

PRESS RELEASE**Member States improve the implementability of the legislative proposal on halting deforestation and forest degradation**

Brussels, 29 June 2022 – Yesterday, Member States adopted their position on the EU's Deforestation and Forest Degradation Regulation during the meeting of the ENVI Council. From European forest owners' view, the changes adopted improve the Commission's proposal as they present more feasible requirements and legal certainty to operators on how to implement new obligations.

EU Member States suggest deleting the term 'sustainable harvesting operations' and to revisit the definition of 'forest degradation' to mean "*structural changes to forest cover, taking the form of the conversion of primary forests into plantation forests or into other wooded land*". This answers to forest owners' concerns about the Commission's proposal which was very prescriptive and difficult to implement in practice.

The Member States also call for a deadline of 18 months within which the Commission must present a list of countries presenting a low or high risk of deforestation. This would guarantee that operators who produce only in low-risk countries are not stuck in the standard category because of bottlenecks in the Commission's assessment procedure and do not have to fulfil an unjustified level of requirements.

Forest owners still have concerns about the requirements related to geo-localisation. It can be challenging to manage data collection in practice, particularly for small-scale owners. The reference in the Council position on the level of accuracy of the geo-localisation coordinates does not solve this problem. Moreover, providing a precise link between the wood product and the plot of land where the raw material was grown may not be easily, if at all, possible.

European forest owners fully support all actions aiming at halting global deforestation. However, legislative efforts will only be successful when made together with operators. Therefore, ahead of the adoption of the European Parliament's position and the beginning of triologue process, it remains essential to consider the voices of those who will be the ones implementing and bearing the responsibility of these new measures.

For more information, contact:

Susanna Kallio

Office & Communications Manager

susanna.kallio@cepf-eu.org

+32493842122

