

March 2009

Fact sheet EU poll illegal timber trade

Illegal logging and related timber trade

Illegal logging poses a significant threat to forests as it contributes to deforestation and forest degradation, which is responsible for about 20% of CO₂ emissions, threatens a large and increasing number of forest ecosystems and species, and undermines the basis for sustainable forest management and development. As a major consumer of timber, the EU has a duty to reduce its impact on forest ecosystems regardless of where these effects occur.

Political process: FLEGT

The EU has to act now to address the problem of illegal logging that has major ecological, economic and social consequences: strong legislation at EU level is needed to halt the trade in illegal timber and timber products on the European market. The envisaged legislation shall help Member States to reduce their environmental and social footprint on the world's forests and set an example for reform of the international forestry sector. We welcome the legislative proposal from the European Commission, after six years of debate. However, the draft law proposed by the Commission is too weak to achieve these goals. NGOs therefore urge the Council and the European Parliament to make vital amendments to transform this law into an effective and therefore credible tool to fight illegal logging and forest destruction. These amendments should at least include those results of the vote in the Environmental Committee of the European Parliament.

EU poll: why now?

In April, the European Parliament will vote on the amendments put forward by its Environmental Committee. In June, the Agriculture Council is expected to formulate its opinion on the legislative proposal and the amendments of the European Parliament. The Environmental Committee has strengthened the legislative proposal into a credible tool to fight illegal timber trade. It has clarified obligations for all companies in the supply chain to prove the legality of their timber, national authorities are given the power to investigate infringements and take immediate measures to prosecute offenders, illegal actions have been defined, penalties clarified and environmental and social credentials have been strengthened. Friends of the Earth (FoE) Europe and WWF are concerned about the slow progress of discussion in the Agriculture Council. In order to inform the Member States governments and the European Parliament about the opinion of European citizens, FoE Europe and WWF have commissioned an EU poll. We wanted to get a picture of the level of public understanding about illegal wood and support for legislation to tackle Europe's role in the problem.

EU poll: general results

The results from the EU poll show that:

- 93% of citizens from the countries polled state that it is important that products sold in Europe are legally harvested and traded.
- 92% of citizens from the countries polled believe it is important that a European wide law is introduced to ensure that wood and wooden products are legally harvested and traded.
- 56% of citizens from the countries polled believe that nearly all wood and wooden products (such as paper, furniture and timber) available to buy in Europe are not legally harvested and traded. People in Bulgaria for example are well aware about this problem (83%).
- 92% of citizens from the countries polled believe it is important that companies breaking the law face penalties. People in Portugal (98%), Bulgaria (96%), France (95%), Italy (97%), Poland (84%) and Spain (96%) share this opinion strongest.
- A minority of 4% think that it is 'not very' or 'not at all' important that wood sold in Europe is legal, that a law is introduced and penalties given to companies that break this law.
- Compared to people in other Member States, the people of Portugal, Italy and Spain are more in favour of ensuring the legality of wood products and want a European wide law to stop illegal timber trade and penalties for companies who break this law.

The EU poll results show that the general public in the European Union is aware of the problem and highly in favour of EU wide legislation to ensure that wood and wood products are legally produced - sending a strong message to European law makers that it is time to act. FoE Europe and WWF therefore urge the Agriculture Council and the European Parliament to adopt a strong legislation without further delay.

EU poll Results in detail

Methodology: This survey has been conducted by You Gov Plc (member of the British Polling Council) using an online interview administered panel of members who have agreed to take part in surveys. An email was sent to panellists selected at random from the base sample, inviting them to take part in the survey. All figures on this page, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 2098 adults for UK, 658 in Germany, 500 Hungary, Bulgaria, and Austria, 501 Czech Republic, 502 Finland, France, Italy, 503 Spain, 505 Portugal, Netherlands and Poland, and 508 in Sweden. Fieldwork was undertaken between 4th and 10th March 2009. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all adults (aged 18+). The survey took place in fourteen member states of the European Union, including key timber producing and importing countries. Please keep in mind that all figures in this table are rounded up from 2 decimal places. This means that averages we have calculated may be slightly different as we have used the full values.

	AVERAGE	UK	France	Italy	Germany	Spain	Sweden	Hungary	Czech Republic	Poland	Austria	Portugal	Netherlands	Finland	Bulgaria
Unweighted Base	8789	2098	502	502	658	503	508	500	501	505	500	505	505	502	500
All Adults	8789	1230	1318	1230	1758	967	176	176	176	791	176	176	352	88	176

Do you believe that nearly all wood and wooden products (such as paper, furniture and timber) available to buy in Europe are legally harvested and traded? (By 'legally harvested and traded' we mean the trade of wood and wooden products that are harvested, transported, processed, bought or sold without violating national or sub-national laws. If these laws are broken then the wood and wooden products are defined as 'illegal')

Yes, I do	25%	20%	34%	22%	23%	31%	18%	28%	18%	30%	34%	26%	16%	26%	8%
No, I do not	56%	49%	44%	51%	64%	57%	64%	52%	70%	56%	55%	63%	67%	62%	83%
Don't know	19%	31%	22%	27%	13%	13%	17%	21%	12%	15%	11%	11%	17%	12%	9%

How important do you think it is that wood and wooden products sold in Europe are legally harvested and traded?

Very important	68%	61%	71%	81%	61%	80%	67%	48%	62%	63%	64%	88%	53%	57%	69%
Fairly important	26%	27%	24%	17%	30%	18%	29%	31%	30%	33%	27%	11%	37%	34%	28%
Not very important	3%	5%	2%	1%	6%	1%	3%	12%	3%	3%	4%	1%	6%	5%	1%
Not at all important	1%	2%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%	3%	1%	0%	1%	-	1%	2%	-
Don't know	3%	6%	3%	1%	3%	1%	1%	7%	4%	1%	3%	0%	3%	1%	2%

There are currently no laws anywhere in Europe, against importing and trading illegally harvested wood and wooden products. How important do you believe it is that...? "A European wide law is introduced to ensure that wood and wooden products available in Europe are legally harvested and traded"

Very important	62%	51%	67%	74%	53%	75%	59%	57%	59%	63%	60%	83%	49%	52%	67%
Fairly important	29%	31%	28%	23%	36%	21%	33%	29%	30%	32%	31%	15%	39%	39%	27%
Not very important	4%	6%	1%	2%	5%	2%	4%	7%	4%	3%	7%	1%	8%	6%	2%
Not at all important	1%	3%	0%	0%	2%	0%	1%	1%	2%	0%	1%	-	1%	2%	-
Don't know	3%	8%	3%	1%	4%	2%	2%	5%	5%	1%	2%	1%	3%	1%	3%

"If a law was introduced companies that break the law by trading in illegal wood and wooden products face penalties"

Very important	67%	57%	68%	81%	59%	74%	60%	64%	64%	69%	62%	83%	56%	63%	74%
Fairly important	25%	27%	27%	16%	31%	22%	31%	24%	20%	26%	25%	15%	32%	28%	22%
Not very important	3%	5%	2%	1%	5%	2%	5%	3%	3%	3%	6%	1%	6%	5%	2%
Not at all important	1%	3%	0%	1%	2%	0%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	2%	0%
Don't know	4%	8%	3%	1%	4%	2%	2%	8%	12%	1%	7%	1%	4%	2%	1%

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