



Timber Trade Federation

Press Release

18 June 2010

TTF welcome EU move to ban illegal timber

The TTF has welcomed impending EU legislation to ban illegal timber entering the EU market. Currently it is not against the law to sell timber in the EU that was chopped down illegally in its country of origin.

Representatives of Commission, Council and Parliament have agreed the text for the EU Due Diligence Regulation. This will require all first placers of timber products to conduct a due diligence process (recycled products are exempt). Other actors within the supply chain will only need to know who they have bought or sold to so that if there is a case of allegedly illegal timber, the first placer can be identified.

The final vote in the European Parliament will be on the 6th of July, but this is unlikely to change the outcome. After this, member states will be given 27 months to implement the agreement in their national laws.

Timber Trade Federation Head of Sustainability Rachel Butler, co-ordinated a UK trade response saying: "The Parliament put on the negotiating table some unworkable suggested amendments but ultimately it has always been clear from the start that one issue was the real point of debate – the inclusion of a prohibition. This has now been agreed and will only apply to the first placer and will mean that it is a criminal offence to place illegal timber on the EU market. However, the burden of proof will rest with the prosecution and illegality is defined by the country of harvest.

"This is fantastic news for the industry and offers a great platform to build upon the environmental credentials of wood. It also represents a first in that the Government, NGO community and trade in the UK have all lobbied for the same position - a prohibition. I want to personally express a particular thanks to both Right Honourable Hilary Benn MP who campaigned tirelessly with European Council colleagues to get them on board and also the new Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Secretary of State, Caroline Spelman, who picked up the agenda quickly and made time to meet stakeholders to ensure the momentum was not lost.

“With lead times and forward planning, two years is not a long time, as TTF has made Due Diligence mandatory, all members should be ready to meet this regulation. The TTF has always intended to become a monitoring organisation and will need to apply to the European Commission to be able to officially run a Due Diligence process. We believe our system is robust enough to meet the criteria set by the regulation.”

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