Products made with forced labour to be banned from EU single market

- Suspected use of forced labour to be investigated and, if proven, products to be withdrawn from the market
- Attention to products coming from areas with a high risk of state-imposed forced labour
- Products may be allowed back on the market if forced labour is eliminated from the supply chain

Parliament has given its final approval to a new regulation enabling the EU to prohibit the sale, import, and export of goods made using forced labour.

Member state authorities and the European Commission will be able to investigate suspicious goods, supply chains, and manufacturers. If a product is deemed to have been made using forced labour, it will no longer be possible to sell it on the EU market (including online) and shipments will be intercepted at the EU’s borders.

Investigations

Decisions to investigate will be based on factual and verifiable information that can be received from, for example, international organisations, cooperating authorities and whistle-blowers. Several risk factors and criteria will be taken into account, including the prevalence of state-imposed forced labour in certain economic sectors and geographic areas.

Consequences for companies using forced labour

Manufacturers of banned goods will have to withdraw their products from the EU single market and donate, recycle or destroy them. Non-compliant companies could be fined. The goods may be allowed back on the EU single market once the company eliminates forced labour from its supply chain.
supply chains.

Quotes

Rapporteur for the Internal Market committee, **Maria-Manuel Leitão-Marques** (S&D, PT) said: “Today, worldwide, 28 million people are trapped in the hands of human traffickers and states who force them to work for little or no pay. Europe cannot export its values while importing products made with forced labour. The fact that the EU finally has a law to ban these products is one of the biggest achievements of this mandate, and a victory for progressive forces.”

Rapporteur for the International Trade committee, **Samira Rafaela** (Renew, NL) said: “This is a historic day. We have adopted a ground-breaking piece of legislation to combat forced labour worldwide. This regulation fosters EU and international cooperation, shifts power from exploiters to consumers and employees, and offers possibilities for remedy for victims. It also transforms trade policies into a greener and fairer future.”

Next steps

The regulation was adopted with 555 votes in favour, 6 votes against and 45 abstentions. The text now has to get a final formal approval from the EU Council. It will then be published in the Official Journal. EU countries will have to start applying it in 3 years.

Press conference

After the vote, at 14.00, rapporteurs Maria-Manuel Leitão-Marques (S&D, PT) and Samira Rafaela (Renew, NL) will hold a press conference to brief journalists on the outcome of the vote and answer questions. This can be followed here and journalists wishing to ask questions remotely should connect via this link.

Background

In adopting this report, the Parliament is responding to citizens’ expectations on defining standards within and outside the EU in trade and investment relations, as expressed in proposals 19(2) and 19(3) of the conclusions of the Conference on the Future of Europe.

Further information

Adopted text (23.04.2024)
Recording of the plenary debate (22.04.2024)
Procedure file
Rapporteur Maria-Manuel Leitão-Marques (S&D, PT)
Rapporteur Samira Rafaela (Renew, NL)
Press release on reaching a deal with the Council (05.03.2024)
Free photos, video and audio material
Contacts

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