
Green Deal: EU Commission approves new initiatives on deforestation, waste management and protection of the soil

A few days after the end of Cop26, “Europe goes on”, and it does it “with effective actions”, as an expression of “taking our responsibilities at home as well as in international contexts”. This is how the deputy president, Frans Timmermans, opened the presentation of the set of initiatives that have been approved by the EU Commission earlier today about three issues “that citizens have at heart”: deforestation, waste management and protection of the soil. From 1990 to 2020, “the world has lost 420 million hectares of forests, an area bigger than the EU”, explained Timmermans, to meet the demand for soya, palm oil, wood, cocoa, coffee, beef. The measures that have been presented today will create a “system” whereby only products that have not involved any deforestation will get into the EU market. So, the companies will have to apply “due diligence”, and the EU Commission will assess the countries and their risk of deforestation and forest degradation in connection with the raw materials to which the regulation applies. These measures will be binding on the EU on the international scene as well. As to waste shipment rules, the intention is to make recycling easier and incineration more difficult, so stricter rules will be enforced, for instance on the destination facilities: they will have to show that they manage waste in an environmentally proper way. This will help boost recycling and circular economy. A “EU group to monitor the lawfulness of waste shipments” will be created too, to fight illegal waste trafficking. As to soil, since “70% of the EU’s farmland is not in a good state”, now the intention is to enforce measures to protect, reclaim and make sustainable use of the soil. The target: that all of the Earth’s ecosystems may be in good health by 2050. All this “without compromising on development”, Timmermans ensured.

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