Resolution on speeding up implementation of the European Union action plan on Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade FLEGT

2005/2586(RSP) - 07/07/2005 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

In July 2004 the Commission presented a proposal for a Council regulation concerning the establishment of a voluntary FLEGT licensing scheme for imports of timber into the European Community, which was to be implemented through bilateral, regional or inter-regional FLEGT partnership agreements.

Given the extraordinarily slow progress in implementing the various commitments set out in the FLEGT action plan, the European Parliament has adopted a resolution in which it expresses its disappointed that the Commission has so far failed to fulfil its commitment to deliver a study on legislative options which was, as set out in its action plan, to be submitted for mid-2004.

The Parliament is also disappointed that the Commission has so far failed to draft comprehensive legislation that will prohibit the import of all illegal timber and timber products, regardless of their country of origin, and to promote sustainable forest management worldwide, as requested for June 2004 by the members of Parliament's Committee on Industry, Research and Energy.

Parliament expresses its disappointment with the Member States who failed to provide the Commission with relevant information regarding national legislation which could be applied to address the illegal logging issue, and that no network has been established to facilitate the exchange of information.

The Parliament is deeply concerned that the proposal for a regulation concerning the establishment of a voluntary FLEGT licensing scheme which gives a mandate for negotiation of FLEGT partnership agreements with timber-producing countries, which is one of the cornerstones of the FLEGT action plan, is being developed under the legal basis of Article 133 of the EC Treaty instead of Article 175 and/or Article 179 of the EC Treaty. Therefore, it urges the Commission and the Member States to comply without further delay with their commitments under the FLEGT action plan and their international commitments on biodiversity, poverty alleviation, sustainable forest management and climate mitigation.

Lastly, Parliament calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure that the voluntary partnership agreements incorporate partnership principles committing producer countries to a timebound action programme and involving measures to tackle the weaknesses in forest sector governance and that it be fully involved and informed of the progress made at every stage of negotiations on FLEGT partnership agreements.