



European Commission
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Subject: The emergency is real. Halting deforestation is more urgent than ever

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Dear President von der Leyen,

Our organization, Rainforest Rescue/ Rettet den Regenwald e.V., strongly opposes efforts by various lobby groups to delay, alter, or weaken the European Union Deforestation-free Products Regulation (EUDR - Reg 1115/2023). Instead, we align with those advocating for ambitious and timely implementation, recognizing the urgent need to halt the alarming rates of deforestation in the world's forests.

We also call for the establishment of effective controls to make the end of deforestation real and immediate. European consumers need robust guarantees and assurance that products containing cocoa, coffee, palm oil, rubber, soy, timber and beef are not associated with deforestation, and that companies and governments make all necessary efforts in this direction.

Overtaking the EUDR would undermine the EU's commitments to forest conservation, combating climate change, and to stopping biodiversity loss. It could trigger a massive surge in deforestation and conversion of areas such as the Amazon and Cerrado in Brazil.

Through our efforts to protect tropical forests and their communities, we have firsthand knowledge that deforestation persists in countries with tropical forests, driven by the expansion of agro-industrial and extractive business activities, often with the collusion of national and local authorities. Many of these projects are driven by "green growth" policies, which are largely promoted by Europe. This creates a contradiction between strategies and legislation, and it is urgent that you change this trend.

Between 1990 and 2020, deforestation wiped out 420 million hectares globally—an area larger than the entire European Union. At least 10 to 16% of this deforestation, according to the EU itself and WWF, respectively, is linked to consumption in the EU, making it the second-largest contributor

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after China. Based on these calculations, the EU was responsible for deforestation covering an area between 420,000 km² (equivalent to the size of Germany, the Netherlands, and Belgium combined) and 670,000 km² (the size of France and Belgium combined).

Human rights violations linked to deforestation include invasion of indigenous territories, land theft, forced displacements, attacks, and threats, among other abuse. These widely documented consequences are entirely unacceptable and highlight the disproportionate and excessive nature of European consumption. Therefore, companies and consumers must acknowledge the urgent need to protect forests, stop deforestation, and adhere to the legislation designed for this purpose.

It is excessive consumption, not anti-deforestation legislation, that can disrupt supply chains when it exceeds the capacity of supplier countries.

Evidenced by the overwhelming approval of EUDR in the European Parliament, European society strongly supports an immediate stop to deforestation and addressing associated rights violations and damages. We therefore call for the prompt implementation of the regulations. We urge you not to yield to industry pressures.

Yours faithfully,

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