



Press release

EU and Indonesia celebrate cooperation milestone in sustainable management of forests

Brussels, 28 November 2016

Since 15 November 2016, the FLEGT (Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade) licensing scheme for legal timber products from Indonesia is fully operational. This means that Indonesia is now the first country in the world to export FLEGT-licensed timber to the EU.

As of that date all timber products exported from Indonesia to the EU must be accompanied by a valid licence attesting to their legality. The first licensed shipments are underway from Indonesia to the UK, Belgium and the Netherlands.

In order to mark this important achievement in EU-Indonesia relations, a brief high-level ceremony was held in Brussels today in the presence of the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy **Federica Mogherini**, the EU Commissioner for Environment, Fisheries and Maritime Affairs **Karmenu Vella**, and **Retno L.P. Marsudi**, Indonesia's Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Commissioner **Vella** said: *"Today we celebrate a turning point in the global fight to end illegal logging. By tackling illegality at both the supply and demand sides of the trade we have closed the EU market to illegal timber from one of the world's biggest producers. The implementation of the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Voluntary Partnership Agreement will boost confidence in the legality of Indonesian timber exports to the EU. It will contribute to a better protection of Indonesian tropical forests, the third largest in the world"*.

The European Union and Indonesia have a long-standing cooperation on sustainable management of forest resources. In 2013 Indonesia and the EU signed a historic agreement, the so-called FLEGT Voluntary Partnership Agreement (FLEGT-VPA), to improve forest governance, address illegal logging and promote trade in legal timber products. Indonesia is one of the largest exporters of tropical timber to the EU. It is also the first Asian country to enter into such an agreement with the EU.

Under the VPA, Indonesia has thoroughly reformed its forestry sector. It has improved transparency and accountability and developed a robust, credible system to verify the legality of timber and timber products. This system assures that all timber products comply with national laws on

environmental, social and economic aspects. It is subject to scrutiny by independent auditors and forest monitors from civil society.

The FLEGT licence automatically meets the requirements of the European Union Timber Regulation (EUTR) which prohibits operators in the EU from placing illegally harvested timber and products derived from illegal timber on the EU market. Importers of FLEGT-licensed timber products can place their imports on the EU market without the need to conduct any risk management exercise (due diligence).

Background

The Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Action Plan is the EU's response to the problem of illegal logging. To address the issue at EU level, the European Commission adopted the FLEGT Action Plan. The Action Plan aims to reduce illegal logging by strengthening the sustainability and legality of forest management, improving forest governance and promoting trade in legally produced timber. FLEGT contributes to efforts to limit climate change, conserve biodiversity, protect rights and increase transparency.

The plan aims to close the EU market to illegal timber products through several actions, amongst which two key elements are the EU Timber Regulation and the Voluntary Partnership Agreements.

The EU FLEGT Action Plan's demand-side measures include the EU Timber Regulation, which prohibits operators in the EU from placing illegal timber products on the EU market. The EU FLEGT Action Plan's supply-side measures include Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPAs) with countries outside the EU, which commit to develop a robust timber legality assurance system and export to the EU only verified legal timber products accompanied by FLEGT licences.

When a VPA country begins FLEGT licensing, EU member states will no longer allow products listed in the VPA to enter the EU unless they have a FLEGT licence.

The EU buys 11%, by value, of timber products and paper exported from Indonesia. Indonesia supplies 33% of the EU's tropical timber imports by value.

The scope of the VPA covers all export markets and the domestic market in Indonesia. Indonesia will issue FLEGT licences to timber products it exports to the EU, and V-Legal documents to timber products it exports to other markets.

The range of timber products included in the scope of the agreement encompasses all major products Indonesia exports to the EU, particularly the five compulsory timber products as defined in the FLEGT Regulation of 2005 (logs, sawn timber, railway sleepers, plywood and veneer) and also includes a number of other timber products such as furniture, fuel wood, wooden tools, wooden packing material, builders' joinery and carpentry of wood, wood pulp, paper and paper products, kitchen and tableware.

Further information

[EU FLEGT Voluntary Partnership Agreements](#)

[Media backgrounder on the Indonesia-EU Voluntary Partnership Agreement](#)

[FLEGT.org](#)

[VPA Unpacked](#)