



Brussels, 24 April 2018
18ENV063

FEDIOL short statement

A feasibility study to step up action against deforestation

FEDIOL welcomes the publication of a "*Study on the feasibility of options to step up EU action to combat deforestation and forest degradation*", as it seems to acknowledge the complexity of the problem of global deforestation, its multiple underlying causes and drivers and to recognise the need for an overarching approach to the issue.

For over a decade, FEDIOL members have been active in moving supply chains towards more sustainable practices, mainly in the palm oil and the soybean sectors. These efforts show positive results, but need to be reinforced to meet climate change and biodiversity objectives, as part of existing commitments under the UN Sustainable Development Goals. For FEDIOL, tackling deforestation requires collaboration, joint efforts and dialogue between all parties involved, including governments and public administration.

The authors of the study suggest three options which might be implemented by the European Commission to address the issue. However, none of the options seem to provide a credible set of actions for a coherent policy initiative. Should the European Commission decide to move forward, FEDIOL considers that the first logical step would be to consult stakeholders about workable and effective sets of actions.

There are, however, several interventions which could prove helpful as part of an overall strategy and supportive of the actions that the private sector is already undertaking: for instance, supply side actions aimed at supporting smallholder producers in risk geographies can be particularly effective for crops such as palm oil. Moreover, helping jurisdictions to strengthen sustainable forest management and land use planning would offer an enabling environment for all involved stakeholders. Also, a possible stakeholders' forum to be set up by the European Commission could bring together public and private sector and civil society in order to exchange information, learn from existing initiatives and discuss the possibility for further joint progress.

Should the EU decide to give a push to this set of actions, FEDIOL believes it should build on and reinforce existing initiatives as well as governments' and private sector's actions at origin. Within this very complex framework, proposing a distinct new legislation focused exclusively on deforestation and targeting commodities would introduce restrictions and complications on imports to the European Union without fundamentally solving the issue of deforestation at origin, since there are enough non-deforestation crops available to serve the EU market.