

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001495/24
to the Commission
Alexander Bernhuber (PPE)
(7 August 2024)**

Subject: Proportionality of EU rules in the forestry sector

The regulation on deforestation-free products (EUDR) introduced far-reaching rules on forestry which could be seen to be disproportionate.

1. How does the Commission justify introducing uniform definitions and common categories of forests, which are to apply in different Member States with different conditions?
2. What analyses and studies did it carry out to demonstrate the need in the forestry sector for the EUDR and its appropriateness?
3. To what extent was the principle of proportionality under Article 5 TEU observed when drafting the EUDR, and what was done to ensure that the rules do not go beyond what is necessary?

Submitted: 8.8.2024

**Answer given by Executive Vice-President Šefčovič on behalf of the European Commission
(1 October 2024)**

The definitions in the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) ⁽¹⁾, adopted by the European Parliament and Council, build on the work of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations and other relevant international organisations (Recital 43 of the EUDR).

The EUDR is designed to apply in an even-handed and non-discriminatory manner to comply with the EU's international commitments.

All commodities and products produced within or outside the EU covered by the EUDR will be subject to the same standards when they are placed on the EU market.

Different levels of wood harvesting are allowed, provided that this does not result in a transformation falling under the definition of degradation.

Sustainable forest management systems can be employed and encouraged, provided they do not lead to a conversion that meets the degradation definition.

The Commission's legislative proposal for the EUDR was based on an Impact Assessment ⁽²⁾ that estimated the costs and benefits of the proposed policy options, as well as a fitness check of the EU rules in place against illegal logging ⁽³⁾, including the EU Timber Regulation ⁽⁴⁾, which the EUDR is set to replace.

The Impact Assessment backing the proposal estimated that the costs of compliance for companies are significantly lower than the expected benefits — i.e. improved market access and growing demand for sustainably sourced products worldwide.

In addition, the EUDR lays down transition periods for enterprises, and longer periods specifically for small and micro-enterprises, to be able to adapt to the changes required.

The cut-off date of 31 December 2020 aims to minimise the number of smallholders that are caught cultivating land whose produce cannot be sold on the EU market or exported from it.

⁽¹⁾ https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/forests/deforestation/regulation-deforestation-free-products_en

⁽²⁾ https://environment.ec.europa.eu/publications/proposal-regulation-deforestation-free-products_en

⁽³⁾ https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/forests/deforestation/eu-rules-against-illegal-logging_en#fitness-check-on-the-eu-timber-regulation-and-the-flegt-regulation

⁽⁴⁾ https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/forests/deforestation/eu-rules-against-illegal-logging_en