

**EU trade**

## EU using incorrect data to map deforestation, warn exporters

Countries including Brazil and Australia urge Brussels to delay new rules that could ban key goods entering bloc



The EU law aims to prevent consumption within the bloc from causing deforestation beyond its borders by banning the import of products linked to cleared land © Jonne Roriz/Bloomberg

**Andy Bounds** and **Alice Hancock** in Brussels 4 HOURS AGO

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Brussels is using incorrect data for a far-reaching initiative to ban imports from deforested land. Australia and Brazil have alleged, as they step up demands for a

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“The EU’s map is not a single source of truth but acts as one possible source of information for EU operators and competent authorities to determine if deforestation has occurred,” said a spokesperson for the Australian embassy in Brussels.

They said there were differences between Canberra’s 2023 Forests of Australia [map](#) and a [2020 map](#) from the EU Observatory on [deforestation](#) and forest degradation, because they used different definitions of forested areas.

The EU law aims to prevent consumption within the bloc from causing deforestation beyond its borders by banning the import of products made from cattle, wood, cocoa, soy, palm oil, coffee and rubber linked to cleared land. Trade in these goods and related products was worth about €126bn in 2022, according to S&P Global.

The rules, agreed by EU policymakers in December 2022, also apply internally to EU countries but have been opposed by more than 20 of the bloc’s agricultural ministries for the administrative burden that it will heap on their countries’ foresters and farmers.



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The Australian embassy said Brussels had yet to publish guidance on how to comply with the rules and several member states had not yet nominated a national authority to police imports.

“Australian producers need to prepare for export to Europe months before the year-end deadline to account for shipping time, yet significant questions remain such as clarification about what counts as a predominantly agricultural land use,” the embassy said, adding that it had requested a delay in implementing the rules “until all required arrangements are understood and effectively in place”.

“Our private sector has documented multiple cases of cocoa and coffee plantations, as well as commercially grown tree plantations, that are misidentified as forests,” said Pedro Miguel da Costa e Silva, Brazil’s ambassador to the EU.

Diplomats said at least three other countries including Canada had complained about the maps. Australia, Brazil and Colombia are among the countries to have joined the US in calling for the [EU to delay the legislation](#). Two European commissioners have backed a pause until there is more comprehensive guidance for countries on how to comply.

“European operators and competent authorities should co-operate with producer governments to use local monitoring systems that have much higher precision rates,” Da Costa e Silva said, adding Brazil had a free-to-use “state of the art” monitoring system.

He criticised the EU’s “imposition of European standards and norms on other countries” without collaboration and warned that producers would have to spend millions of euros on private sector compliance systems.

Colombia’s Institute of Hydrology, Meteorology and Environmental Studies said it tracked deforestation in a similar way to the EU, but the latter’s definition “would also include areas that are not considered as deforestation in Colombia, for example the conversion of areas of secondary vegetation”.

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The commission in March agreed to delay the classification of countries as having either “[low](#)”, “[standard](#)” or “[high](#)” [deforestation risks](#), a system that will eventually determine the amount of customs checks required for imports.

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