Forced labour continues to be a major global issue. The latest International Labour Organization’s estimates put the global number of people in forced labour at 27.6 million. Though this phenomenon impacts some parts of the world more than others, all continents are affected.

The respect for human rights, including labour rights, is a key priority of the EU’s agenda. In addition to already existing EU policies and laws to address this problem, the proposed Regulation sets rules prohibiting the placing on the EU market of goods made by forced labour.

WHO WILL BENEFIT FROM THE REGULATION?

WORKERS
- The Regulation will contribute to the eradication of forced labour both in the EU and elsewhere through banning products sold on the EU market, imported or exported goods
- It will also contribute to protecting workers’ rights, and the promotion of the EU’s decent work agenda

CONSUMERS
- More confidence that the goods they buy have not been made by forced labour

BUSINESSES
- Better reputation and brand image
- Increased public trust and credibility to customers
- Increased social sustainability
- One coherent set of rules to be followed across the EU market
WHICH PRODUCTS WILL BE AFFECTED?

All products made by forced labour will be banned on the EU market:

- Products made by forced labour which are already on the EU market would be withdrawn from the market.

HOW WILL THE REGULATION BE ENFORCED?

The enforcement of the Regulation will be:

- carried out by Member States’ competent authorities
- facilitated by the involvement of customs authorities to identify and stop products at EU borders
- based on risk-based approach drawing from independent and verifiable sources of information, such as the International Labour Organization
- supported by a dedicated coordination network for Member States
- Guidelines issued by the Commission will facilitate the implementation of the prohibition both by business and by competent authorities of Member States

FOLLOWING AN INVESTIGATION

In case of proven forced labour, competent authorities should:

- Prohibit, without delay, the placing and making available of such products on the Union market and their export from the Union
- Require the economic operators to withdraw the relevant products already made available from the Union market
- Have relevant products destroyed, rendered inoperable, or otherwise disposed of in line with national law