

EU/Côte d'Ivoire Voluntary Partnership Agreement: forest law enforcement, governance and trade in timber and timber products to the EU (FLEGT)

2023/0222(NLE) - 23/02/2024 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to conclude, on behalf of the EU, the voluntary partnership agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire on forest law enforcement, governance and trade in timber and timber products to the European Union (FLEGT).

PROPOSED ACT: Council Decision.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: Council may adopt the act only if Parliament has given its consent to the act.

BACKGROUND: on 21 May 2003, the Commission adopted a Communication to the Council and the European Parliament 'Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT): proposal for an EU action plan'. The Action Plan set out in that communication ('the FLEGT Action Plan') called for measures to address illegal logging by developing voluntary partnership agreements with timber-producing countries. Council conclusions on the action plan were adopted in October 2003¹ and a European Parliament resolution on the subject was adopted

on 11 July 2005 .

In line with a Council Decision, the Voluntary Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire on forest law enforcement, governance and trade in timber and timber products was signed, subject to its conclusion at a later date.

It is now necessary to approve the Agreement on behalf of the Union.

CONTENT: the Council draft concerns the approval, on behalf of the Union, the Voluntary Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire on forest law enforcement, governance and trade in timber and timber products.

The objective of this Agreement, in accordance with the joint commitment of the Parties to sustainably manage all types of forests, is to provide a legal framework to **ensure that timber and timber products** defined by the FLEGT authorisation and imported into the Union from Côte d'Ivoire have been legally produced and to promote trade in said timber and timber products and implement the **principle of sustainability**.

The Agreement, *inter alia*:

- establishes a licensing scheme that checks and confirms the legality of timber products exported to EU and non-EU countries, as well as timber sold domestically;
- establishes a mechanism for dialogue and cooperation between the EU and Côte d'Ivoire on the licensing scheme, via a joint implementation committee;

- provides a detailed description of the structures underpinning the timber legality assurance system of Côte d'Ivoire;
- sets out a framework for involving stakeholders, social safeguards, and accountability and transparency.