

(English version)

Question for written answer E-002735/24
to the Commission
Ciaran Mullooly (Renew)
(3 December 2024)

Subject: Derogation from the EU Deforestation Regulation

The forestry sector is vital to Ireland's economy. It supports rural communities and generates local employment.

Irish forestry is characterised by sustainable practices that emphasise biodiversity and afforestation efforts. Ireland's forestry practices are rigorously enforced and are certified by international certification bodies such as the Forest Stewardship Council. Irish forestry is regulated by a strict licensing regime, which obliges all felling to be replanted within two years. Therefore, the risk of deforestation in Ireland should be considered very low.

The EU Deforestation Regulation ⁽¹⁾, while essential for tackling deforestation globally, imposes disproportionate regulatory and administrative burdens on Member States such as Ireland.

Ireland has a low-risk status with regard to deforestation. In line with EU proposals that Member States should have greater flexibility in implementing EU regulations that are fit for purpose in their regions and in line with the risk assessment and simplified due diligence provisions of the Deforestation Regulation, can the Commission confirm whether it has considered differentiated approaches such as a derogation within the EU Deforestation Regulation for countries, such as Ireland, whose forestry practices are tightly regulated?

Submitted: 3.12.2024

Answer given by Ms Roswall on behalf of the European Commission
(14 February 2025)

The Commission is aware that a majority of EU foresters and farmers already live up to the highest standards of environmental sustainability and are therefore well-placed to meet the requirements of the regulation on deforestation-free products (EUDR) ⁽¹⁾.

Deforestation and forest degradation in the EU have been minimal in recent decades as national laws for forest protection are generally complied with.

The EUDR sets strict geolocation and customs control requirements, applying the same rules for all products placed on the EU market, irrespectively if they come from the EU or partner countries.

The Commission's legislative proposal for the EUDR was based on an Impact Assessment ⁽²⁾ which estimated that overall expected benefits of this regulation outweigh the costs of compliance for companies.

The Commission is finalising the methodology for the classification of low-risk and high-risk countries (Article 29(3) of the EUDR), whose guiding principles have already been published ⁽³⁾.

The Commission is committed to making the proposal for risk classification available as soon as possible but no later than six months before the EUDR enters into application ⁽⁴⁾.

Operators and traders supplying products from countries with low-deforestation rates will benefit from simplified due diligence (Article 13) and a lower threshold for mandatory checks carried out by competent authorities (Article 16(10)).

Regulation (EU) 2024/3234 ⁽⁵⁾ postponing the date of application of the EUDR provides stakeholders with more time to prepare. During the additional 12 months of phasing in, the Commission will explore further clarifications and simplifications.

¹ Regulation (EU) 2023/1115 of 31 May 2023 on the making available on the Union market and the export from the Union of certain commodities and products associated with deforestation and forest degradation, OJ L 150, 9.6.2023, p. 206, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2023/1115/oj>.

⁽¹⁾ Regulation (EU) 2023/1115 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 31 May 2023 on the making available on the Union market and the export from the Union of certain commodities and products associated with deforestation and forest degradation and repealing Regulation (EU) No 995/2010, OJ L 150, 9.6.2023, p. 206-247.

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

⁽³⁾ Communication from the Commission on the Strategic Framework for International Cooperation Engagement in the context of Regulation (EU) 2023/1115 on the making available on the Union market and the export from the Union of certain commodities and products associated with deforestation and forest degradation.

⁽⁴⁾ <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/CM-5486-2024-INIT/xx/pdf>

⁽⁵⁾ Regulation (EU) 2024/3234 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 December 2024 amending Regulation (EU) 2023/1115 as regards provisions relating to the date of application, OJ L, 2024/3234, 23.12.2024, p. 1.