



28 March 2024

The game-changing EU Deforestation Regulation will only work if Member States start implementation now

Dear European Union Member States,

When the EU Regulation on deforestation-free products (EUDR) was enacted in 2023, it had overwhelming public support, and was strongly backed by NGOs, companies and most EU Member States and Members of the European Parliament (MEPs). But there are worrying signals that some Member States are planning to delay implementation.

We are therefore writing to urge you to devote enough resources to implement the EUDR on time, taking into account the urgency of the climate and biodiversity crises.

One of the EUDR's innovations is that it tackles unsustainable agricultural expansion, which the journal *Science* estimates to be behind 90-99% of tropical deforestation. It was developed through long and complex negotiations including a wide range of stakeholders with the aim of preventing the EU consumption and export of deforestation-tainted goods using cattle, cocoa, coffee, palm oil, natural rubber, wood or soy. The EUDR will also be crucial to stopping the degradation of European forests, which are already severely impacted by the climate crisis, over-exploitation and poor plantation management.

It is now up to Member States to ensure this "game-changing" regulation achieves its promise and reduces the EU's deforestation footprint, which is the second largest in the world.

We are therefore very concerned by the recent investigation from the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) which found that Member States, such as Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, and Romania have allocated too few resources to the EUDR implementation challenge.

We are also dismayed by the EU agriculture ministers' last-minute effort, in opposition of EU democratic principles, to scale back and delay the Regulation, as reported following the AGRIFISH Council meeting on March 26, 2024. Similarly, some industries are asking for EUDR obligations to be postponed - completely ignoring the environmental crises the EUDR seeks to help tackle.

We support those companies and sectors that are working towards compliance. The rubber and cocoa sectors are already looking at traceability and legality-compliance in their supply chains, as well as how to incorporate smallholder suppliers.

We urge all Member States to be at the forefront of a fast and effective implementation of EUDR, instead of falling for industries' lobbying efforts. The EU must uphold its commitment to combat global deforestation and forest degradation both at home and abroad. Any delay in implementation would hamper its credibility.

We stand by our June 2023 statement and commit to working with the European Commission and Member States to ensure that:

- EUDR implementation is not delayed or weakened in order to not "punish" those who are working hard to comply or send a signal of weakness to global markets and their leading players.
- Member States appoint Competent Authorities and provide them with sufficient staff and budget to deliver on the required number of inspections.
- Supportive measures are adopted to help small farmers to comply with the Regulation.

During this transition period, we have shown that due diligence systems, data and anti-deforestation tools already exist. The time to implement is now. EU-Member States need to keep pushing forward so we can stop deforestation and forest degradation for the benefit of people, nature and the planet.

Biofuelwatch, Europe/USA

BirdLife, Sweden

Both Ends, Netherlands

Bruno Manser Fonds, Switzerland

Canopée Forêts Vivantes, France

ClientEarth, EU

Comité Schone Lucht, Netherlands

Deutsche Umwelthilfe, Germany

Earth Thrive, UK / Serbia

Earthsight, UK

Ecologistas en Acción, Spain

Ei polteta tulevaisuutta, Finland

Ekumenická akademie, Czech Republic

Envol Vert, France

European Civic Forum, France

Fern, Belgium

Finnish Association for Nature Conservation, Finland

Forests of the World, Denmark

Friends of Fertő Lake Association, Hungary

Germanwatch, Germany

Great Lakes and Wetlands Association, Hungary
Koalice pro řeky, Czech Republic
Leefmilieu, Netherlands
Mighty Earth, International
Milieudefensie, Netherlands
Mobilisation for the Environment, Netherlands
Neuer Weg Association, Romania
OroVerde, Germany
Polish Ecological Club, Poland
Rainforest Foundation, Norway
ROBIN WOOD e.V., Germany
Society for Threatened Peoples, Switzerland
Südwind, Austria
Swedish Society for Nature Conservation, Sweden
Ukrainian Nature Conservation Group, Ukraine
Wetlands International, Netherlands
Wild Europe Foundation, Netherlands
Zero, Portugal