



Plenary sitting

A9-0136/2024

7.3.2024

RECOMMENDATION

on the draft Council decision on the conclusion, on behalf of the Union, of the Voluntary Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire on forest law enforcement, governance and trade in timber and timber products to the European Union (FLEGT)
(COM(2023)0383 – C9-0035/2024 – 2023/0222(NLE))

Committee on International Trade

Rapporteur: Karin Karlsbro

Symbols for procedures

- * Consultation procedure
- *** Consent procedure
- ***I Ordinary legislative procedure (first reading)
- ***II Ordinary legislative procedure (second reading)
- ***III Ordinary legislative procedure (third reading)

(The type of procedure depends on the legal basis proposed by the draft act.)

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DRAFT EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION

**on the proposal for a Council decision on the conclusion, on behalf of the Union, of the Voluntary Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire on forest law enforcement, governance and trade in timber and timber products to the European Union (FLEGT)
(COM(2023)0383 – C9-0035/2024 – 2023/0222(NLE))**

(Consent)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the proposal for a Council (COM(2023)0383),
 - having regard to the draft Voluntary Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire on forest law enforcement, governance and trade in timber and derived products to the European Union (12902/2023),
 - having regard to the request for consent submitted by the Council in accordance with Article 207(3), first subparagraph and Article 207(4), first subparagraph, and Article 218(6), second subparagraph, point (a)(v) and Article 218(7) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (C9-0035/2024),
 - having regard to its non-legislative resolution of ...¹ on the proposal for a decision,
 - having regard to Rule 105(1) and (4), and Rule 114(7) of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the opinion of the Committee on Development,
 - having regard to the recommendation of the Committee on International Trade (A9-0136/2024),
1. Gives its consent to the conclusion of the agreement;
 2. Instructs its President to forward its position to the Council, the Commission and the governments and parliaments of the Member States and of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire.

¹ Texts adopted of that date, P9_TA(0000)0000.

**ANNEX: ENTITIES OR PERSONS
FROM WHOM THE RAPPORTEUR HAS RECEIVED INPUT**

The rapporteur declares under her exclusive responsibility that she did not receive input from any entity or person to be mentioned in this Annex pursuant to Article 8 of Annex I to the Rules of Procedure.

7.12.2023

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON DEVELOPMENT

for the Committee on International Trade

on the proposal for a Council decision on the conclusion, on behalf of the Union, of the Voluntary Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire on forest law enforcement, governance and trade in timber and timber products to the European Union (FLEGT)
0000/2023 – C9-0000/2023 – 2023/0222(NLE))

Rapporteur for opinion: Carlos Zorrinho

SHORT JUSTIFICATION

The Commission entered into negotiations with the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire in 2013 and concluded the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) negotiations in October 2022.

Côte d'Ivoire has one of the highest deforestation rates in the world. According to the World Bank, as of 2020 only 8.9 % (2.8 million hectares) of Côte d'Ivoire land area was covered by forests, compared to 24.7% in 1990. The causes of this decline include extensive agriculture, cocoa trade, poorly controlled exploitation of forests to meet the demands for timber and wood energy and weak legal enforcement capacity of public authorities in forest governance.

Recently, the Ivorian government has committed to improving forest governance jointly with international and local actors, so as to increase forest coverage to 20% by 2030. In 2014, it launched the National Programme for the Environment and Forests, which aims to reduce deforestation and promote sustainable land use practices. Furthermore, the new Forestry Code adopted in 2019 largely improved the Ivorian forestry legislation. It added agro-forests, community forests, sacred forests to the classified list and made the legal framework more participatory, requiring the involvement of local communities in forest management and protection initiatives.

The forest industry still largely contributes to the Ivorian economy and local livelihoods. However, a large part is foreign owned and only a few out of a total of 40 exotic and local forest species processed and exported as timber are known, leading to overexploiting certain forest areas. Around 50% of Ivorian timber exports are destined to the EU.

Representatives of the government, civil society, the private sector and indigenous peoples as members of the Technical Negotiating Committee played a critical and active role in the negotiation process of the VPA with the EU, including in the design of a roadmap. The process provided a more favourable context for an inclusive implementation of forest policy and the creation of a new forest ownership regime. The Agreement aims to ensure legality in the entire timber-forestry sector and trade with the EU, while supporting the Ivorian government in a better management of its natural resources, where women now play a

prominent role, and fight against illegal logging.

The VPA's successful implementation will depend on Côte d'Ivoire's sustained commitment and political will. EU assistance should be strengthened to support the VPA implementation as part of the programming review process of the EU bilateral programme for the period 2025- 2027.

The Committee on Development calls on the Committee on International Trade, as the committee responsible, to recommend approval of the proposal for a Council decision on the conclusion of the Voluntary Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire on forest law enforcement, governance and trade in timber and timber products to the European Union (FLEGT).

**ANNEX: ENTITIES OR PERSONS
FROM WHOM THE RAPPORTEUR FOR THE OPINION HAS RECEIVED INPUT**

The rapporteur declares under his exclusive responsibility that he did not receive input from any entity or person to be mentioned in this Annex pursuant to Article 8 of Annex I to the Rules of Procedure.

PROCEDURE – COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

| | |
|---|---|
| Title | Voluntary Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire on forest law enforcement, governance and trade in timber and timber products to the European Union (FLEGT) |
| References | 2023/0222(NLE) |
| Committee responsible | INTA |
| Rapporteur for the opinion Date appointed | Carlos Zorrinho 9.10.2023 |
| Date adopted | 7.12.2023 |
| Result of final vote | <div style="display: flex; justify-content: flex-end; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: right; padding-right: 10px;">+:</div> <div>16</div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: flex-end; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: right; padding-right: 10px;">–:</div> <div>1</div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: flex-end; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: right; padding-right: 10px;">0:</div> <div>3</div> </div> |
| Members present for the final vote | Barry Andrews, Hildegard Bentele, Stéphane Bijoux, Mercedes Bresso, Udo Bullmann, Catherine Chabaud, Christophe Clergeau, Charles Goerens, Mónica Silvana González, Pierrette Herzberger-Fofana, György Hölvényi, Erik Marquardt, Eleni Stavrou, Miguel Urbán Crespo, Bernhard Zimniok |
| Substitutes present for the final vote | Caroline Roose, Carlos Zorrinho |
| Substitutes under Rule 209(7) present for the final vote | Marie Dauchy, Jarosław Duda, Aušra Maldeikienė |

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

| 16 | + |
|----------|--|
| ID | Marie Dauchy |
| PPE | Hildegard Bentele, Jarosław Duda, György Hölvényi, Aušra Maldeikienė, Eleni Stavrou |
| Renew | Barry Andrews, Stéphane Bijoux, Catherine Chabaud, Charles Goerens |
| S&D | Mercedes Bresso, Udo Bullmann, Christophe Clergeau, Mónica Silvana González, Carlos Zorrinho |
| The Left | Miguel Urbán Crespo |

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| ID | Bernhard Zimniok |

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| Verts/ALE | Pierrette Herzberger-Fofana, Erik Marquardt, Caroline Roose |

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention

PROCEDURE – COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

| | | | | | | | |
|---|--|----|----|----|---|----|---|
| Title | Voluntary Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire on forest law enforcement, governance and trade in timber and timber products to the European Union (FLEGT) | | | | | | |
| References | 12247/2023 – C9-0035/2024 – 2023/0222(NLE) | | | | | | |
| Date of consultation or request for consent | 23.2.2024 | | | | | | |
| Committee responsible Date announced in plenary | INTA 14.3.2024 | | | | | | |
| Committees asked for opinions Date announced in plenary | DEVE 14.3.2024 | | | | | | |
| Rapporteurs Date appointed | Karin Karlsbro 18.9.2023 | | | | | | |
| Discussed in committee | 28.11.2023 | | | | | | |
| Date adopted | 7.3.2024 | | | | | | |
| Result of final vote | <table> <tr> <td>+: </td><td>36</td></tr> <tr> <td>–: </td><td>0</td></tr> <tr> <td>0: </td><td>0</td></tr> </table> | +: | 36 | –: | 0 | 0: | 0 |
| +: | 36 | | | | | | |
| –: | 0 | | | | | | |
| 0: | 0 | | | | | | |
| Members present for the final vote | Barry Andrews, Geert Bourgeois, Saskia Bricmont, Jordi Cañas, Danuta Maria Hübner, Karin Karlsbro, Danilo Oscar Lancini, Bernd Lange, Thierry Mariani, Margarida Marques, Emmanuel Maurel, Samira Rafaela, Catharina Rinzema, Inma Rodríguez-Piñero, Helmut Scholz, Kathleen Van Brempt, Marie-Pierre Vedrenne, Jörgen Warborn, Jan Zahradil | | | | | | |
| Substitutes present for the final vote | Marek Belka, Anna Cavazzini, José Manuel García-Margallo y Marfil, Enikő Győri, Cristina Maestre Martín De Almagro, Javier Moreno Sánchez, Manuela Ripa, Witold Jan Waszczykowski | | | | | | |
| Substitutes under Rule 209(7) present for the final vote | Andrea Bocskor, Paola Ghidoni, Ivo Hristov, Virginie Joron, Ska Keller, Dace Melbārde, Wolfram Pirchner, Aušra Seibutytė, Dominik Tarczyński | | | | | | |
| Date tabled | 20.3.2024 | | | | | | |

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

| 36 | + |
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| ECR | Geert Bourgeois, Dominik Tarczyński, Witold Jan Waszczykowski, Jan Zahradil |
| ID | Paola Ghidoni, Virginie Joron, Danilo Oscar Lancini, Thierry Mariani |
| NI | Andrea Bocskor, Enikő Győri |
| PPE | José Manuel García-Margallo y Marfil, Danuta Maria Hübner, Dace Melbārde, Wolfram Pirchner, Aušra Seibutytė, Jörgen Warborn |
| Renew | Barry Andrews, Jordi Cañas, Karin Karlsbro, Samira Rafaela, Catharina Rinzema, Marie-Pierre Vedrenne |
| S&D | Marek Belka, Ivo Hristov, Bernd Lange, Cristina Maestre Martín De Almagro, Margarida Marques, Javier Moreno Sánchez, Inma Rodríguez-Piñero, Kathleen Van Brempt |
| The Left | Emmanuel Maurel, Helmut Scholz |
| Verts/ALE | Saskia Bricmont, Anna Cavazzini, Ska Keller, Manuela Ripa |

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Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention