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Answer given by Mr Síkela
on behalf of the European Commission
(16.7.2025)

The Commission proposal for termination of the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) with Liberia is based on a decade of dialogue and close monitoring through joint EU-Liberia management structures and five independent audits. These assessments consistently found deep-rooted issues in Liberia's implementation of the VPA, especially the lack of a functional Legality Assurance System, weak institutional capacity, and limited law enforcement.

While the Boakai administration has renewed efforts to advance the VPA – reactivating joint committees, imposing a moratorium on carbon concessions, and resuming logging revenue payments – these steps have not addressed the deep-rooted structural and implementation issues.

As a result, the limited likelihood of Forest Law Enforcement Governance Trade licenses combined with low timber trade flows, reduce the relevance of the VPA. The Commission has explained the reasons behind this proposal, notably at the Joint Implementation Committee meeting in November 2024¹.

The termination of the VPA and the possible transition to a Forest Partnership (FP) open the door to a new phase of cooperation which will support Liberia in aligning with the EU Deforestation Regulation² and advancing broader forest governance reforms through more flexible support mechanisms.

The governance structures under the FPs build on those under the VPA, with participation of all stakeholders, including civil society. The EU Council and the European Parliament exercise scrutiny and provide consent on the conclusion and termination of VPAs. Whilst FPs are a more flexible agreement, they also require scrutiny.

¹ <https://loggingoff.info/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/EU-GoL2024-AideMemoire-12thVPA-JIC-28-Nov-24-NoAnnexes.pdf>

² <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32023R1115>.