



Thursday, 18 February, 2016

### **EU Timber Regulation: First two years show progress, but more effort needed from Member States and private sector**

Today the Commission released a [report](#) on the effectiveness of the EU Timber Regulation during its first two years of implementation. The report finds that the EU is on track to achieve its objectives to combat illegal logging and associated trade in illegal timber, but challenges remain. Some positive trends are visible, namely that EU operators are gradually taking steps to ensure the legality of their suppliers and that there is more awareness of the problem of illegal logging amongst EU consumers. The Regulation has also encouraged producer countries to develop systems assessing compliance with the requirements of the legislation. However, more effort is needed from both the Member States and the private sector to ensure its effective and efficient application. Since 2014 there has been significant progress in the implementation of timber regulation across the EU. While in July 2014 there were 18 non-compliant Member States, in June 2015 the number was reduced to four (Greece, Hungary, Romania and Spain). The Commission launched infringement procedures against these Member States in 2015. It was also widely recognised that the Regulation adds significant value to the international efforts to halt deforestation and forest degradation, conserve biodiversity and address climate change. The results of evaluation will be used to further improve the implementation and application of the Timber Regulation.

### **President Juncker co-hosted Western Balkans Route Leaders' Meeting and participates in EPP Summit today**

Yesterday evening, President **Juncker** co-hosted a dinner with President Tusk and the leaders of Western Balkan countries of Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Participants underlined the need to avoid a humanitarian crisis developing in the Western Balkans, and discussed the need to avoid unilateral measures. President **Juncker** reminded participants of the agreement reached by the Leaders of the Western Balkan countries when they met in October last year at the [Western Balkans Route Leaders' Meeting](#), during which they [agreed](#) to improve cooperation and step up consultation between the countries along the route. Ahead of the European Council today, President **Juncker** will also participate in the European People's Party Summit with Presidents Tusk and Schulz, as well as Heads of State and Government, including Chancellor Merkel, Prime Minister of Bulgaria Borissov, President of Romania Iohannis, Taoiseach Enda Kenny, Hungarian Prime Minister Orbán and Prime Minister of Spain Rajoy. On the agenda will be the preparation of the European Council, and President **Juncker** will remind participants of the recent measures taken by the European Commission to deal with the refugee crisis, and will inform participants of the meetings over the recent days, including yesterday's dinner and the first meeting of the Facility for Refugees in Turkey steering committee, which also took place yesterday. Ahead of the European Council during his press point with President Schulz this

morning, President **Juncker** recalled that the European Council has already agreed on measures to deal with the refugee crisis, including redistribution and relocation, adding that "*Member States must make good on what they agreed*". Coverage is available on [EbS](#).

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### **Implementing the Energy Union: Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič discusses Energy Security package in Berlin**

On 18 and 19 February, Vice-President for the Energy Union **Šefčovič** will be in Berlin to discuss with representatives of government, parliament and industry priorities and the implementation of the Energy Union strategy, a key political priority of this Juncker Commission. The Vice-President will meet bilaterally with German Economic Affairs Minister and Vice Chancellor Sigmar Gabriel, with Chief of Staff of the German Chancellery Peter Altmaier, Environment Minister Barbara Hendricks and Norbert Röttgen, Chair of the Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs. On the agenda within government representatives the recently adopted Commission's Energy Security package (see [IP/16/307](#), [MEMO/16/308](#), [MEMO/16/309](#), [MEMO/16/310](#) and [MEMO/16/311](#)), the State of the Energy Union one year after its official launch and post-COP21 developments. Furthermore **Šefčovič** attends the industrial conference "future perspective industry 2030" organised by the Economy Ministry where he will speak about the competitiveness of the European industry and the Energy Union contribution to it. The Vice-President will also deliver a keynote on "Boosting Competitiveness and Supply Security with the Energy Union" at the German Economic Council.

More information is available on the [Energy Union](#) and [Vice-President](#) websites.

### **Italian role in Circular economy and Mediterranean fish stocks discussed by Commissioner Vella in Rome**

The Commission's new ambitious [circular economy package](#) was presented today by EU Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Karmenu **Vella** in front of the Environment and European Committees of the Chamber of Deputies at the Italian Senate: "*Following the Paris Cop 21 global agreement on climate, we have to make a shift to a more Circular Economy that can deliver economically as well as environmentally. Examples such as the work of the public recycling company Contarina, providing waste services to Treviso and Priula, prove that Italy is very well placed to play a leading role in this shift.*" Following the hearing, the Commissioner joined Mr Cataudella, Chair of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean, and Mr Srour, Executive Secretary, at the GFCM headquarters where he reiterated the Commission's commitment, following the success of the High-level seminar for the Mediterranean in Catania last week, for a new strategy for the Mediterranean that addresses the alarming depletion of fish stocks. The Commissioner also met with José Graziano da Silva, Director General of the United Nations FAO on the Commission's ongoing work on [Ocean Governance](#) and the fight against illegal fishing worldwide.

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Find out [here](#) what will be discussed next week in the European Commission, the European Council and the European Parliament.