



BELARUS

COUNTRY OVERVIEW TO AID IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EUTR



LAND AREA:	20.29 million hectares ¹
FORESTED AREA:	8.26 million hectares ² 39.8% total land area ²
FOREST TYPE:	4.6% primary ³ 73.2% naturally regenerated ³
FOREST OWNERSHIP:	100% publicly/state owned ^{4,5}
PROTECTED AREAS:	1.94 million hectares ⁶ 15.9% of forests found in Protected Areas ³
VPA STATUS:	No VPA currently ⁷

ECONOMIC VALUE OF FOREST SECTOR:

USD 575 million in 2011⁸
 1.1% of the GDP in 2011⁸
 19th highest exporter of EUTR products globally in 2018 by weight (kg)⁹
 42nd highest exporter of EUTR products globally in 2018 by value (USD)⁹

TREE COVER CHANGE:

87.4 thousand hectares of tree cover loss in 2018⁸
 Average of 64 840 hectares per year 2014-2018⁸
 [noting that 'tree cover' may be natural forests or plantations and that 'loss' can be due to a variety of factors].
 15.7 thousand hectares of tree cover gain in 2017¹⁰

CERTIFIED FORESTS:

FSC certification: 8.96 million hectares (2019)¹¹
 PEFC certification: 8.62 million hectares (2019)¹²
 FSC & PEFC certification: 8.04 million hectares (2018)¹³

CHAIN OF CUSTODY CERTIFICATION:

FSC certification: 210 CoC certificates (2019)¹¹
 PEFC certification: 109 CoC certificates (2019)¹²

MAIN TIMBER SPECIES IN TRADE:

Black alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), birch (*Betula* spp.), spruce (*Picea* spp.), pine (*Pinus* spp.), aspen (*Populus* spp.) and oak (*Quercus* spp.)¹⁴

CITES-LISTED TIMBER SPECIES:

None¹⁵

RANKINGS IN GLOBAL FREEDOM AND STABILITY INDICES:

Rule of law index¹⁶ 3 rd quarter 68/128 in 2020 (score: 0.51/1)	Corruption perceptions index¹⁷ 2 nd quarter 66/180 in 2019 (score: 45/100)	Fragile states index¹⁸ 2 nd quarter score: 68.2 in 2020 (rank 76/172)	Freedom in the world¹⁹ 4 th quarter 169/195 in 2020 (score: 19/100)
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LEGAL TRADE FLOWS

In 2018, exports of EUTR-regulated products (timber and timber products to which the EUTR applies) from Belarus totalled USD 1.94 billion, of which 55% was exported to the EU-28, according to data from the UN Comtrade Database²⁰. Belarus exported EUTR products to 90 different countries and territories²⁰. The **main global markets for Belarus's EUTR products in 2018** by value were the Russian Federation and Poland (Figure 1 a). The main EUTR products exported from Belarus by HS code according to value in 2018 were sawn wood (HS 4407) and particle boards (HS 4410) (Figure 1 b).

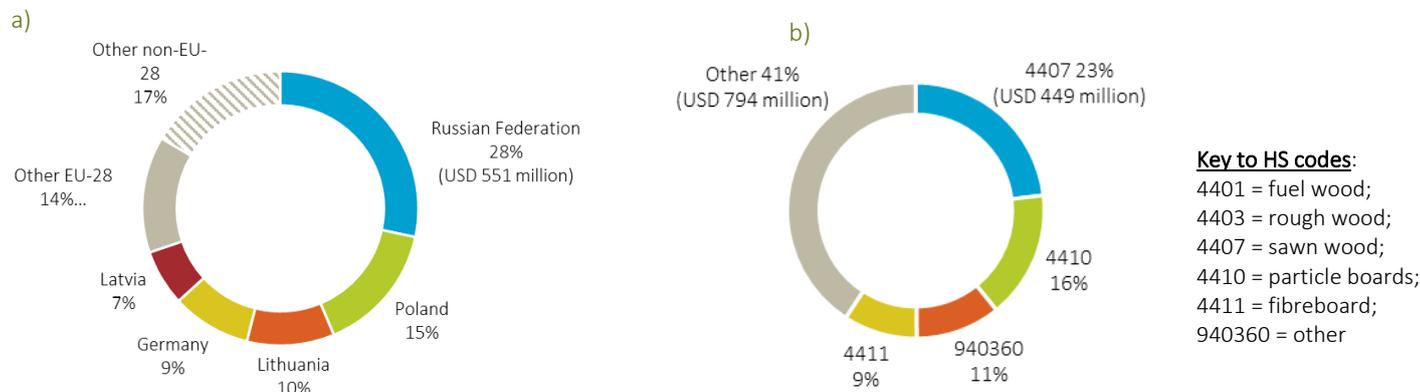


Figure 1: a) Main global markets for EUTR products from Belarus in 2018 in USD; b) Main EUTR products exported from Belarus in 2018 by HS code according to value in USD. Produced using data from the UN Comtrade Database²⁰.

The EU imported 975 million Euros of EUTR-regulated products from Belarus in 2018, according to data from the Eurostat Comext database²¹. The **main EUTR products imported into the EU from Belarus in 2018** by value (Figure 2) and weight (Figure 4) were sawn wood (HS 4407) and fuel wood (HS 4401) respectively. The main importers of EUTR products in 2018 were (in order of most imports) Poland, Germany, Lithuania and Latvia by value and Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Germany by weight.

Over the ten year period 2009–2018, there has been an increase in the **total value of EU imports of EUTR-regulated products from Belarus** (Figure 3).

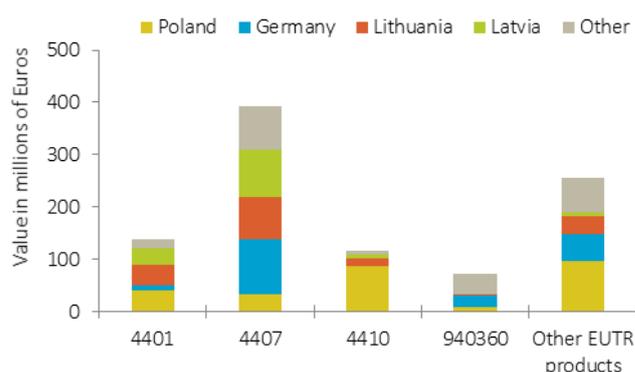


Figure 2: Main EUTR products by value in EUR imported into the EU from Belarus in 2018. Produced using data from Eurostat²¹.

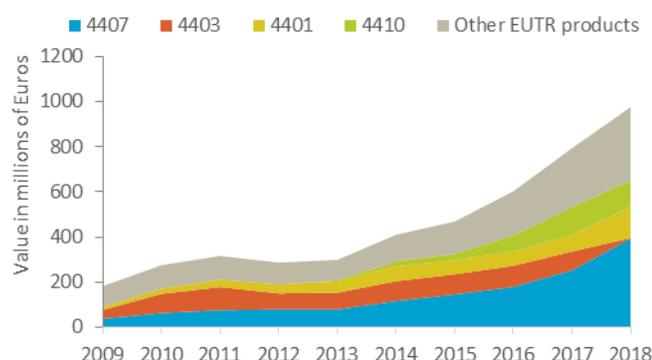


Figure 3: Value of total imports of EUTR products in EUR imported into the EU from Belarus 2009-2018. Produced using data from Eurostat²¹.

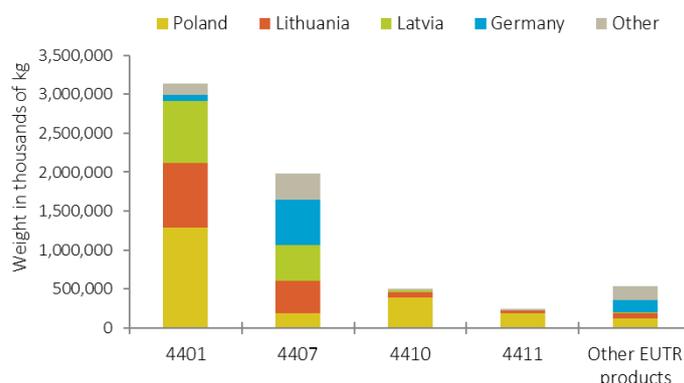


Figure 4: Main EUTR products by weight imported into the EU from Belarus in 2018. Produced using data from Eurostat²¹.

The production and trade flows of wood products in Belarus in 2015 (Table 1) show that domestic consumption was estimated to exceed exports for logs, sawn wood, veneer and plywood.

Table 1: Production and trade flows of wood products in Belarus in 2015²².

	Production (x 1000 m ³)	Imports (x 1000 m ³)	Domestic consumption (x 1000 m ³) <i>Calculated from reported data</i>	Exports (x 1000 m ³)
Logs (Ind. Roundwood)	16 234	41	16 101	133
Sawn wood	4560	32	1173	3387
Veneer	10	12	1	9
Plywood	307	36	284	293

KEY RISKS FOR ILLEGALITY

COMPLIANCE WITH LEGISLATION:

Legal procedures to protect endangered or threatened species may not be adhered to; harvesting may also take place in restricted areas or during prohibited times²³.

PREVALENCE OF ILLEGAL HARVESTING OF TIMBER:

Unofficial removals were estimated at 0.07 to 0.1% of the total harvest in 2015²⁴.

ILLEGAL HARVESTING OF SPECIFIC TREE SPECIES:

No specific species identified.

COMPLEXITY OF THE SUPPLY CHAIN

Harvesting of timber is allowed depending on the management and protection regime assigned based on the forest category⁵. The State has the exclusive right to export specified timber products (see below for details)²⁵.

Most timber sales are based on online trading (bidding), which is managed by the Timber Trade Department of the Open Joint Stock Company “Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange” which the Belarusian government has a controlling stake in²⁵.

RESTRICTIONS ON TIMBER TRADE

The export of pulpwood, veneer logs and sawn logs was prohibited (since 1 January 2016) unless otherwise authorised by the President of Belarus²⁶; this has since been replaced by an export licensing scheme (see below). Harvesting of rock oak (*Quercus petraea*), silver fir (*Abies alba*), low birch (*Betula humilis*), dwarf birch (*Betula nana*), bilberry willow (*Salix myrtilloides*), Lapland willow (*Salix lapponum*), yellow rhododendron (*Rhododendron luteum*), german gorse (*Genista germanica*) and blackcap cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster melanocarpus*) is prohibited, with the exception of sanitary logging⁵.

No specific sanctions on timber or timber products, but the EU has placed sanctions on listed persons, entities and bodies in Belarus; any potential relation to the timber industry is not detailed in the sanction²⁷.

No UN sanction on timber exports or imports²⁸.

Illegal trade

In 2017, NEPCo²³ and FSC²⁹ published results of their timber legality risk assessments for Belarus, both categorising most legality indicators as “low risk”, but identifying a “specified risk” concerning protected sites and species. Concern regarding this category arose from reports of the potential unauthorised exploitation of protected areas and species, resulting from lack of communication between Government departments, management plans being prepared using outdated data and protection requirements and procedures not being adequately followed^{23,29}.

In 2015, the Deputy Head of the Department of Forestry in Belarus stated that “Belarus has considerable experience in fighting illegal logging” and that “efficiency of state systems for the control of legality of harvested timber has been highly appreciated by international experts”³⁰.

Little publicly available information on legality risks regarding timber and timber products from Belarus was found to be available. In 2015, unofficial removals were estimated at 0.07 to 0.1% of the total harvest²⁴. There is no evidence of

widespread illegal activity^{31,32}, and it has been noted that Belarus has a strong legal framework that limits the risk of illegal trade in timber^{23,24}.

Forestry management and legislation

The forests of Belarus are owned exclusively by the State⁵; as such, all nationally produced timber originates from state managed forests^{5,31}. However, privately owned businesses were reported to produce over 70% of total timber products in 2012³³. State ownership of forests is enshrined within the Forest Code of the Republic of Belarus of 2015⁵, which came into force on 1 January 2017. The Code requires that all forest management plans and forest inventory documents align with the Forest Code by the end of 2020⁵. Presidential Decree No. 214 sets out the timber types that the State has the exclusive right to export²⁵: fuel wood (HS4401 10 000 0); unprocessed softwood, except round wood (HS4403 20); unprocessed hardwood, except hornbeam and maple timber (HS4403 99 100 0, HS4403 99 510 0, HS4403 99 590 0, HS4403 950 2, HS4403 99 950 9); wooden sleepers (4406); coniferous sawn wood, except for longitudinally sawn rounded wood (HS4407 10 910 0, HS4407 10 930 0, HS4407 10 980 0); and sawn hardwood (HS4407 99 970 0)²⁵. The export of pulpwood, veneer logs and sawn logs was prohibited since 1 January 2016 (as per Decree of the President of Belarus No. 211 of 20 May 2015) unless otherwise authorised by the President of Belarus²⁶. This was replaced by an export licensing scheme (Resolution of the Belarussian Council of Ministers No. 532 of 14 July 2017³⁴) which came into effect on 1 August 2017, initially for a period of 6 months³⁵. A further 6 month extension for export licences for hardwood timber supplies (oak and ashwood) to countries outside the Eurasian Economic Union was reported to have been announced (Decree no. 59 of the Council of Ministers 25 January 2018)^{36,37}, with further 6 month extensions for unprocessed timber (4403 and 4404) starting on 1 August 2018³⁸ and 1 February 2019³⁹.

According to the Forest Code of the Republic of Belarus, state administration in the field of use, conservation, protection and reproduction of forests is carried out by the President of the Republic of Belarus, the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus, the Ministry of Forestry, and other state authorities within their powers in accordance with the legislation⁵. Belarusian forests are primarily under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Forestry (88%); other agencies with jurisdiction over forests include the Administration of the President (7.9%), the Ministry of Emergency Situations (2.3%), the Ministry of Defence (0.9%), National Academy of Sciences (0.4%), the Ministry of Education (0.3%) and Local Administration units (0.2%)⁴⁰. The Ministry of Forestry is responsible for implementing national forest policy and enforcing forest legislation⁵. This includes administering the use, reproduction, conservation and protection of the country's forests, the development of the legal framework for forest management, and ensuring a rational development of forest resources⁵. Six State Forestry Associations are responsible for local administrative duties including managing Forestry Management Records, performing regular on-site inspections and penalising Forest Management Enterprises^{14,23,25}. Forest use rights allocation and sales of wood to industry are carried out by 98 State Forestry Institutions (leskhoz)^{14,41}. Every State Forestry Institution has an individual forestry management plan, developed by the State Forest Inventory Enterprise (Belgosles) and updated every 10 years²⁹. The Plans hold information about forest types, categories of protection and special protected areas that determine the requirements for activities²⁹. The types, volume and forest stands for activities, such as logging, are also determined in these plans. The volume of logging is calculated each year based on the area of the forest, its category and age⁴².

There are four categories of forest in Belarus: exploitative/operational forests, recreation and health forests, protective forests, and conservation/nature protection forests⁵. A harvest permit is required for all forest types⁵. Exploitative forests are the primary source of timber²³, although felling can take place in all forest categories⁵. However, the extent and nature of timber harvesting allowed is dependent on the forest categorisation; for example, commercial timber harvesting is prohibited in recreation and health forests⁵.

There was reported to be a growing issue of timber harvested in Belarus surplus to the volume that can be processed and sold, or used domestically, with hundreds of thousands of cubic meters of felled timber lying in warehouses and deteriorating in quality, or rotting on the forest floor⁴³. This was partly explained by the high level of sanitary felling to stop the spread of the bark beetle; the Ministry of Forestry reported that 55% of the harvested wood in 2018 was sanitary felling, and that because of the bark beetle, 75% of all harvested wood in Belarus is now low-grade⁴³. In August 2019, the President announced plans for a program on processing low-grade commercial timber into wood chips and fuel pellets, to be implemented within the next three years⁴⁴.

Sustainable management of forest resources is considered central to the development of Belarus's forests and improving the quality and competitiveness of forest products on the external market⁴⁵. Forest certification is one of the activities of the Ministry of Forestry, which contributes to ensuring the productivity and sustainability of stands⁴⁵. The vast majority of Belarusian forest was FSC or PEFC certified in 2017⁴⁶, with much of this forest certified under both schemes⁴⁷.

A 2014 assessment conducted by the ENPI East FLEG II programme found that the current timber tracking system in Belarus was effective and suitable to prove compliance with EUTR⁴⁸; it also found that the cost of introducing an electronic labelling system for timber products was high relative to the potential benefits⁴⁸. Nonetheless, the assessment emphasised the need to, *inter alia*, improve relevant legislation and introduce a legal definition of illegal logging⁴⁸. A definition of illegal logging was included in the 2015 Forest Code of the Republic of Belarus⁵. A separate report carried out as part of the ENPI East FLEG II programme identified Belarus as having a strong forest management system and protection of public forest³¹.

The majority of timber sales for the domestic market and for export are based on online trading (bidding), which is managed by the Timber Trade Department of the Open Joint Stock Company (OJSC) "Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange"^{25,49}. Timber can only be purchased by organisations registered in the database of the OJSC and must follow official procedures²⁵. Harvesting permits are based on the data contained in forest management plans and are either: a logging license (for felling of forest stand); a forest order (for felling by private individuals of wood less than 50 m³ in volume); or a forest ticket (for harvesting of non-timber products)⁵. The Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange states that 14.8 million m³ (with a value of EUR 410 million) of timber was sold at exchange auctions in 2016⁴⁹. In 2010 there were estimated to be approximately 5000 companies and enterprises of various forms, employing more than 146 000 people, in the forest sector¹⁴.

LEGALLY REQUIRED DOCUMENTS¹

See FSC (2017) '[Centralised national risk assessment for Belarus](#)' and NEPCo (2017) '[Timber legality risk assessment – Belarus](#)' for lists of forestry related documents

For logging:

- Harvest permit: **Logging license/bilet** (permission for felling of forest stand) or **Forest warrant/Order** (permission for felling of a part of forest stand or individual trees)
- Forest management plan (FMP)
- Charter of a Forestry Enterprise
- Protection documents (depending on type of forest sites and values)
- Land State Registration Data (2015)
- List of projected silvicultural measures
- Technological plan ("karta")
- Forest map with delineated forest stands projected for forestry measures
- Act of survey of forest stand
- Forest map showing harvesting areas
- Forest inventory data

For transport:

- Waybill (or Bill of lading, Shortcut on the timber hauling)
- Wood records documentary
- Round wood inventory sheet
- Reclassification card
- Computer timber accounting database

Export:

- Financial reports according to the Law on Financial Statements of Entities
- Waybills (international form, cmr)
- Invoices

¹ The following list may not be exhaustive and is intended as a guide only on required documents.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND POLICY²

See FSC (2017) '[Centralised national risk assessment for Belarus](#)' and NEPCon (2017) '[Timber legality risk assessment – Belarus](#)' for lists of forestry related legislation and policy, as well as the [Belarus country page of FAOLEX](#).

- [Constitution of the Republic of Belarus](#) of 1994 (as amended and supplemented at the national referenda on 24 November 1996 and 17 October 2004)
- Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union (together with Appendices 1 - 33) (2014)
- Agreement on the Customs Code of the Eurasian Economic Union (2017);
- Decision of the Council of the Eurasian Economic Commission dated July 16, 2012 № 54 *"On approval of the Common Commodity Nomenclature for Foreign Economic Activity of the Eurasian Economic Union and the Common Customs Tariff of the Eurasian Economic Union"*
- [Civil Code of the Republic of Belarus](#) No. 218-Z (1998)
- [Tax Code of the Republic of Belarus](#) No.166-Z (2002)
- [Forest Code of the Republic of Belarus](#) No.332-Z (2015)
- [Decree of the Ministry of Forestry of the Republic of Belarus](#) December 29, 2005 No. 50 *"On approval of the Rules for the determination and approval of the estimated cutting area for main felling in the forests of the Republic of Belarus"*
- Decree of the President of the Republic of Belarus of March 27, 2008 No. 178 *"On the procedure for conducting and controlling foreign trade operations"*
- Decree of the President of the Republic of Belarus of July 13, 2006 No. 443 *"On customs duties"*
- Decree of the President of the Republic of Belarus of October 09, 2010 No. 522 *"On the establishment of rates of export customs duties on timber"*
- Decree of the President of the Republic of Belarus of May 07, 2007 No. 214 *"On Some Measures for Improving Activities in the Field of Forestry"*
- Decree of the President of the Republic of Belarus of August 07, 2007 No. 373 *"On points of entry and exit of goods transported across the customs border of the Eurasian Economic Union in the Republic of Belarus"*
- Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus of November 04, 2016 No. 907 *"On measures for the implementation of the Forest Code of the Republic of Belarus"*
- Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus of June 16, 2004 No. 714 *"On measures for the development of exchange trade of commodity exchange"*
- Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus of August 06, 2009 No. 1039 *"On some measures to implement the Law of the Republic of Belarus" On Commodity Exchanges "*
- Decree of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus of January 18. 2019 No. 34 *"On Licensing of export of certain types of timber and making additions to the Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus of February 17, 2012 No. 156"*
- Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus of March 16, 2005 No. 285 *"On some issues of organizing work with a book of comments and suggestions and introducing amendments and additions to some resolutions of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus"*
- Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus dated February 17, 2012 No. 156 *"On approval of a common list of administrative procedures carried out by state authorities and other organizations with respect to legal entities and individual entrepreneurs, making additions to the resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus dated February 14, 2009 No. 193 and invalidation of some resolutions of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus "*
- Resolution of the Board of the National Bank of the Republic of Belarus of July 09, 2009 No. 101 *"On the conducting of foreign trade operations"*

² The following list may not be exhaustive and is intended as a guide only on required legislation.

- Law of the Republic of Belarus of November 25, 2004 No. 346-Z *“On measures to protect the economic interests of the Republic of Belarus in Foreign Trade of Goods”*
- Law of the Republic of Belarus of January 05, 2009 N 10-3 *“On Commodity Exchanges”*
- [The Code of Administrative Offences](#) No.194-Z (2003)
- [Procedural-Executive Code of Administrative Offences](#) No.194-Z (2006)
- [Labor Code of the Republic of Belarus](#) No.296-Z 5 (1999)
- Technical Code of Common Practice. Sustainable forest management. Sanitary rules in the forests of the Republic of Belarus (TKP 026-2006)
- Technical Code of Common Practice. Rules of survey of cutting areas, the collection of resin, the procurement of secondary forest resources and secondary forest utilisation (TKP 103-2007)
- Technical Code of Common Practice. Rules of forest management inventory of forest fund (TKP 377-2012)
- Technical Code of Common Practice. Rules of felling in the Republic of Belarus (TKP 143-2008)
- Resolution of the Board of the National Bank of the Republic of Belarus of April 30, 2004 No. 72 *“On approval of the Rules for conducting foreign exchange transactions”*.
- Technical Code of Common Practice. Rules of delineation and measurements of felling area in the forests of the Republic of Belarus (TKP 060-2006)
- Technical Code of Common Practice. Sustainable forest management. Instruction on reforestation and afforestation in Belarus (TKP 047-2006)
- Red Book of Belarus
- System Safety Standards. Logging operation. Safety Requirements. GOST 12.3.015-78
- Fire safety regulations in the forests of the Republic of Belarus. Belarus PPB 2.38-2010
- STB 1711-2007. Round timber of coniferous species. Specifications
- STB 1712-2007. Hardwood Roundwood in kind. Specifications
- STB 1667-2012. Round timber
- Database of contracts from the section of the timber trade of the Open Joint Stock Company “Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange”

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These EU Timber Regulation country overviews support the work of EU Competent Authorities in assessing potential legality risks of timber and timber products from source countries of importance to the EU market. They were produced following a thorough review of the publicly available literature, as well as requesting additional information from Competent Authorities and experts. To ensure their accuracy, relevance and completeness, country overviews have been subject to comprehensive peer review, including consultation with relevant national ministries/agencies and in-country experts, the European Commission and Competent Authorities. These documents are updated periodically based on available information. Specific inputs can be sent to timber@unep-wcmc.org, for potential inclusion in the next update. Published overviews are available from https://ec.europa.eu/environment/forests/timber_regulation.htm.