

Question for written answer E-005546/2015
to the Commission
Rule 130
Marielle de Sarnez (ALDE)

Subject: Implementation and evaluation of voluntary partnership agreements

In the context of the FLEGT action plans, the European Union negotiated voluntary partnership agreements (VPAs) with timber exporting partner countries. The aim of the agreements is to combat the illegal trade in timber, chiefly by means of a licensing system certifying the legality of timber exported to the EU, but also to promote improved compliance with forestry legislation and the adoption of an approach that includes civil society and the private sector.

Three of the most affected countries, Gabon, Cameroon and Liberia, are currently encountering problems implementing the agreements. According to a report from the Chatham House NGO on the timber sector in Cameroon, the legal reform process is extremely slow and nearly half of timber production in the country still takes place on an informal basis.

Does the Commission have plans to evaluate the voluntary partnership agreements with partner countries and to propose ways of improving how they are implemented?