



EUROPEAN
COMMISSION

Brussels, 27.10.2023
C(2023) 7169 final

COMMISSION DECISION

of 27.10.2023

**on the signature on behalf of the European Union of the Memorandum of
Understanding on a Forest Partnership between the European Union and the Republic
of Honduras**

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THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

Having regard to the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

Whereas:

- (1) Article 17(1) of the Treaty on European Union lists the powers of the Commission and provides in particular that the Commission is to ensure the Union's external representation, with the exception of the common foreign and security policy and other cases provided for in the Treaties.
- (2) In May 2003, the Commission adopted the Communication *EU action plan for forest law enforcement, governance and trade*¹, which called for measures to address illegal logging through improved governance and a regulatory framework.
- (3) In July 2019, the Commission adopted the Communication *Stepping up EU action to protect and restore the world's forests*², which called for partnerships with producing countries to ease the pressure on forests and fight deforestation.
- (4) In 2021, in the context of the programming exercise, the European Union and the Republic of Honduras identified forests as one of the priority sectors of their cooperation. A Forest Partnership, in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding, will strengthen policy dialogue on forests and accelerate the achievement of the EU's and Honduras's respective commitments towards Agenda 2030, the Paris Agreement, the Convention on Biological Diversity³ and reducing poverty. This agenda is at the heart of our Global Gateway strategy through which the European Union is committed to supporting sustainable investments around the world.
- (5) In May 2023, the European Union adopted a Regulation⁴ to curb EU-driven deforestation and forest degradation that aims to guarantee that the products that EU citizens consume on the EU market do not contribute to deforestation and forest degradation within the EU and globally which are major drivers of climate change and biodiversity loss. The entry into force of the Regulation provides market opportunities for deforestation-free products with traceable supply chains, including wood, coffee, soy and palm oil.
- (6) In June 2023, discussions took place between representatives of the Commission and Honduras's National Institute of Forest Conservation and Development, Protected

¹ COM(2003) 251.

² COM/2019/352 final.

³ Decision 93/626/EEC

⁴ UE (2023/1115)

Areas and Fauna as well as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The aim was to draw up a non-binding instrument that sets out political commitments on developing the forest sector in Honduras. The Memorandum of Understanding on a Forest Partnership is the result of those discussions.

- (7) The Council has been kept informed of the discussions and the envisaged date for signature.
- (8) The Memorandum of Understanding on a Forest Partnership does not, nor is it intended to, create any legal obligations on either side under domestic or international law.
- (9) Given the Union's interest in developing the sustainable forest sector in Honduras, it is appropriate to sign the Memorandum of Understanding on a Forest Partnership.
- (10) It is necessary to submit the Memorandum of Understanding on a Forest Partnership to the Council for endorsement before it is signed by the Commission on behalf of the Union,

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1

The Memorandum of Understanding on a Forest Partnership between the European Union and the Republic of Honduras, attached to this Decision, is approved.

The text of the Memorandum of Understanding on a Forest Partnership between the European Union and the Republic of Honduras is submitted to the Council for endorsement.

Article 2

The Member of the Commission responsible for international partnerships or the person designated is authorised to sign the Memorandum of Understanding on a Forest Partnership on behalf of the Union, after its endorsement by the Council.

Done at Brussels, 27.10.2023

For the Commission
Jutta URPILAINEN
Member of the Commission