

# 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) - 27/05/2024 - Final act

**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).

**NON-LEGISLATIVE ACT:** Council Decision (EU) 2024/1413 on the conclusion of 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).

**CONTENT:** under this Decision, the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) between the European Union and the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire on forest law enforcement, governance and trade in timber products to the European Union is hereby approved on behalf of the Union.

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 in Annex I to the Agreement 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 also provides a basis for dialogue and cooperation between the Parties aimed at facilitating and promoting its full implementation and at strengthening the enforcement of forest law and governance.

The Agreement sets out in particular the **framework, the institutions and the system for issuing FLEGT licenses**. It also sets out:

- the supply chain controls;
- legal compliance framework;
- independent audit requirements for the system.

These elements are set out in the Annexes to the Agreement and provide a detailed description of the structures that will underpin the assurance of legality afforded by the issuing of a FLEGT licence.

More specifically, the Agreement:

- provides 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.
- 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.

The VPA's successful implementation will depend on Côte d'Ivoire's sustained commitment and political will. EU assistance should be strengthened to support the VPA implementation as part of the programming review process of the EU bilateral programme for the period 2025- 2027.

This Agreement will be valid for 10 years from its entry into force. It will be automatically extended for consecutive periods of 10 years, unless a Party terminates it.

ENTRY INTO FORCE: 29.04.2024.