field for European industry, contractors and forest owners and addressing the main objective of the regulation: curbing illegal logging.