

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002193/24
to the Commission
Beatrice Timgren (ECR)
(21 October 2024)**

Subject: Concerns regarding satellite data accuracy in the EU forest monitoring proposal

The Commission's proposal on forest monitoring has raised concerns about the accuracy, cost-efficiency and feasibility of satellite data in monitoring forest activity. For example, satellite data has incorrectly classified selectively thinned forests as fully deforested, creating a misleading picture of forest management.

This reliance on global algorithms, which lack regional specificity, like those from Global Forest Watch, risks undermining long-established national monitoring systems such as Sweden's National Forest Inventory, leading to unnecessary administrative burdens ⁽¹⁾.

1. How does the Commission plan to ensure that satellite data methodologies are regionally accurate, particularly in countries such as Sweden, where major discrepancies have already emerged?
2. What steps will it take to avoid additional administrative burdens and costs on Member States, while fully respecting existing, long-standing forest data systems such as those in Sweden and Finland?
3. How will it address concerns over data confidentiality, including the protection of private property and national security, particularly in avoiding the over-collection of sensitive information through geographically explicit identification systems?

Submitted: 21.10.2024

**Answer given by Mr Hoekstra on behalf of the European Commission
(3 January 2025)**

The Commission proposal for a regulation on a Monitoring Framework on Resilient European Forests ⁽¹⁾ is designed to use a combination of Earth observation (EO) information and ground monitoring.

This approach ensures timely, cost-effective and accurate information about European forests, avoiding unnecessary administrative burden. It builds on the technological potential of EO, while allowing for calibration and ground-truthing of satellite-derived data.

It will support Member States in fulfilling the obligations under the land use, land use change, and forestry (LULUCF) Regulation ⁽²⁾, Nature Restoration Regulation ⁽³⁾, and Habitats Directive ⁽⁴⁾, as well as assist land managers in engaging in certification schemes under the new the Carbon Removal and Carbon Farming Certification Framework ⁽⁵⁾.

The information from EO will be collected by the Commission through the Copernicus Programme that is already well established. These datasets ensure the temporal consistency and are accompanied by comprehensive documentation on the operation of algorithms, including quality standards.

Their accuracy and consistency with regional statistics will be further ensured by the calibration of these products with ground data collected by the Member States, including, where relevant, in the framework of their national forest inventories. To that end, the proposal builds on forest data collection systems already in place in the Member States.

Article 346(1)(a) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union provides that no Member State shall be obliged to supply information the disclosure of which it considers contrary to the essential interests of its security.

The proposal provides for the necessary safeguards to ensure data confidentiality, including on land ownership and on the location of monitoring sites.

¹ <https://www.svt.se/nyheter/inrikes/sverige-pekas-ut-som-skogsbov-eu-far-fel-uppgifter>.

⁽¹⁾ COM (2023) 728 of 22 November 2023.

⁽²⁾ Regulation (EU) 2018/841 as amended by Regulation (EU) 2023/839.

⁽³⁾ Regulation (EU) 2024/1991.

⁽⁴⁾ Council Directive 92/43/EEC.

⁽⁵⁾ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TC1-COD-2022-0394_EN.pdf