



TEXTS ADOPTED

P10_TA(2026)0210

EU-Liberia Voluntary Partnership Agreement on forest law enforcement, governance and trade in timber products: termination (Resolution)

European Parliament non-legislative resolution of 17 June 2026 on the proposal for a Council decision on the termination of the Voluntary Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Liberia on Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade in timber products to the European Union (14569/2025 - C10-0299/2025 - 2025/0259M(NLE))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission proposal of 9 September 2025 for a Council decision on the termination of the Voluntary Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Liberia on Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade in timber products to the European Union (COM(2025)0467),
- having regard to the draft Council Decision on the termination of the Voluntary Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Liberia on forest law enforcement, governance and trade in timber products to the European Union (C10-0299/2025),
- having regard to the request for consent submitted by the Council in accordance with Article 207(4), first subparagraph, and Article 218(6), second subparagraph, point (a) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
- having regard to the Partnership Agreement between the European Union and its Member States, of the one part, and the Members of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States, of the other part¹,
- having regard to the Voluntary Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Liberia on forest law

¹ OJ L, 2023/2862, 28.12.2023, ELI:
http://data.europa.eu/eli/agree_international/2023/2862/oj.

enforcement, governance and trade in timber products to the European Union²,

- having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 2173/2005 of 20 December 2005 on the establishment of a FLEGT licensing scheme for imports of timber into the European Community³,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) No 995/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 October 2010 laying down the obligations of operators who place timber and timber products on the market⁴ (EU Timber Regulation),
- having regard to Regulation (EU) 2023/1115 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 31 May 2023 on the making available on the Union market and the export from the Union of certain commodities and products associated with deforestation and forest degradation and repealing Regulation (EU) No 995/2010⁵ (EU Deforestation Regulation),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 7 November 2024 on the Strategic Framework for International Cooperation Engagement in the context of Regulation (EU) 2023/1115 on the making available on the Union market and the export from the Union of certain commodities and products associated with deforestation and forest degradation⁶,
- having regard to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and in particular Goal 15, which aims to protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss,
- having regard to its resolution of 15 January 2020 on the European Green Deal⁷,
- having regard to the Paris Agreement and to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework on halting and reversing nature loss,

² OJ L 191, 19.7.2012, p. 3.

³ OJ L 347, 30.12.2005, p. 1, ELI:
<http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2005/2173/oj>.

⁴ OJ L 295, 12.11.2010, p. 23, ELI:
<http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2010/995/oj>.

⁵ OJ L 150, 9.6.2023, p. 206, ELI:
<http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2023/1115/oj>.

⁶ OJ C, C/2024/6604, 7.11.2024, ELI:
<http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2024/6604/oj>.

⁷ OJ C 270, 7.7.2021, p. 2.

- having regard to its resolution of 16 September 2020 on the EU's role in protecting and restoring the world's forests⁸,
 - having regard to its resolution of 22 October 2020 with recommendations to the Commission on an EU legal framework to halt and reverse EU-driven global deforestation⁹,
 - having regard to its legislative resolution of 17 June 2026¹⁰ on the draft decision,
 - having regard to Rule 107(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on International Trade (A10-0146/2026),
- A. whereas the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) between the European Union and the Republic of Liberia on forest law enforcement, governance and trade in timber products (FLEGT) to the European Union entered into force on 1 December 2013;
- B. whereas Liberia's forests cover approximately 68 % of its national territory and make up more than half of West Africa's remaining tropical forests; whereas according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, most of the forests found in Liberia are primary or naturally regenerated forests; whereas Global Forest Watch reports that between 2021 and 2024, 98 % of tree cover loss in Liberia occurred in natural forests, with a total loss of 589 000 hectares; whereas based on data from Global Forest Watch, between 2001 and 2022, Liberia lost 2.2 million hectares of forest, equivalent to a 23 % decrease in vegetation cover since 2000; whereas illegal logging and forest conversion, enabled by poor forest governance and driven by trade, are major contributors to deforestation; whereas 0,39 % of forest cover was lost between 2010 and 2020;
- C. whereas deforestation and forest degradation are aggravating factors in the ongoing climate and biodiversity crises; whereas illegal logging has significant negative economic, environmental and social impacts, results, in particular, in the loss of public revenue and benefits for forest-dependent communities, and is often linked to conflicts over land and resources, the disempowerment of local and indigenous communities, corruption and armed conflicts;
- D. whereas Liberia should comply with the applicable EU legal framework when exporting timber and timber products to the EU; whereas the Commission should support Liberia in its endeavour to comply with the EU Timber Regulation and prepare for the

⁸ OJ C 385, 22.9.2021, p. 10.

⁹ OJ C 404, 6.10.2021, p. 175.

¹⁰ Texts adopted, P10_TA(2026)0209.

implementation of the EU Deforestation Regulation, set to apply from December 2026;

- E. whereas the purpose of FLEGT VPAs is to bring about systemic changes in forest governance, law enforcement, transparency and the inclusion of various stakeholders in the political decision-making process, specifically local communities and civil society organisations;
 - F. whereas Liberia's FLEGT licensing scheme is not yet in place and its Timber Legality Assurance System remains non-operational, implying that the VPA between the EU and Liberia is not yet operational;
 - G. whereas FLEGT VPAs are bilateral, legally binding trade agreements that commit the EU and the partner country to eliminating trade in illegally sourced timber; whereas they provide a unique combination of trade levers and governance reform; whereas the VPA has provided a basis for dialogue and cooperation between the EU and Liberia, and has delivered some results, including regulatory reform, capacity building, reinforced benefit sharing, improved traceability, increased accountability and expanded civic space in forest governance; whereas Liberia has not fully met its VPA obligations and has not achieved its core objective over the last 13 years; whereas Ghana issued its first FLEGT license in August 2025 – the first African country to do so – after 16 years of work towards its implementation;
 - H. whereas the Liberia-EU VPA entered into force in 2013; whereas in May 2025, Liberia expressed its interest in transitioning from a VPA to a forest partnership focusing on community forests, sustainable production, biodiversity protection and legal reforms;
 - I. whereas in its communication of 7 November 2024 on the strategic framework for international cooperation engagement, the Commission suggested that forest partnerships could build on or even replace VPAs; whereas VPAs and forest partnerships are two distinct instruments, different in nature and scope; whereas forest partnerships are non-binding umbrella partnerships, expanding beyond timber licensing and the forest governance sector, and as such are complementary instruments to VPAs;
1. Highlights the fact that illegal and unsustainable logging, deforestation and forest degradation have profound negative environmental consequences and detrimental impacts on human development, undermining economic stability, health and social cohesion, particularly for vulnerable populations and indigenous communities;
 2. Highlights the fact that the environmental damage caused by deforestation and forest degradation will have hugely negative social

and economic consequences for communities, notably the loss of income and resources, an increase in poverty and economic and social inequalities at the expense of small-scale farmers, the displacement of communities, and land conflicts resulting in the loss of traditional ways of life;

3. Underlines that the Global Gateway strategy should support Liberia in promoting sustainable, inclusive and green development throughout its territory;
4. Recalls that sustainable and inclusive forest management and governance are essential for achieving the objectives set out in the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework on halting and reversing nature loss;
5. Recalls that VPAs provide an important legal framework for both the EU and its partner countries, and that they require effective multi-stakeholder dialogue and good cooperation with and commitment from the countries concerned; recalls that the EU-Liberia VPA has resulted in improvements, including in stakeholder participation in government processes and forestry reform, but that unfortunately this progress has not been consistent over the last 13 years; regrets the lack of progress in the implementation of the VPA with Liberia, especially with regard to the establishment of an operational FLEGT licensing scheme and a timber legality assurance system;
6. Highlights that in order to address weak governance, ineffective law enforcement, insecure land tenures, lack of access to finance, shrinking civic space and corruption, the EU must meaningfully engage relevant stakeholders, such as indigenous people and local communities, with a view to overcoming regulatory implementation hurdles regarding transparency and traceability;
7. Underlines the importance of including multi-stakeholder mechanisms that bring together civil society, private sector and local authorities in decision-making processes, of benefit-sharing with local communities and of reinforcing security and accountability; stresses that decisions concerning the future of EU-Liberia cooperation on forests should be accompanied by timely information-sharing and meaningful engagement with civil society; notes that civil society organisations in both the EU and Liberia have expressed serious concerns about the Commission's proposal to terminate the VPA; calls on the Commission to strengthen the Joint Implementation Committee by guaranteeing adequate funding and customised capacity-building initiatives to enable civil society organisations, indigenous people and local communities to actively participate in any future forest partnerships;

8. Underlines that proof of timber legality is increasingly being included in market regulations worldwide; stresses that countries all over the world that either have or aim to have regulated import markets for legal timber would benefit from cooperating with each other and, where possible, endorsing each other's rules and systems, such as the EU's FLEGT VPAs; emphasises that establishing international standards and systems that promote legal timber would be more effective in this regard and would promote long-term legal security for businesses and consumers;
9. Highlights that in order to address the root causes of deforestation, such as rising global consumption and demand for agricultural commodities, timber and mining, undue influence of certain actors in the timber industry and other groups with vested interests, weak governance, ineffective law enforcement, insecure land tenures, lack of access to finance, shrinking civic space and corruption, the EU and its partner countries must carry out joint assessments based on the meaningful engagement of stakeholders, including indigenous people and local communities, with a view to overcoming regulatory implementation hurdles regarding transparency and traceability; highlights the need to conduct an independent, in-depth diagnostic assessment of the evolution of forest governance in Liberia and to ensure that the relevant experiences and lessons learned from the VPA process inform any decisions on the future of the agreement and are integrated into any future partnership;
10. Regrets the need to end the legally binding VPA with Liberia and stresses the need for the Commission to keep engaging with the Government of Liberia on forestry; points out the negative impact that its termination could have on civic space, as the VPA has contributed to the facilitation of dialogue between the Government of Liberia and civil society in recent years; underlines that the EU remains a committed partner of Liberia in fostering economic growth and comprehensive human development; calls on the Commission and the European External Action Service to engage in dialogue with the authorities of Liberia to explore possibilities for constructive cooperation based on areas of mutual interest, combat illegal logging, support forest conservation and boost economic cooperation and trade;
11. Calls on the Commission to explore complementary initiatives, in close dialogue with Liberia, including through the development of a forest partnership as a framework for continued dialogue and cooperation to ensure the legality of timber and timber products originating from Liberia and to properly address the problem of illegal logging, while taking into account the recent positive developments in Liberia regarding government and stakeholder involvement, ensuring that the progress made is pursued, encouraged and strengthened, and not lost due to the termination of the VPA;

12. Calls on the Commission, before the transmission of the written notification of the termination of the VPA to Liberia, in line with the principles of effectiveness of EU external action and sincere cooperation, to present to Parliament and to the EU-Liberia VPA Joint Implementation Committee a fully fledged transition roadmap setting out the objectives, targets, negotiation timeline, governance structure and inclusive stakeholder consultation arrangements for future cooperation with Liberia in the form of a forest partnership, so as to ensure that the progress already achieved in stakeholder participation, benefit-sharing and legal reform is not lost; stresses that the termination of the VPA must not take effect until a successor forest partnership has been concluded, in order to avoid a vacuum in cooperation between the EU and Liberia on sustainable and inclusive forest management and governance, and to ensure continuity of governance, accountability and stakeholder participation; therefore insists that negotiations on the successor forest partnership be conducted without delay and concluded as a matter of urgency, at the latest one year after the transmission of the written notification of termination to Liberia;
13. Calls on the Commission to ensure full continuation of the inclusive and participatory governance structures of the VPA, including the Joint Implementation Committee and Liberia Implementation Committee, including under the memorandum of understanding underpinning the future forest partnership, and by supporting Liberia's ongoing forest reforms, such as the National Forest Reform Law, which represents an opportunity for Liberia to embed these structures into national law; stresses that such a future forest partnership should contain strong accountability and enforcement mechanisms, including local grievance and feedback mechanisms; calls on the Commission to design and embed detailed indicators for impact assessments and social benefits into forest partnership compliance and evaluation requirements; insists that the forest partnership build on VPA governance structures, including multi-stakeholder platforms, legality verification tools and community participation mechanisms; stresses the need to ensure full transparency and meaningful, non-discriminatory participation of all stakeholders systematically throughout the negotiation, development and implementation of such a forest partnership, notably through the VPA multi-stakeholder platforms, involving, in particular, civil society, local and international non-governmental organisations, the private sector including microenterprises and other small and medium-sized enterprises, local authorities, farmers, indigenous people and local communities, environmental and human rights defenders and trade unions;
14. Stresses the importance of parliamentary oversight and the monitoring of VPAs by Parliament's Committee on International Trade; underlines the need for the meaningful, continuous and timely involvement of Parliament in assessing the implementation of

existing VPAs, as well as in negotiating, signing and implementing any potential future forest partnerships; regrets the lack of a formal role for Parliament in the conclusion and implementation of existing forest partnerships; asks the Commission to regularly report to Parliament on the implementation of the EU's VPAs and forest partnerships, including on the work of the joint implementation committees and on the strategies to be pursued in the coming years; calls on the Commission to revise its FLEGT Working Group's terms of reference to require regular reporting on forest partnerships and to include representatives from civil society organisations based in countries with forest partnerships; further calls for the regular publication of meeting summaries of discussions on forest partnerships, accompanied by strategic roadmaps and budgets that incorporate clear and measurable performance indicators;

15. Underlines that VPAs continue to provide an important legal framework for both the EU and its partner countries, which has been made possible through good cooperation with and commitment from the countries concerned; stresses that the EU should remain fully committed to existing VPAs and should support partner countries in their implementation, including through technical assistance and financial support; stresses furthermore the importance of assisting with the implementation of the EU Deforestation Regulation, providing technical assistance and regulatory guidance to partner countries and helping to align trade practices with environmental standards, particularly in sectors such as timber, cocoa and tropical agriculture; calls on the Commission to assess the implementation of existing VPAs, including by assessing the differing degrees of implementation in order to ensure a better adapted and more effective methodology in the future;
16. Calls on the Commission to ensure coherence between the EU's trade and sustainability frameworks when engaging with Liberia;
17. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the European External Action Service, the governments and parliaments of the Member States and the Government and Parliament of the Republic of Liberia.