Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of the Environment through Criminal Law

2025/0244(NLE) - 08/07/2026 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 499 votes to 99, with 69 abstentions, a legislative resolution on the draft Council decision on the conclusion of the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of the Environment through Criminal Law on behalf of the European Union.

Parliament **gave its consent** to the conclusion of the agreement.

The Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of the Environment through Criminal Law was signed on 3 December 2025, subject to its conclusion at a later date. The Convention is consistent with the Union's objectives of ensuring a high level of environmental protection and improving environmental quality, as well as combating environmental crime, including through criminal law.

The aim of the Convention is to: (a) effectively prevent and combat environmental crime; (b) promote and enhance national and international co-operation and (c) establish minimum rules to guide states in their national legislation and thus promote and improve environmental protection.

The Convention establishes binding international standards for defining and criminalising serious environmental offences punishable by effective, proportionate and dissuasive sanctions. It also strengthens prevention measures and international cooperation to address environmental crime, including through cross-border investigations, information exchange and the collection of statistical data.

Upon its entry into force, neighbouring countries will apply criminal law standards consistent with those of the EU, thereby, in effect, improving cooperation, investigations and accountability. For EU Member States, the new Convention is consistent with Directive (EU) 2024/1203, however they can go beyond the requirements of both that Directive and that Convention when implementing their provisions.

The Convention is expected to enter into force upon ten ratifications, including at least eight ratifications by member States of Council of Europe. Alongside the Council of Europe member States, the new Convention is open for signature by non-member States that have participated in its elaboration and the EU.