

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000798/22
to the Commission
Tomáš Zdechovský (PPE)
(25 February 2022)**

Subject: Commission proposal on commodities and products associated with deforestation and forest degradation (COM(2021)0366)

The proposal for a regulation 2021/0366 on deforestation is inspired by Regulation 995/2010 laying down the obligations of operators who place timber and timber products on the market. However, its implementation has revealed certain shortcomings, such as inconsistencies in the approach of Member States (different legal environments, documents that have not been formalised) or a lack of mutual communication. How does the Commission intend to ensure that regulation 2021/0366 does not encounter the same problems?

The new proposal for a regulation does not include certain wood and paper products in its scope. Thus, the proposal could be considered inconsistent if it only covers wood and paper products at a certain stage of the supply chain — see Combined Nomenclature Chapters 47 and 48 on pulp and paper and Chapter 49 on printed products. Why has the Commission proceeded in this way, and is it considering including printed products in the regulation?

According to recent estimates, around 90% of global deforestation is caused by conversion to agricultural land, urban expansion or mining. Will the Commission not consider removing wood from the 2021/0366 regulation, since this area is already covered by legislation?

**Answer given by Mr Sinkevičius on behalf of the European Commission
(2 May 2022)**

The Commission undertook a Fitness Check of the rules in place to fight illegal logging, the EU Timber Regulation (EUTR) ⁽¹⁾ and the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade Regulation ⁽²⁾.

The results of the Fitness Check ⁽³⁾ have been published together with the proposal for a regulation on the making available on the Union market as well as export from the Union of certain commodities and products associated with deforestation and forest degradation ⁽⁴⁾.

The new initiative builds on the EUTR but introduces many improvements in the mandatory due diligence regime. Those improvements — such as the coverage of legal and illegal deforestation, the strict traceability requirements and the benchmarking system — are expected to significantly boost the effectiveness of the policy intervention, as demonstrated by the impact assessment ⁽⁵⁾ of the initiative.

The proposal also provides for common minimum levels of controls by competent authorities and enhanced obligations of cooperation between the different authorities involved.

For wood and wood products, the Commission has relied on the product scope of the EUTR. The proposal sets a progressive scope that will be reviewed regularly — the first time two years after the entry into force.

Once it enters into application, the new Regulation on deforestation and forest degradation, will repeal and replace the EUTR, as it will essentially integrate and improve the existing system to control timber legality.

⁽¹⁾ Regulation (EU) No 995/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 October 2010 laying down the obligations of operators who place timber and timber products on the market, OJ L 295, 12.11.2010, p. 23-34.

⁽²⁾ Council Regulation (EC) No 2173/2005 of 20 December 2005 on the establishment of a FLEGT licensing scheme for imports of timber into the European Community, OJ L 347, 30.12.2005, p. 1-6.

⁽³⁾ SWD(2021) 328 final.

⁽⁴⁾ COM(2021) 706 final.

⁽⁵⁾ SWD(2021) 326 final.