



TEXTS ADOPTED

P9_TA(2020)0212

The EU's role in protecting and restoring the world's forests

European Parliament resolution of 16 September 2020 on the EU's role in protecting and restoring the world's forests (2019/2156(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, in particular Articles 11, 191(1) and 208 thereof,
- having regard to the ruling of the Court of Justice of the European Union of 17 April 2018¹,
- having regard to the 2015-2030 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs),
- having regard to the Paris Agreement reached at the 21st Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC),
- having regard to the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity, the Global Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 23 July 2019 entitled 'Stepping up EU Action to Protect and Restore the World's Forests' (COM(2019)0352),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 11 December 2019 on the European Green Deal (COM(2019)0640) and to Parliament's resolution of 15 January 2020 on the European Green Deal²,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 20 May 2020 entitled 'EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030: Bringing nature back into our lives' (COM(2020)0380),
- having regard to the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy for 2020-2024, the EU External Policy on Indigenous Peoples of 2016, the Council conclusions on indigenous peoples of 15 May 2017 and the European Consensus on Development of

¹ Judgment of the Court of Justice of 17 April 2018, *European Commission v Republic of Poland*, C-441/17, EU:C:2018:255.

² Texts adopted, P9_TA(2020)0005.

2017,

- having regard to the Commission communication of 28 November 2018 entitled ‘A Clean Planet for all – A European strategic long-term vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate neutral economy’ (COM(2018)0773),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 20 September 2013 entitled ‘A new EU Forest Strategy: for forests and the forest-based sector’ (COM(2013)0659),
- having regard to the 2013 final report of the Commission study entitled ‘The impact of EU consumption on deforestation: Comprehensive analysis of the impact of EU consumption on deforestation’,
- having regard to the 2018 feasibility study on options to step up EU action against deforestation, commissioned by the Commission’s Directorate-General for Environment,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 17 October 2008 entitled ‘Addressing the challenges of deforestation and forest degradation to tackle climate change and biodiversity loss’ (COM(2008)0645),
- having regard to the EU Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Action Plan of 2003, the FLEGT Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPAs) with third countries and the FLEGT Work Plan 2018-2022,
- having regard to the UN Human Rights Council resolution of 21 March 2019 on recognising the contribution of environmental human rights defenders to the enjoyment of human rights, environmental protection and sustainable development,
- having regard to the report of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) entitled ‘The State of the World’s Forests 2020’,
- having regard to the UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030,
- having regard to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) special reports on climate change, desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security, and greenhouse gas fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems, and its fifth assessment report on climate change 2014: impacts, adaptation and vulnerability,
- having regard to the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services of 31 May 2019,
- having regard to its resolution of 16 January 2020 on the 15th meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP15) to the Convention on Biological Diversity¹,
- having regard to its resolution of 28 November 2019 on the climate and environment emergency²,

¹ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2020)0015.

² Texts adopted, P9_TA(2019)0078.

- having regard to its resolution of 11 September 2018 on transparent and accountable management of natural resources in developing countries: the case of forests¹,
 - having regard to its resolution of 4 April 2017 on palm oil and deforestation of rainforests²,
 - having regard to Rule 54 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the opinions of the Committee on Development, the Committee on International Trade, the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development and the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (A9-0143/2020),
- A. whereas between 1990 and 2016, 1,3 million square kilometres of the world’s forests was lost, with destructive effects on biodiversity, climate, people and the economy; whereas despite all efforts so far, a number of forest-related international commitments, such as target 15.2 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)³ and target 5 of the Aichi Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)⁴, are not on track to be adequately met by current policies; whereas the European Environment Agency report entitled ‘The European Environment – state and outlook 2020’ notes that ‘the forested area in Europe has been largely stable over the last two decades’, but also warns that ‘there has been little improvement in the conservation status of forest habitats and species since 2013’ and that ‘natural [...] and human-induced disturbances [...] are threats to Europe’s forests’;
- B. whereas the 17 SDGs are integrated and indivisible; whereas progress towards sustainable agriculture, food security and sustainable forest management – core elements of the SDGs – should be made simultaneously;
- C. whereas forests are essential contributors to climate change mitigation and adaptation and whereas, conversely, deforestation, in particular tropical deforestation, is an important contributor to climate change; whereas emissions from land use and land-use change, mostly due to deforestation, are the second largest cause of climate change after the burning of fossil fuels, accounting for nearly 12 % of all greenhouse gas emissions; whereas forests also host 80 % of global biodiversity, contribute to disaster risk reduction measures through nature-based solutions, and support the livelihoods of around 25 % of the global population, while representing a large part of the land traditionally inhabited by indigenous peoples, and contributing to human health, embodying irreplaceable cultural, societal and spiritual values;
- D. whereas due to climate change and loss of biodiversity, natural disturbances such as

¹ OJ C 433, 23.12.2019, p. 50.

² OJ C 298, 23.8.2018, p. 2.

³ Target 15.2: By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally.

⁴ Target 5: By 2020, the rate of loss of all natural habitats, including forests, is at least halved and where feasible brought close to zero, and degradation and fragmentation is significantly reduced.

droughts, floods, storms, pest infestations, erosion and fires will occur more frequently and with greater intensity, which will also cause increasing damage to the world's forests, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change; whereas scaling up investments in nature-based solutions is one of the most cost-effective remedies to tackle emissions and protect vital ecosystems, while improving livelihoods, resilience and food security;

- E. whereas there is a need for far-reaching, ambitious and concerted action, underpinned by political and societal will, to protect and restore the world's forests;
- F. whereas stepping up action to protect and restore forests and enhance the quantity and quality of forest ecosystems has to play a crucial role in the EU's and Member States' sustainability policies and in reaching the objectives of the European Green Deal; whereas in order to limit global warming and help tackle biodiversity loss, it is essential that forests are protected, restored and managed in such a way as to maximise their capacity for carbon storage and biodiversity protection; whereas primary forests provide more carbon dioxide storage and essential habitat that is missing from younger and newly planted forests;
- G. whereas according to the FAO State of the World's Forests Report 2020, globally, 'agricultural expansion continues to be the main driver of deforestation' alongside urban expansion, infrastructure development and mining; whereas there is a need to work closely with the EU's partner countries and different stakeholders to enhance innovative and positive interactions between agriculture and forestry to build sustainable agricultural systems and improve food security; whereas the EU is also indirectly involved in the deforestation and degradation of world forests and other natural ecosystems through the import and consumption of commodities associated with deforestation, such as soy, palm oil, rubber, maize, beef, leather and cocoa; whereas EU consumption represents around 10 % of the global share of deforestation embodied in total final consumption;
- H. whereas a recent Global Witness investigation revealed that between 2013 and 2019, EU-based financial institutions were the main international source of funds for six agribusiness companies linked to forest destruction in the Amazon, Congo Basin and Papua New Guinea, whom they backed to the tune of EUR 7 billion¹;
- I. whereas current voluntary commitments from companies and banks to tackle deforestation have failed to deliver the change in behaviour needed to halt this disastrous environmental destruction;
- J. whereas the negative impact of the Renewable Energy Directive on the world's and EU's forests required the directive to be recast²; whereas the changes introduced will not address the problem however;
- K. whereas subsidies for bioenergy from wood should be redirected towards energy

¹ <https://www.globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/forests/why-eu-action-tackle-deforestation-should-not-let-finance-hook/>

² Directive (EU) 2018/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2018 on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources (OJ L 328, 21.12.2018, p. 82).

efficiency and renewable energy;

- L. whereas the applicable rules of the Renewable Energy Directive are based on the understanding that dedicated energy harvests are sustainable, climate neutral and enable the source to be renewed within a suitable time frame; whereas this understanding is erroneous;
- M. whereas action at all levels, including regulatory measures and stricter enforcement of current legislation, as well as substantial public and private investment, will be needed to protect the world's forests and other natural ecosystems more effectively; whereas this can only be achieved by ensuring policy coherence across all sectors and between the EU's internal and external policies through the application of the do no harm principle;
- N. whereas increased protection and restoration of forests and other natural ecosystems, as well as sustainable forest management, are important to preserve the livelihoods of indigenous peoples and local communities, provide opportunities for social and economic development and job creation, and allow for sustainable bio-economies to be developed, while enhancing ecosystem services and protecting biodiversity; whereas forests represent a green economic sector with the potential to create between 10 and 16 million jobs worldwide;
- O. whereas mangrove forests fulfil crucial ecosystem services, as they store large amounts of carbon, are an important spawn location for many species of coral reef fish, and protect coral reefs from nutrient loads and sediments, and coastal areas from flooding; whereas until recently, mangrove forests covered more than three quarters of tropical coasts, but more than half has been lost due to coastal development, aquaculture, pollution and unsustainable use;
- P. whereas the conversion of mangrove forests causes 10 % of carbon emissions from deforestation, despite mangroves representing just 0,7 % of tropical forests¹;
- Q. whereas the amount of EU funding provided to support the protection and restoration of forests and sustainable forest management in partner countries is insufficient given the scale of the problem; whereas the protection, restoration and sustainable management of forests and other natural ecosystems, as well as their related co-benefits and human rights aspects, need to be better integrated into EU funding mechanisms;
- R. whereas the EU and its Member States have a long tradition of and expertise in sustainable forest management and can use this to assist other countries in capacity-building in this field;
- S. whereas indigenous peoples, local communities and environmental defenders are increasingly under threat and being subjected to intimidation, while facing human rights violations in their efforts to protect their forests, land and environment;
- T. whereas the chances of pathogens like viruses passing from wild and domestic animals to humans (zoonoses) may be increased by the destruction and modification of natural

¹ Donato, D. et al., 'Mangroves among the most carbon-rich forests in the tropics', *Nature Geoscience*, April 2011.

ecosystems;

- U. whereas a sustainable and effective forest policy requires reliable information on forest resources, their condition, and how they are managed and used, along with reliable information on land-use change;
 - V. whereas forests and the forest-based value chain are fundamental to the further development of the circular bio-economy by providing jobs and economic welfare in rural and urban areas, delivering climate change mitigation and offering health-related benefits;
1. Welcomes the Commission communication ‘Stepping up EU Action to Protect and Restore the World’s Forests’ and considers it a good basis for decisive action; agrees with the five priorities presented in the communication; underlines that these priorities are all necessary to halt and reverse deforestation and the degradation of natural ecosystems, in particular forests, as well as biodiversity loss and related human rights violations, and need to be implemented speedily and coherently; recalls, however, that the EU and its Member States should be more ambitious in their actions to meet their commitments and address the urgency of deforestation and forest degradation worldwide; underlines the importance of a comprehensive set of actions and initiatives, including new regulatory measures, which are effective, complementary, enforceable, and include monitoring;
 2. Stresses the need to recognise the EU’s competences, responsibility and funds available in the area of forest protection, including European forests as part of the world’s forests, in the framework of EU environmental policy; reiterates that the success of our external action and of our partners’ response to protect their forests depends on how effective and ambitious we are in relation to our natural heritage; calls, therefore, on the Commission and the Member States to ensure, in line with the European Green Deal and the 2030 Biodiversity Strategy, the highest standards of environmental protection and greater consistency between the task of protecting and restoring forests both within the EU and in its external action;
 3. Recalls that the EU and its Member States are expected to take urgent action to protect and restore forests in order to meet their commitments under the SDGs, the Paris Agreement, the Global Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030 and its Global Forest Goals;
 4. Highlights the role of forests in increasing resilience towards adverse impacts from climate change; underlines the need for concrete and effective action in climate adaptation strategies and plans, incorporating the synergies between mitigation and adaptation;
 5. Emphasises the positive contribution of forests to human health and the quality of life of citizens and the high environmental value provided in terms of carbon sequestration, storing water, controlling erosion and providing protection from landslides;
 6. Underlines the fact that the drivers of deforestation go beyond the forest sector per se and relate to a wide range of issues, such as land tenure, protection of the rights of indigenous peoples, agricultural policies, climate change, democracy, human rights and political freedom;

7. Highlights that indigenous women and women farmers play a central role in protecting forest ecosystems; notes with concern, however, the absence of women's inclusion and empowerment in the natural resource management process; believes that gender equality in forestry education plays a key role in the sustainable management of forests and should be reflected in the EU Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Action Plan;
8. Calls on the Commission to step up its efforts to address deforestation holistically through a coherent policy framework, while ensuring the conservation of ecosystems; recalls the importance of respecting the UN's Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights; supports the ongoing negotiations to create a binding UN instrument on transnational corporations and other business enterprises with respect to human rights and stresses the importance of the EU being proactively involved in this process;
9. Agrees with and highlights the reference in the Commission communication to the irreplaceable nature of primary forests and calls on the Commission and Member States to recognise that the protection of native forests provides an outstanding climate mitigation benefit, deriving from the size and longevity of their ecosystem carbon stocks; stresses that afforestation, performed in a way that is compatible with the protection and enhancement of local ecosystems, can help to reach climate neutrality by 2050, while noting that newly planted forests cannot replace primary forests; highlights that safeguarding forests should be a political priority of the EU; emphasises that the EU should lead by example and ensure implementation of its own and Member States' international social and environmental commitments, including on climate, biodiversity and human rights;
10. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure effective implementation of existing priority areas, and to include binding targets for the protection and restoration of forest ecosystems, especially primary forests, as part of the EU's future forest strategy, which should be fully consistent with the proposal outlined in the EU 2030 Biodiversity Strategy for binding targets on restoration and protected areas; underlines the importance of providing adequate support and funding for these measures;
11. Underlines that specific attention should be paid to mangroves and forests in coastal areas, which are particularly impacted by climate change and represent a great opportunity for preservation, adaptation and mitigation policies; regrets the fact that the Commission communication lacks any mention of mangrove forests; stresses that 80 % of terrestrial biodiversity can be found in forests and that mangrove forests are important both from a climate and biodiversity point of view, as well as for the livelihood of the respective local communities;
12. Stresses the role of civil society in environmental protection and sustainable consumption and calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure full transparency and public participation in forest and land use-related measures in order to prevent deforestation and forest degradation, promote forest protection and sustainable forest management, and support the protection and restoration of natural forests, at regional and global levels; stresses the importance of establishing a platform for multi-stakeholder and Member State dialogue on deforestation, forest degradation and ways of sustainably increasing the world's forest cover in order to build alliances, enter into joint commitments, halt deforestation, and exchange experiences and information;
13. Stresses the crucial role, rights and need for support of indigenous peoples and local

communities, including women, in the protection of the world's forests and in the decision-making process concerning those forests; recognises, furthermore, the threats and human rights violations they are facing; calls on the Commission, therefore, to take their role into account and involve them in the design, adoption, implementation and enforcement of forest protection measures, whether at global, EU, national or sub-national level;

14. Recalls that many farmers are aware of forests as an integral and necessary part of the landscape for their relevant ecological, economic and social functions, and that historically they strived to protect, use and regenerate forests, and continue to do so now; notes that certain local communities and indigenous peoples have used traditional farming techniques for centuries to preserve forests, with their special understanding of sustainable land use;
15. Recalls that indigenous peoples, local communities, smallholder farmers and women possess and heavily rely on indispensable knowledge regarding forests; calls for the EU to ensure the recognition of their land tenure and human rights as a matter of social justice, in line with the UN FAO Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests (VGGT), the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 169, as well as their effective participation in the design and implementation of EU development programmes which have an impact on them and in the enforcement of forest protection measures, building upon the lessons learnt from the FLEGT programme;
16. Recalls the importance of adequate access to justice, legal remedies and effective protection for whistleblowers in natural resource-exporting countries in order to ensure the efficiency of any legislation or initiative; calls on the Commission and the Member States to step up their support for environmental and forest defenders in the EU and worldwide;
17. Welcomes the Commission's commitment to increasing supply chain and investment sustainability and transparency in order to ensure the consumption of products from deforestation-free supply chains; reiterates the importance of a comprehensive set of actions and initiatives in this regard;
18. Calls on the Commission, in developing any such actions and initiatives, to also consider how these can best contribute to the protection of other relevant natural ecosystems at serious risk of degradation or conversion;
19. Takes the view that a single definition of the concept of a deforestation-free supply chain is central to addressing the problem of commodities contributing to deforestation, and calls on the Commission to propose an ambitious definition; highlights, in this context, the strong connection between forest-based value chains and the SDGs;
20. Notes that the promotion of transparent certification schemes for non-deforestation commodities is one of a number of appropriate tools; points out, however, that the main purpose of such schemes must be to combat deforestation;
21. Calls on the Commission to carry out without delay studies on certification and verification schemes in the forest sector and for wood-based products and on certification schemes for non-deforestation commodities; invites the Commission to

submit these studies to Parliament for further consideration, together with the proposed follow-up actions and measures so as to encourage more stringent standards and ensure the transparency of certification and third party verification schemes;

22. Welcomes the Commission's announcement to further integrate deforestation considerations within the EU Ecolabel, green public procurement and other initiatives in the context of the circular economy, as part of a comprehensive set of actions and initiatives to ensure deforestation-free supply chains;
23. Reiterates its request to the Commission to present, without delay, an impact-assessed proposal for an EU legal framework based on due diligence, in order to ensure sustainable and deforestation-free supply chains for products and commodities placed on the EU market, with a particular focus on tackling the main drivers of imported deforestation; considers that such a framework should be enforceable and in line with international standards and obligations, should apply to the whole supply chain once careful evaluation has concluded that it is functional and applicable to all actors on the market, including SMEs, and should be accompanied by a robust enforcement mechanism, including effective, proportionate and dissuasive penalties; points out that EU measures in this regard should not lead to income loss for the people in developing countries, but to new economic opportunities and an overall transformation into a more sustainable economy; calls on the Commission to declare its support on the issue of the sustainability of supply chains, including deforestation and forest degradation, in the relevant international commodity trade forums;
24. Calls on the Commission to come forward with due diligence requirements for financial institutions to identify, prevent and mitigate the environmental, social and human rights impacts of EU-driven deforestation in order to guarantee that no EU finance or banking entity is linked – either directly or indirectly – to deforestation, forest degradation, the conversion or degradation of natural ecosystems or human rights violations;
25. Stresses the role of forest owners and managers in ensuring sustainable forest development; highlights that European forest industries can contribute to advancing global standards for sustainable forest management; believes that European industries, SMEs and micro-enterprises in the forest sector should also play a role in the dialogue with partner countries on how to further promote sustainability throughout the entire value chain;
26. Calls on the private sector to be more proactive in the fight against deforestation in their supply chains and investments, by fulfilling their deforestation commitments and ensuring full transparency on the compliance with their commitments; highlights the need to leverage private investments to address drivers of deforestation and to realise the SDGs and the Paris Agreement; calls, at the same time, on the Commission to step up cooperation with the private sector and to develop appropriate instruments to incentivise frontrunners based on the principle of shared responsibility; welcomes the ongoing review of the Non-Financial Reporting Directive¹ and invites the Commission to step up the quality and scope of non-financial disclosures, in particular on

¹ Directive 2014/95/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2014 amending Directive 2013/34/EU as regards disclosure of non-financial and diversity information by certain large undertakings and groups (OJ L 330, 15.11.2014, p. 1).

environmental aspects, and to promote the integration of forest-relevant considerations into corporate social responsibility; further recalls the importance of respecting the UN's Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights; supports the ongoing negotiations to create a binding UN instrument on transnational corporations and other business enterprises with respect to human rights and stresses the importance of the EU being proactively involved in this process;

27. Calls on the Commission to assess, together with the private sector and other development actors, new disaster risk finance and insurance solutions against catastrophic events affecting a large number of hectares of forest;
28. Calls on the Commission to support and stimulate industry-driven innovation and initiatives to enhance sustainability in value chains;
29. Considers it necessary to redirect financial flows, both private and public, in the relevant industrial sectors towards activities that do not cause deforestation; recalls that by 31 December 2021, the Commission should assess the provisions required to extend the scope of the Taxonomy Regulation¹ to economic activities that significantly harm environmental sustainability;
30. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to make efficient use of blended finance mechanisms to attract private sector finance into forest restoration;
31. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to propose specific measures to strengthen the political and regulatory framework supporting the protection and restoration of forests and sustainable forest management at global level, and to provide guidance and specific measures on sustainable land-use planning; calls on the Commission to promote an exchange of best practices among the Member States and with third countries; calls on the Commission, furthermore, to encourage legal reform processes in producer countries to be carried out with the effective and meaningful participation of all stakeholders, including civil society, indigenous peoples and local communities, with special attention for the effective participation of women;
32. Stresses the importance of promoting sustainable forest management and a sustainable bioeconomy; acknowledges that sustainable forest management models and sustainable land use globally can contribute to preventing deforestation and forest degradation and should be based on the highest sustainability standards, reconciling economic, environmental and societal sustainability, with the protection of biodiversity and valuable carbon sinks as central elements while retaining their intrinsic value, productivity and ecosystem services; calls on the Commission to promote sustainable forestry and agriculture and to develop incentive mechanisms for small farmers and local communities in partner countries to maintain and improve ecosystem services and products obtained through sustainable forestry and agriculture; stresses the importance of agroforestry systems for agricultural production, diversification, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and the prevention of desertification; points out that these agroforestry systems are characterised by higher effectivity of land use than other agricultural systems; calls for a change in order to systematically incentivise existing

¹ Regulation (EU) 2020/852 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2020 on the establishment of a framework to facilitate sustainable investment, and amending Regulation (EU) 2019/2088 (OJ L 198, 22.6.2020, p. 13).

- high-nature-value agroforestry systems, facilitate their restoration and provide capacity-building to streamline this method of production;
33. Highlights the fact that Horizon 2020 has already financed significant research and innovation in the transition towards more sustainable land-use practices and supply chains in order to halt deforestation and forest degradation; calls for increased funding to enable Horizon Europe to continue providing support in these areas;
 34. Draws attention to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Ministerial Katowice Declaration on Forests for the Climate adopted by the international community on 12 December 2018, which emphasises the importance of forests and timber use for climate protection and sets those issues in the context of other international forest-related objectives and decisions; notes that, as stated in the declaration, these objectives can only be achieved by means of multifunctional active forest management, which means a management strategy that takes account of and strikes a balance between all forest-related objectives, such as carbon storage, species and soil protection, extraction of raw materials, leisure and food production;
 35. Stresses the crucial role of forestry, along with farming, in the management of natural resources and land use in the EU's and the world's rural areas; recognises, in this respect, the variety in forest management, forest ownership, agroforestry and possibilities between the Member States;
 36. Stresses that the methods used to achieve the objectives set out in the Clean Energy for all Europeans package must not lead to deforestation and forest degradation in other parts of the world; calls on the Commission, therefore, to review by 2021 the relevant aspects of the report annexed to Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2019/807¹ and, if necessary, to revise this regulation without undue delay, and in any case before 2023, on the basis of scientific knowledge and in accordance with the precautionary principle; asks the Commission to reassess soy data and phase out high indirect land-use change (ILUC)-risk biofuels as soon as possible and by 2030 at the latest;
 37. Stresses the need to reduce the EU's consumption of wood and wood-based products by promoting a more circular economy, minimising the generation of waste and by promoting consumer awareness on the ecological consequences of wood-based commodities;
 38. Recalls the letter by more than 700 scientists calling for a scientifically-sound revision of the Renewable Energy Directive, in particular the exclusion of certain types of woody biomass from counting towards the target and from the eligibility to receive support;
 39. Denounces the increasing use of wood for biofuels and bioenergy, which is creating pressure on the EU's and the world's forests in the light of the rising demand for energy

¹ Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2019/807 of 13 March 2019 supplementing Directive (EU) 2018/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the determination of high indirect land-use change-risk feedstock for which a significant expansion of the production area into land with high carbon stock is observed and the certification of low indirect land-use change-risk biofuels, bioliquids and biomass fuels (OJ L 133, 21.5.2019, p. 1).

from renewable sources;

40. Notes that COP23 witnessed the ambition of a number of countries, rich in primary and highly-biodiverse forests and representing half of the world population, to increase the use of wood and other plant matter to generate energy¹; reiterates that the EU should not set the wrong example and must ensure that rules guiding renewable energy policy do not lead to decimated and degraded ecosystems;
41. Urges the Commission and the Member States to take full account of the impact that the increased use of biofuels has on deforestation; calls on the Commission, therefore, to fundamentally reform EU bioenergy policies, namely by revising the Renewable Energy Directive;
42. Calls on the Commission to ensure effective measures for the sustainable production and use of wood fuels in view, inter alia, of the high level of imports of wood pellets into the EU and the potential risks that these imports pose to forests in third countries; considers that the principle of cascading use should be encouraged and can be used as a beneficial way to improve resource efficiency;
43. Recalls that around 2,6 billion people worldwide use traditional biomass for cooking, mainly wood and charcoal, while almost three quarters of them do not have access to efficient stoves; calls for the EU to step up support to third countries in order to switch to sustainable and renewable energy sources, and reduce the pressure of deforestation caused by the use of wood as fuel; highlights that if the energy systems of third countries were more decentralised, it would allow for a straightforward transition to sustainable renewable energy sources;
44. Notes that the social and economic importance of agriculture is expanding as the world population grows and requires increased production of food and agricultural commodities while mitigating climate change; notes with concern the estimate that 14 % of the world's food is lost from harvest, slaughter and catch-up² and stresses the need for coherent actions to prevent food loss and food waste along the food chain and to respond rapidly to crises that could cause food shortages;
45. Stresses the importance of promoting sustainable diets, by raising consumer awareness of the impacts of consumption patterns and providing information on diets that are better for human health and have a lower environmental footprint;
46. Underlines the need for further significant progress to be made when it comes to developing and implementing an EU protein plant strategy and ensuring robust protein plant production within the EU in order to limit the danger of deforestation linked to these crops in other regions of the world and to reduce the dependence on imports and to reduce the pressure on forests due to land use change; stresses that such progress should be made, inter alia, through the wider adoption of crop rotation accompanied by support and guidance for farmers in areas suitable for cultivation of protein plants and

¹ Doyle, A. & Roche, A., 'Nineteen nations say they'll use more bioenergy to slow climate change', *Reuters*, 16 November 2017, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-climatechange-accord-biofuels/nineteen-nations-say-theyll-use-more-bioenergy-to-slow-climate-change-idUSKBN1DG2DO>

² <http://www.fao.org/food-loss-and-food-waste/en/>

that such action would reduce the dependence on imports, deforestation, degradation and pressure on forests due to land-use change; calls, therefore, for the introduction of sustainability criteria for plant protein imports;

47. Takes the view that the drivers of deforestation should be addressed in an EU policy framework, thereby ensuring the coherence of forest-related policies and reducing the pressure on forests; takes the view that such a policy framework would encourage ever more innovative, sustainable and efficient farming within and outside the EU, and would reduce food losses throughout the food chain through new technologies; points out that targets outlined in the framework can be met by giving farmers easy access to funding so that they can acquire cutting-edge high-precision farming technologies;
48. Stresses that, while farmers are at the heart of providing our basic agricultural and food needs, their work is dependent on natural resources such as soil, water and forests; notes that recognising the multifunctionality of forests is crucial in order to properly manage our global forest heritage; emphasises that the economic, social and environmental aspects – ranging from the traditional production of wood and other products, to ecosystem services, biodiversity and other environmental benefits such as carbon absorption and storage, which prevent soil erosion and improved air and water quality – are all linked and interdependent; stresses that such aspects require a holistic and coherent approach when it comes to protecting, restoring and managing forests and tackling the problem of deforestation;
49. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to take specific steps to harmonise data and improve the availability of information and data obtained through existing and new monitoring and assessment tools relating to the world's and the EU's forests, and to ensure that the information is disseminated in a form that is accessible, user-friendly and comprehensible to regulatory and enforcement authorities, the public, consumers and the private sector and ready to use by policymakers; calls on the Member States to improve their statistics on the volume of wood they purchase, including the indication of how much sustainable, legal or FLEGT-licensed material might be included within their procurement;
50. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to step up efforts to improve the availability, quality and harmonisation of reliable information on forest resources and land-use change in order to inform policymaking through the participation of a wide range of stakeholders, including in partner countries.
51. Stresses that credible and reliable forest monitoring and information sharing are essential to improving forest governance and facilitating compliance with zero-deforestation commitments in partner countries; calls for the EU to step up financial and technical support to partner countries to achieve these ends and to help them develop the expertise necessary to improve local forest governance structures and accountability;
52. Stresses that illegal logging is an ongoing practice not only in third countries, but also in the EU; calls on the Commission and the Member States to act decisively to prevent and fight illegal logging; calls on the Commission to establish a European forest surveying and preservation system based on a monitoring system using GNSS (Galileo and Copernicus) and ground networks in order to monitor the activity from logging from the point of harvesting to the entry and exit points of timber processing companies; stresses that the Commission should focus on preventing illegal logging by enhancing the

implementation of the Timber Regulation¹ and FLEGT; underlines the need to raise public awareness of the social and economic impacts of illegal logging and forest-related crimes;

53. Recalls that the risk of wildfires is expected to increase due to climate change; underlines the need, therefore, to considerably strengthen prevention and preparedness efforts by collaborating internationally on early warning tools, disaster resilience and risk mitigation measures; recommends that the Commission continue to support the development of global (such as the Global Wildfire Information System) and regional (such as the European Forest Fire Information System) information systems to monitor the impact of forest fires; calls on the Commission to use its expertise and expand the use of the Copernicus REDD+ satellite system to support global forest risk monitoring and deforestation in collaboration with third countries;
54. Reiterates that EU trade and investment policy should include binding and enforceable sustainable development chapters that fully respect international commitments, in particular the Paris Agreement, and are compliant with World Trade Organization (WTO) rules; welcomes the Commission's intention to make the Paris Agreement an essential element of all future trade and investment agreements; calls on the Commission to ensure that all future trade and investment agreements, both comprehensive and relevant sub-agreements, contain binding and enforceable provisions, including illegal logging-related anti-corruption provisions, to prevent deforestation and forest degradation;
55. Welcomes the 'do no harm' principle as highlighted in the communication on the European Green Deal; recommends, in that context, that the Commission better assess the impact of existing trade agreements on deforestation and ensure that more ambitious forest protection, biodiversity and sustainable forestry provisions are included in the trade and sustainable development chapters of all free trade and investment agreements;
56. Calls on the Commission to ensure that the impact of trade agreements on the state of forests, biodiversity and human rights is systematically evaluated within the framework of sustainability impact assessments and other relevant assessment methods, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, and that the conclusions of these assessments are subsequently fully taken into account when negotiating and concluding such agreements;
57. Emphasises the need to further improve implementation and enforcement of the Timber Regulation to best tackle trade in imported and domestic illegally harvested timber and timber products; notes, moreover, that imports of timber and timber products should be more thoroughly checked at EU borders to ensure that the imported products do indeed comply with the criteria necessary for their placing on the EU market; recalls that conflict timber is already an action area in the FLEGT Action Plan, but that the work done to address this issue has been insufficient; calls on the Commission to deliver on its commitment to extend the due diligence obligations provided by the Timber Regulation so as to cover conflict timber in the framework of the upcoming review; stresses that the strengthening of existing policies must go hand in hand with increased

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).

policy coherence to ensure that EU policies, including trade, do not create negative impacts on the environment or people;

58. Notes with regret that the current level of monitoring of imports of timber and timber products into the EU is insufficient, especially with regard to checking that they meet the criteria necessary for entry into the EU;
59. Recalls that the objective of the FLEGT Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPAs) is to provide a legal framework aimed at ensuring that all timber and timber product imports from partner countries into the EU that are covered by VPAs have been produced legally; stresses that VPAs are generally intended to foster systemic changes in the forestry sector with the aim of developing sustainable management of forests, eradicating illegal logging and supporting worldwide efforts to stop deforestation and forest degradation; underlines that VPAs provide an important legal framework for both the EU and its partner countries, made possible by good cooperation and engagement on the part of the countries concerned;
60. Welcomes the progress made through FLEGT VPAs, and the increased dialogue between governments, industry and civil society in several countries resulting from the VPA process; notes that to date, seven countries have ratified VPAs with the EU (Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Ghana, Indonesia, Liberia, the Republic of the Congo and Vietnam), among which Indonesia is the first and so far the only VPA partner with FLEGT licencing, which has been operational since 2016, and that the EU has concluded negotiations and initialled VPAs with Honduras and Guyana, while negotiations are ongoing with six other countries (Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Laos, Thailand and Malaysia); stresses that VPAs constitute a very effective framework within which to establish good partnerships with those countries, and that new VPAs with additional partners should be promoted; is convinced that the EU should continue to engage with FLEGT VPA countries to ensure it remains an attractive alternative to export markets with less stringent environmental standards; acknowledges the importance of the FLEGT Regulation¹ and the Timber Regulation in preventing the entry of illegally harvested timber into the EU market; calls for the EU to increase funding for FLEGT; welcomes the Commission's upcoming fitness check of the FLEGT Regulation and the Timber Regulation, also as an opportunity to strengthen their enforcement and to widen their scope;
61. Calls on the Commission, when strengthening existing policies, to ensure the coherence of the FLEGT VPAs with all its policies, including in the fields of development, environment, agriculture and trade; calls on the Commission to negotiate timber import standards in future bilateral or multilateral trade-related agreements, in order to avoid undermining the successes achieved through the FLEGT Action Plan with timber-producing countries;
62. Believes that the FLEGT licensing process complements voluntary third-party certification, and that it is particularly beneficial for smaller operators that often struggle to obtain certification through private sector schemes;

¹ 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).

63. Calls for the EU to strengthen international cooperation by increasing efforts in key international forums, including the WTO and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD); calls on the Commission to investigate avenues for multi-, pluri-, or bilateral cooperation, including speeding up negotiations at the WTO on an Environmental Goods Agreement, with trade partners and other importing countries in the fight against deforestation and climate change resulting from imports, while safeguarding avenues for legal trade and strengthening sustainable land management and agriculture, as well as land tenure and good governance in third countries;
64. Stresses that clear commitments to the fight against deforestation are included in all new trade agreements including Mercosur and others;
65. Calls on the Commission to make use of the new provisions of the Anti-Dumping Regulation¹ concerning environment and climate policies;
66. Calls for the EU to make a stronger link between trade and development policies, inter alia by better implementing the rules of the Generalised Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP+) in partner countries; calls on the Commission to work with GSP+ recipients on forestry management action plans to ensure the effective implementation of their environmental commitments.
67. Stresses that the climate emergency and the consequences of mass biodiversity loss constitute a grave threat to human rights; calls for the EU and the European External Action Service to thoroughly assess how their external action can best contribute to a holistic and human rights-based approach aimed at stopping biodiversity loss, forest deforestation and degradation; calls for the EU to further promote biodiversity as a human right in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework;
68. Stresses the importance of facilitating an inclusive partnership approach at all levels with third countries in order to further combat deforestation and forest degradation, strengthen sustainable land management and agriculture, as well as land tenure and good governance, while respecting human rights, the rights of indigenous peoples, smallholders and local communities; calls on the Commission to strengthen cooperation with third countries through technical assistance, exchange of information and good practices in preservation, conservation and sustainable use of forests, the circular economy, a sustainable bio-economy, renewable energy, sustainable smart agriculture, agro-ecology and agroforestry, while recognising sustainability initiatives by the private sector, such as fair trade schemes; insists that the external dimension of the European Green Deal should be further strengthened through alliances and partnerships aimed at addressing global challenges like climate change and biodiversity while facilitating the socio-economic development of partner countries;
69. Welcomes the Commission's plan to ensure that the topic of deforestation is part of country-level and regional political dialogues with partner countries and encourages the Commission to develop partnership agreements which include the protection of forests and ecosystems, the promotion of human rights, in particular the rights of indigenous

¹ Regulation (EU) 2016/1036 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 8 June 2016 on protection against dumped imports from countries not members of the European Union (OJ L 176, 30.6.2016, p. 21).

peoples and local communities, including women, as well as support for the effective participation of civil society actors and environmentalists; stresses that such dialogues should be held with all producer countries, including developed countries;

70. Welcomes the Commission's plan to support partner countries in designing and implementing frameworks that can encourage better forest protection and management and land governance, including, where relevant, the recognition of land tenure rights of indigenous peoples and local communities, as well as related governance measures, such as mitigation and adaptation strategies, and recommends that the Commission include this aspect in its reflections and actions; points out that such frameworks should contribute not only to domestic needs but also to partner countries' nationally determined contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement as well as their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) under the Convention on Biological Diversity;
71. Calls for the EU to provide support to partner countries to implement actions that will help them comply with any measures the EU may set up to address imported deforestation and calls for cooperation to be stepped up and for the necessary and effective measures to be taken to prevent trade in goods related to deforestation and forest degradation from being diverted to other regions of the world; calls on the Commission to ensure that support provided by the EU for agricultural, infrastructure, mining, urban, peri-urban and rural policies in partner countries does not contribute to deforestation and forest degradation; invites the Commission, together with the Member States, to support an EU technical and financial mechanism which would catalyse funding to support partners' efforts to sustainably use, protect and restore forests, improve sustainable, deforestation-free agricultural production, and address mining activities with adverse impacts on forests, under the upcoming Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI);
72. Calls for the forestry sector to feature strongly in the upcoming NDICI and for the full potential of the External Investment Plan and regional blending facilities to be exploited in leveraging private funding for sustainable forest management (ranging from proforestation to reforestation and afforestation), sustainable tourism and agroforestry, as well as the initiatives taken by companies to eliminate deforestation products from their supply chains, with the aim of achieving the SDGs;
73. Recommends that the Commission and the Member States identify effective methods for sharing with other countries innovative and sustainable EU practices and expertise on the circular economy, sustainable bio-economy, renewable energy, sustainable smart agriculture and other relevant areas;
74. Requests that the Commission regularly present a report covering the trends of deforestation and exploitation of high carbon stock areas, such as peatlands, in third countries;
75. Encourages the implementation of support measures intended to increase agricultural productivity in targeted countries in order to reduce the social and economic pressure linked to deforestation and the exploitation of peatlands;
76. Supports the Commission's intention to promote, on behalf of the EU in key international forums, the adoption and implementation of strict commitments and regulations to halt deforestation and forest degradation and to support forest restoration;

considers that the EU must lead by example; underlines the importance of taking national, regional and local expertise and practices into account when applying forest protective measures; welcomes the UN General Assembly's decision to proclaim 2021-2030 as the Decade on Ecosystem Restoration; underlines that this UN Decade positions the restoration of ecosystems as a major nature-based solution towards meeting a wide range of SDGs;

77. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to continue to support forest conservation through the creation, consolidation and effective management of networks of protected areas, including forest areas, such as NaturAfrica 2030, especially in countries that are major timber producers; recognises that this also contributes to the preservation of biodiversity and will strengthen the EU's position at the next Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity;
78. Welcomes the Commission's plan to strengthen international cooperation on policies and measures to protect, restore and sustainably manage the world's forests to prevent global deforestation in key international forums; notes that the existing definition of a forest and the categorisation of forests, as well as other relevant concepts and principles related to sustainable forest management used by relevant institutions such as the FAO, are strictly technical and do not fully reflect the diversity of forest ecosystems; calls on the Commission and the Member States to endeavour to cooperate with these key international forums with a view, inter alia, to harmonising the terminology, concepts and statistics in use (e.g. intact and old-growth forests, plantation, sustainable forest management, close-to-nature management or deforestation-free supply chains) and to ensuring the coherence of the policies and measures adopted;
79. Calls on the Commission to restart the negotiations for an international forest convention that would contribute to the management, conservation and sustainable development of forests and would provide for their multiple and complementary functions and uses, including action towards reforestation, afforestation and forest conservation; stresses that such a convention should take into account the social, economic, ecological, cultural and spiritual needs of present and future generations and recognise the vital role of all types of forests in maintaining ecological processes and the ecological balance and supporting the identity, culture and rights of indigenous peoples, their communities and other communities and forest dwellers;
80. Calls on the Commission and Member States to systematically integrate provisions on deforestation and forest degradation, as well as the degradation of other natural ecosystems, biodiversity loss and human rights violations, into development policies and all investment and support programmes aimed at producer countries and to consider making investments and support conditional on compliance with these elements;
81. Recognises the relevance of international frameworks such as the VGGT in offering legal clarity and internationally accepted standards of good practice for the responsible governance of land tenure; invites the Commission to support the diffusion and use of the VGGT at global, regional and country level; stresses the need for effective independent monitoring and enforcement, including appropriate dispute resolution and grievance mechanisms, to ensure compliance with the VGGT;
82. Calls for cooperation between the EU and the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) to be strengthened in order to tackle the increasing problem of deforestation and desertification in ACP states through the development of action plans

aimed at improving the management and conservation of forests, taking into account the causes of deforestation from within and outside the forest sector and acknowledging the importance of tropical timber for the economies of the ACP states with timber-producing forests;

83. Urges the EU and its Member States to ensure consistency among policies, in accordance with the principle of policy coherence for development set out in Article 208 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union;
84. Acknowledges and supports the FAO's conclusions that globally sustainable land use is important in the fight against poverty;
85. Points out that forests make a significant contribution to global food security, livelihoods and nutrition in developing countries and are an important source of income for local communities; recalls that progress towards sustainable agriculture, food security and sustainable forest management should be made simultaneously as core elements of the 2030 Agenda;
86. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.