











Procedure file

Basic information	
NLE - Non-legislative enactments	2023/0222(NLE)
Procedure completed, awaiting publication in Official Journal	
EU/Côte d'Ivoire Voluntary Partnership Agreement: forest law enforcement, governance and trade in timber and timber products to the EU (FLEGT)	
See also 2023/0222R(NLE)	
Subject	
3.10.11 Forestry policy	
3.70.01 Protection of natural resources: fauna, flora, nature, wildlife, countryside; biodiversity	
3.70.18 International and regional environment protection measures and agreements	
6.20.02 Export/import control, trade defence, trade barriers	
6.20.03 Bilateral economic and trade agreements and relations	
6.30.02 Financial and technical cooperation and assistance	
Geographical area	
Côte d'Ivoire	

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	 International Trade	 KARLSBRO Karin	18/09/2023
		Shadow rapporteur	
		 WARBORN Jürgen	
		 KUMPULA-NATRI Miapetra	
		 HAUTALA Heidi	
		 CAMPOMENOSI Marco	
		 TARCZYŃSKI Dominik	
		 MAUREL Emmanuel	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	 Development	 ZORRINHO Carlos	09/10/2023
Council of the European Union			

Key events

13/07/2023	Preparatory document	COM(2023)0383	Summary
23/02/2024	Legislative proposal published	12247/2023	Summary
07/03/2024	Vote in committee		
14/03/2024	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
20/03/2024	Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading	A9-0136/2024	Summary
10/04/2024	Decision by Parliament	T9-0208/2024	Summary
29/04/2024	Act adopted by Council after consultation of Parliament		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2023/0222(NLE)
Procedure type	NLE - Non-legislative enactments
Procedure subtype	Consent by Parliament
	See also 2023/0222R(NLE)
Legal basis	Treaty on the Functioning of the EU TFEU 218-p6a; Treaty on the Functioning of the EU TFEU 207-p3; Treaty on the Functioning of the EU TFEU 218-p7; Treaty on the Functioning of the EU TFEU 207-p4
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 159
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed, awaiting publication in Official Journal
Committee dossier	INTA/9/12717

Documentation gateway

Document attached to the procedure		COM(2023)0378	13/07/2023	EC	
Preparatory document		COM(2023)0383	13/07/2023	EC	Summary
Committee draft report		PE756.012	08/11/2023	EP	
Committee opinion	DEVE	PE756.017	07/12/2023	EP	
Legislative proposal		12247/2023	23/02/2024	CSL	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading		A9-0136/2024	20/03/2024	EP	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading		T9-0208/2024	10/04/2024	EP	Summary

EU/Côte d'Ivoire Voluntary Partnership Agreement: forest law enforcement, governance and trade in timber and timber products to the EU (FLEGT)

PURPOSE: to conclude, on behalf of the EU, 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).

PROPOSED ACT: Council Decision.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: Council may adopt the act only if Parliament has given its consent to the act.

BACKGROUND: the action plan on forest law enforcement, governance and trade (FLEGT), endorsed by the Council in 2003, proposes a set of measures to stop illegal logging. These measures include support to timber-producing countries, multilateral collaboration to tackle trade in illegal timber, support to private-sector initiatives, and action to discourage investment in activities that encourage illegal logging.

In 2005, the Council adopted Regulation (EC) No 2173/2005 on the establishment of a FLEGT licensing scheme for imports of timber into the European Community. This enables authorities to check the legality of timber imported into the EU under FLEGT partnerships. Also in 2005, the Council authorised the Commission to negotiate FLEGT partnership agreements with timber-producing countries.

The Commission entered into negotiations with Côte d'Ivoire in 2013. It has kept the European Parliament and stakeholders informed about the negotiations.

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 was signed, subject to its conclusion at a later date.

CONTENT: the Commission proposes that the Council should decide to approve, on behalf of the Union, 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).

The objective of this Agreement, in accordance with the joint commitment of the Parties to sustainably manage all types of forests, is to provide a legal framework to ensure that timber and timber products defined by the FLEGT authorisation and imported into the Union from Côte d'Ivoire have been legally produced and to promote trade in said timber and timber products and implement the principle of sustainability.

This Agreement also provides a basis for dialogue and cooperation between the Parties aimed at facilitating and promoting its full implementation and at strengthening the enforcement of forest law and governance.

The Agreement:

- establishes a licensing scheme that checks and confirms the legality of timber products exported to EU and non-EU countries, as well as timber sold domestically. For imported timber, Côte d'Ivoire commits to ensure that the timber has been harvested according to the law of the country of origin;
- establishes a mechanism for dialogue and cooperation between the EU and Côte d'Ivoire on the licensing scheme, via a joint implementation committee;
- provides a detailed description of the structures underpinning the timber legality assurance system of Côte d'Ivoire;
- sets out a framework for involving stakeholders, social safeguards, and accountability and transparency;
- describes how complaints are handled and how monitoring and reporting will be carried out;
- provides for import controls at the EU's borders under Regulation (EC) No 2173/2005 on the FLEGT licensing scheme and Regulation (EC) No 1024/2008 laying down detailed measures for implementing the scheme.

The Agreement is underpinned by the principle of non-discrimination, which means that stakeholders from both within and outside the forestry sector will be involved. These include stakeholders from the private sector, civil society, and local communities.

The Agreement is relevant to the EU Biodiversity strategy 2030 because it combats illegal timber trade and promotes sustainable forest management and effective participation of local communities, which will help preserve biodiversity.

EU/Côte d'Ivoire Voluntary Partnership Agreement: forest law enforcement, governance and trade in timber and timber products to the EU (FLEGT)

PURPOSE: to conclude, on behalf of the EU, 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).

PROPOSED ACT: Council Decision.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: Council may adopt the act only if Parliament has given its consent to the act.

BACKGROUND: on 21 May 2003, the Commission adopted a Communication to the Council and the European Parliament Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT): proposal for an EU action plan. The Action Plan set out in that communication (the FLEGT Action Plan) called for measures to address illegal logging by developing voluntary partnership agreements with timber-producing countries. Council conclusions on the action plan were adopted in October 2003¹ and a European Parliament resolution on the subject was adopted on 11 July 2005 .

In line with a Council Decision, 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 was signed, subject to its conclusion at a later date.

It is now necessary to approve the Agreement on behalf of the Union.

CONTENT: the Council draft concerns the approval, on behalf of the Union, 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.

The objective of this Agreement, in accordance with the joint commitment of the Parties to sustainably manage all types of forests, is to provide a legal framework to ensure that timber and timber products defined by the FLEGT authorisation and imported into the Union from Côte d'Ivoire have been legally produced and to promote trade in said timber and timber products and implement the principle of sustainability.

The Agreement, inter alia:

- establishes a licensing scheme that checks and confirms the legality of timber products exported to EU and non-EU countries, as well as timber sold domestically;
- establishes a mechanism for dialogue and cooperation between the EU and Côte d'Ivoire on the licensing scheme, via a joint implementation committee;
- provides a detailed description of the structures underpinning the timber legality assurance system of Côte d'Ivoire;
- sets out a framework for involving stakeholders, social safeguards, and accountability and transparency.

EU/Côte d'Ivoire Voluntary Partnership Agreement: forest law enforcement, governance and trade in timber and timber products to the EU (FLEGT)

The Committee on International Trade adopted the report by Karin KARLSBRO (Renew, SE) 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).

The committee recommended that the European Parliament give its consent to the conclusion of the Agreement.

The objective of this Agreement, in accordance with the joint commitment of the Parties to sustainably manage all types of forests, is to provide a legal framework to ensure that timber and timber products defined by the FLEGT authorisation and imported into the Union from Côte d'Ivoire have been legally produced and to promote trade in said timber and timber products and implement the principle of sustainability.

This Agreement also provides a basis for dialogue and cooperation between the Parties aimed at facilitating and promoting its full implementation and at strengthening the enforcement of forest law and governance.

EU/Côte d'Ivoire Voluntary Partnership Agreement: forest law enforcement, governance and trade in timber and timber products to the EU (FLEGT)

The European Parliament adopted by 585 votes to 10, with 20 abstentions, a legislative resolution 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).

Parliament gave its consent to the conclusion of the Agreement.

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.

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.

The Agreement, inter alia:

- provides a legal framework to ensure that timber and timber products defined by the FLEGT authorisation and imported into the Union from Côte d'Ivoire have been legally produced and to promote trade in said timber and timber products and implement the principle of sustainability.
- establishes a licensing scheme that checks and confirms the legality of timber products exported to EU and non-EU countries, as well as timber sold domestically;
- establishes a mechanism for dialogue and cooperation between the EU and Côte d'Ivoire on the licensing scheme, via a joint implementation committee;
- provides a detailed description of the structures underpinning the timber legality assurance system of Côte d'Ivoire;
- sets out a framework for involving stakeholders, social safeguards, and accountability and transparency.

The VPAs successful implementation will depend on Côte d'Ivoires 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.