Basic information

2019/2156(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
The EU's role in protecting and restoring the world's forests **Subject** 3.10.11 Forestry policy 3.70.01 Protection of natural resources: fauna, flora, nature, wildlife, countryside; biodiversity	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
ENVI Environment, Public Health and Food Safety	POLČÁK Stanislav (EPP)	11/12/2019
	Shadow rapporteur RÓNAI Sándor (S&D) RODRÍGUEZ RAMOS María Soraya (Renew) HÄUSLING Martin (Greens/EFA) ZALEWSKA Anna (ECR) VILLUMSEN Nikolaj (GUE/NGL)	

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
DEVE Development (Associated committee)	BENTELE Hildegard (EPP)	09/01/2020
INTA International Trade (Associated committee)	KARLSBRO Karin (Renew)	02/12/2019
ITRE Industry, Research and Energy	PEKKARINEN Mauri (Renew)	19/12/2019
REGI Regional Development	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
AGRI Agriculture and Rural Development (Associated committee)	OLEKAS Juozas (S&D)	04/12/2019

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
23/07/2019	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2019)0352	
19/12/2019	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
19/12/2019	Referral to associated committees announced in Parliament		
27/05/2020	Referral to associated committees announced in Parliament		
07/07/2020	Vote in committee		
23/07/2020	Committee report tabled for plenary	A9-0143/2020	Summary
16/09/2020	Decision by Parliament	T9-0212/2020	Summary
16/09/2020	Results of vote in Parliament		
17/09/2020	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2019/2156(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 55
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 165
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	ENVI/9/01954

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE648.567	24/03/2020	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE650.715	08/05/2020	
Committee opinion	INTA	PE648.523	02/06/2020	
Committee opinion	ITRE	PE647.152	03/06/2020	
Committee opinion	AGRI	PE648.361	03/06/2020	
Committee opinion	DEVE	PE648.612	02/07/2020	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A9-0143/2020	23/07/2020	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T9-0212/2020	16/09/2020	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Commission document (COM)	COM(2019)0352	23/07/2019	
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2020)597	11/02/2021	

National parliaments

Document type	Parliament /Chamber	Reference	Date	Summary
Contribution	CZ_CHAMBER	COM(2019)0352	20/12/2019	

The EU's role in protecting and restoring the world's forests

2019/2156(INI) - 16/09/2020 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 543 votes to 47, with 109 abstentions, a resolution on the EU's role in protecting and restoring the world's forests.

Between 1990 and 2016, 1.3 million square kilometres of the world's forests was lost, with destructive effects on biodiversity, climate, people and the economy. While welcoming the Commission's Communication 'Stepping up EU Action to Protect and Restore the World's Forests', Parliament argued that the EU and its Member States should be more ambitious in their actions to meet their commitments and address the urgency of deforestation and forest degradation worldwide.

High standards and binding targets

Parliament stressed the need to recognise the EU's competences in the field of forest protection and the role of forests in increasing resilience to the negative effects of climate change. It called on the Commission and the Member States to:

- ensure, in line with the European Green Deal and the 2030 Biodiversity Strategy, the highest standards of environmental protection and greater consistency between the task of protecting and restoring forests both within the EU and in its external action;

- intensify its efforts to combat deforestation in a comprehensive manner through a coherent policy framework, while ensuring the conservation of ecosystems;

- include binding targets for the protection and restoration of forest ecosystems, in particular primary forests, in the future EU Forest Strategy;

- propose specific measures to strengthen the policy and regulatory framework for the protection and restoration of forests and globally sustainable forest management and develop specific guidelines and measures for sustainable land management.

Supply chains

Parliament voted for an ambitious single definition of the concept of a deforestation-free supply chain to address the problem of commodities contributing to deforestation.

The Commission was invited to present a proposal for an EU legal framework based on due diligence to ensure sustainable and deforestation-free supply chains for products and raw materials placed on the EU market. Such a framework should be enforceable and in line with international standards and obligations, apply to the whole supply chain and be accompanied by a robust enforcement mechanism with effective, proportionate and dissuasive penalties.

Recognising furthermore the threats and human rights violations they face, Parliament also invited the Commission to take into account the rights of indigenous nations and local communities, including women, in the protection of forests and to involve them in the design, adoption, implementation and enforcement of forest protection measures, whether at EU or national level.

Members also urged the private sector to be more proactive in combating deforestation in its supply chains and investments and considered it essential to redirect both private and public financial flows in relevant industrial sectors towards activities that do not cause deforestation.

Trade agreements

Parliament recommended that the Commission better assess the impact of existing trade agreements on deforestation and ensure that more ambitious provisions on forest protection, biodiversity and sustainable forestry are included in the trade and sustainable development chapters of all free trade and investment agreements.

Members also insisted that the external dimension of the European Green Deal should be further strengthened through alliances and partnerships aimed at addressing global challenges like climate change and biodiversity while facilitating the socio-economic development of partner countries.

Illegal logging

Members stressed that illegal logging is an ongoing practice not only in third countries, but also in the EU. They called on the Commission to establish a European forest surveying and preservation system based on a monitoring system using GNSS (Galileo and Copernicus) and ground networks in order to monitor the activity from logging from the point of harvesting to the entry and exit points of timber processing companies.

Increased cooperation

Parliament called on the EU to strengthen international cooperation by increasing efforts in key international forums, including the WTO and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

The EU should also provide support to partner countries to implement actions that will help them comply with any measures the EU may set up to address imported deforestation and called for cooperation to be stepped up and for the necessary and effective measures to be taken to prevent trade in goods related to deforestation and forest degradation from being diverted to other regions of the world.

Parliament supported the creation of an EU technical and financial mechanism that would catalyse funding to support partners' efforts to sustainably use, protect and restore forests and improve sustainable agricultural production under the next Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI).

Lastly, it supported the establishment of a platform for dialogue between stakeholders and Member States on deforestation in order to build alliances, enter into joint commitments, halt deforestation, and exchange experiences and information.

The EU’s role in protecting and restoring the world’s forests

2019/2156(INI) - 23/07/2020 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety adopted an own-initiative report by Stanislav POLČÁK (EPP, CZ) on the EU’s role in protecting and restoring the world’s forests.

Forests are essential contributors to climate change mitigation and adaptation. Conversely, deforestation, in particular tropical deforestation, is an important contributor to climate change. Between 1990 and 2016, 1.3 million square kilometres of the world’s forests was lost, with destructive effects on biodiversity, climate, people and the economy.

While welcoming the Commission communication ‘Stepping up EU Action to Protect and Restore the World’s Forests’, Members considered that there is a need for far-reaching, ambitious and concerted action, underpinned by political and societal will, to protect and restore the world’s forests. According to Members, the EU and its Member States should be more ambitious in their actions to meet their commitments and address the urgency of deforestation and forest degradation worldwide.

Proposed action

The Commission is called on to:

- step up its efforts to address deforestation holistically through a coherent policy framework, while ensuring the conservation of ecosystems;

- propose a single definition of the concept of a deforestation-free supply chain which Members consider is central to addressing the problem of commodities contributing to deforestation;

- work with the private sector and other development actors to assess new disaster risk finance and insurance solutions for catastrophic events affecting forests;

- take into account the rights of indigenous nations and local communities, including women, in the protection of forests and involve them in the design, adoption, implementation and enforcement of forest protection measures, whether at EU or national level;

- fundamentally reform EU bio-energy policies, namely by revising the Renewable Energy Directive;

- present a proposal for an EU legal framework based on due diligence to ensure sustainable and deforestation-free supply chains for products and commodities placed on the EU market;

- ensure effective measures for the sustainable production and use of wood fuels in view, inter alia, of the high level of imports of wood pellets into the EU and the potential risks that these imports pose to forests in third countries.

The Commission and the Member States are called on to:

- include binding targets for the protection and restoration of forest ecosystems, especially primary forests, as part of the EU’s future forest strategy;

- ensure full transparency and public participation in forest and land use-related measures in order to prevent deforestation and forest degradation, promote forest protection and sustainable forest management, and support the protection and restoration of natural forests, at regional and global levels;

- stress the importance of establishing a platform for multi-stakeholder and Member State dialogue on deforestation, forest degradation and ways of sustainably increasing the world's forest cover in order to build alliances, enter into joint commitments, halt deforestation, and exchange experiences and information;

- step up their support for environmental and forest defenders in the EU and worldwide;

- carry out without delay studies on certification and verification schemes in the forest sector and for wood-based products and on certification schemes for non-deforestation commodities;

- propose specific measures to strengthen the political and regulatory framework supporting the protection and restoration of forests and sustainable forest management at global level, and to provide guidance and specific measures on sustainable land-use planning;

- harmonise data and improve the availability of information and data obtained through existing and new monitoring and assessment tools relating to the world's and the EU's forests.

Illegal logging

Members stressed that illegal logging is an ongoing practice not only in third countries, but also in the EU. They called on the Commission to establish a European forest surveying and preservation system based on a monitoring system using GNSS (Galileo and Copernicus) and ground networks in order to monitor the activity from logging from the point of harvesting to the entry and exit points of timber processing companies.

Increased cooperation

The report called on the EU to strengthen international cooperation by increasing efforts in key international forums, including the WTO and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) with a view, *inter alia*, to harmonising the terminology, concepts and statistics in use and to ensuring the coherence of the policies and measures adopted. The EU should also provide support to partner countries to implement actions that will help them comply with any measures the EU may set up to address imported deforestation and calls for cooperation to be stepped up and for the necessary and effective measures to be taken to prevent trade in goods related to deforestation and forest degradation from being diverted to other regions of the world.

Financial measures

Horizon 2020 has already financed significant research and innovation in the transition towards more sustainable land-use practices and supply chains in order to halt deforestation and forest degradation. However, Members called for increased funding to enable Horizon Europe to continue providing support in these areas. An EU technical and financial mechanism which would catalyse funding to support partners' efforts to sustainably use, protect and restore forests, improve sustainable, deforestation-free agricultural production, and address mining activities with adverse impacts on forests, under the upcoming Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) should be supported.