

MEPs propose EU Green Prosecutor, better data collection to fight illegal logging

- Harmonised data collection through a Forest Observation framework needed
- Close loopholes, introduce EU Green Prosecutor to tackle the issue
- Negotiations on deforestation-free product rules present an opportunity for a global solution

An EU Green Prosecutor and improved data collection could help tackle illegal logging, argue MEPs in a resolution.

In a resolution on illegal logging in the EU, adopted with a show of hands, MEPs backed the establishment of an EU Green Prosecutor through the extension of the European Public Prosecutor's Office's (EPPO) powers. Also, MEPs support establishing an EU Forest Observation, Reporting and Data Collection framework ("Forest Observatory") to boost the timely and frequent collection of comparable data across member states.

Harmonized definitions and stronger enforcement

It is still challenging to distinguish between legal and illegal logging, and improved data collection could help in this regard, say MEPs. They add that data and imaging should be complemented by field inspections, the EU should have a harmonised definition of illegal logging, and national-level sanctions for illegal logging should be more substantial. The MEPs also ask for more resources and personnel for law enforcement, so that criminal proceedings can be effective, and protection for environmental activists, whistle-blowers, staff responsible for forest management and investigative journalists. The [revision of the Environmental Crime Directive](#), currently being examined by Parliament, should include the possibility of criminal proceedings against private persons, say MEPs.

On the international level, the EU should use its trade policy to fight illegal logging, and promote a unified definition for it, argue MEPs. The ongoing negotiations for new rules on [deforestation-free products](#) are an opportunity to work towards these goals, they say. At the same time, MEPs

call on the Commission to actively monitor compliance with existing legislation such as the [Timber Regulation](#), the [Habitats Directive](#), the [Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive](#) and the [Conservation of Wild Birds Directive](#), as well as the [Aarhus Regulation](#). They urge the Commission to review the current legislative framework and eliminate any legal loopholes, for example the mixing of legally and illegally harvested timber to obtain a certification.

Background

Several petitions (for example [1248/2019](#), [0408/2020](#) and [1056/2021](#)) from citizens have highlighted the scale and gravity of illegal logging in the EU, which goes largely undetected and is responsible for an estimated 20 % of global CO2 emissions.

Further information

[Committee on Petitions](#)

The adopted text will be added here ([23.6.2022](#))

[Oral question in plenary \(9.6.2022\)](#)

[Procedure file](#)


[European Parliament resolution of 8 October 2020 on the European Forest Strategy - The Way Forward](#)

[EPRS: EU Forest Strategy 2030](#)

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