

Forests of Romania, destroyed in a snatch: new blockboard factory makes us RETCH¹

Civil society reacts to illegal logging, being aware of its catastrophic effects, favoured by functional sideslip of state institutions. The Forests of Romania are public, national and european wealth. Forest exploitation and treatment not respecting national interest is contrary to the Romanian State and society and seriously affects national security.

Based on constitutional rights and the rights conferred by international treaties Romania is part of, **we request:**

1. Stop illegal logging

“**Illegal logging** is a pervasive problem of major international concern. It poses a significant threat to forests as it contributes to the process of deforestation and forest degradation, which is responsible for about 20 % of global CO2 emissions, threatens biodiversity, and undermines sustainable forest management and development including the commercial viability of operators acting in accordance with applicable legislation. It also contributes to desertification and soil erosion and can exacerbate extreme weather events and flooding. In addition, it has social, political and economic implications, often undermining progress towards good governance and threatening the livelihood of local forest-dependent communities, and it **can be linked to armed conflicts**².”

2. Maintaining and improving “Forest Radar” programme

Informatic and procedure system improvements are required, as well as effective and strict monitoring by specific control institutions.

There still exist many “ways of escape”:

Traders make multiple use of the unique code generated by the “forest radar”, despite being stopped by police for control, as police do not fill the section meant to prove that transport has been verified.

Police do not cover all requests for transportation control, and when they do, the loaded quantity of wood often exceeds the one notified on paper, pertaining to the unique code generated by the program. The difference between scriptural and real value represents illegal logging, reaching up to 30% of the total transported volume. In these cases, as police do not have competences for evaluating wood cubic volume, they check transportation as legal.

3. Protection of Virgin and Quasivirgin Forests and Natural Parks

Ensuring effective protection of Virgin and Quasivirgin Forests of Romania by establishing a “National Catalogue of Virgin and Quasivirgin Forests”, as a managing instrument, by order

¹ Word Game: in Romanian language, the pronunciation of RETCH is the same as the name of the village where the newest Schweighofer Holzindustrie factory was built and is functioning, RECI, in the county of Covasna

² According to EU Parliament Regulation 995/2010, 20th of October 2010

of the public authority in charge of forestry. For acknowledgement of their exceptional value and long-term protection, virgin and quasivirgin forests will be included in UNESCO World Heritage, scientific reservations and/or integrated in national or natural parks strictly protected areas.

4. Unblock forestry corruption case files

Thousands of criminal case files of forestry or illegal logging, transportation or wood trading are currently blocked in prosecutors' or NAD (National Anticorruption Directorate) drawers, along with poaching, corruption, illegal retrocessions case files. Then, there are illegal acquisition, fake auction, fake public investment case files.

5. Strengthening forestry control institutions

Improvement of control and leading institutions by ensuring: (I) appropriate amenities; (ii) appropriate qualified personnel; (iii) attractive salaries; (iv) effective and transparent control procedures.

6. Elaboration of National Forestry Strategy and National Afforestation Programme

Since 2011, Romania no longer has a National Forestry Strategy. Without it, we are acting “blindly”, according to momentary interest and pride.

The afforested area of Romania is below European average (27% as opposed to 32%) and far from climate change/desertification evaluation standards (40%).

During the last 10 years, the average of the annual afforested area was 4.000 ha/year, while Forest Law imposes 2 milion ha until 2035. Elaborating and financing the National Afforestation Programme, imposed by the Forest Law, is a priority.

Any afforestation programme is compromised as long as agriculture subsidies reach hundreds of euros yearly, while forestry use remains zero. Extra funds for forest areas are required.

7. Establishing antimonopoly measures for wood industry, eradicating dominant position and monopoly abuses, as well as establishing regulation for long-term development of local wood industry

Forest Law to list principles forming legislation for wood valorisation (from public propriety forests), in order to lead to development of superiour wood processing sector and create balanced competition market, in the benefit of long-term development of local communities:

- a) superiour capitalization of wood;
- b) support for rural development by promoting local wood industry;
- c) establishing antimonopoly measures;
- d) respect for the rights of local communities;
- e) conservation and improvement of environmental services and biodiversity;
- f) transparency in wood marketing.

We request:

- i. Competition Council to start an investigation on the economic concentration generated by Holzindustrie Schweighofer through their investment in Reci – Covasna;
- ii. investigation on this company's commercial practices;
- iii. **stop the construction/functioning of the factory in Reci, Covasna** and a detailed analysis regarding legal status of authorizations, as well as accordance with EIA Directive (Environmental Impact Assessment) 2011/92/EU (EIA) and SEA Directive (Strategic Environmental Assessment) 2001/42/EC.

8. Compensatory payments for protected forest owners

Establishing an effective compensatory payment system for private forest owners to fully compensate.

For unrealised gains due to legal restrictions for protection. Compensating for protection functions of forest owners must consider direct and indirect environment service beneficiaries.

9. Appropriate financing of forest sector for balancing protection and exploitation

Forest, the main creator of a healthy environment and fight against climate change, is treated by the fiscal law as a polluter, having to pay taxes for environment and natural resources. Forests were practically excluded from the National Rural Development and Environment Fund Programme.

Appropriate budgetary, extrabudgetary and European funding is required for appropriate management of forest sector and Environment Fund for maximizing forest protection.

10. Stop modification of Hunting Bill – a massacre of the right to property and fauna!

In its actual form, the hunting law breaks several constitutional principles regarding property right and national principles derived from European directives:

- a) breaking the right to property;
- b) breaking protection principles for 5 wild bird species by extending hunting season;
- c) breaking protection principles for hunted animals in protected areas.

Petition: “Save the forest”

This press release and the [petition](#) for stopping illegal logging and adopting the Forest Law without the presidential amendments, are supported by civil society and:

[2Celsius](#)

[Agent Green](#)

[Bankwatch România](#)

[Greenpeace România](#)

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