EU Timber Regulation

The European Union Timber Regulations (EUTR) were instigated in 2013 with the intention that illegally harvested timber, and products made from illegally harvested timber, cannot be sold in the European Union. Illegal timber has no place in the Paper Industry and the Confederation of Paper Industries (CPI), representing the paper manufacturing sector in the UK, supported the introduction of the new legislation.

Essentially, EUTR requires that those placing regulated product onto the market operate supply chain monitoring and assessment to ensure that timber has been legally harvested in the originating country.

Enforcement is by Member States, with the UK Regulator being the National Measurement Office (NMO).
Papermaking in the UK is not seen as a high-risk sector, and so any over-regulation could cause a disproportionate red tape burden, especially for fibre-based products where supply chains can be complex and the risk of illegally harvested material is low.

The Regulations require periodic review of the scheme operation and the first such review has now been published and can be found at:

ec.europa.eu/environment/forests/timber_regulation.htm?dm_i=1TYD,41K1E,BFVN36,EPZPQ,1

CPI welcomes the reported progress in preventing illegal material entering the European market. However, we continue to express concern over the uneven implementation between Member States and, in particular, no move to close the loophole due to the limited coverage of the legislation.

While a number of different timber-based products are not covered by the current legislation, the loophole of most concern to the UK Papermaking Industry is the exemption for printed products, such as books, magazines and other products of the Printing Industry.

Printers in the UK, quite rightly, are required to ensure the legality of the paper they use. Yet printers outside the European Union, that can be based in locations where illegally harvested timber products are present, have no such requirement – even when they are exporting to the UK.

While this exemption has never been sensible, the increasing imports of printed materials from potentially problematic areas means the loophole needs to be closed. As part of the consultation process to inform the review, a wide range of environmental and industry groups called for this issue to be addressed, and it is disappointing to see no proposals in the review.

The Confederation of European Paper Industries (CEPI) and the European Federation for Print and Digital Communications (INTERGRAF) have jointly written to the Commission raising their concerns on this issue.

A copy of the letter can be viewed on CPI's website at: www.paper.org.uk/news/2016/160225TimmermansVella.pdf

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NOTES TO EDITORS

- The Confederation of Paper Industries (CPI) is the leading trade association representing the UK's Paper-based Industries, comprising recovered paper merchants, paper and board manufacturers and converters, corrugated packaging producers, and makers of soft tissue papers.

- CPI represents an industry with an aggregate annual turnover of £6.5 billion, 25,000 direct and more than 100,000 indirect employees.

- For facts on the UK's Paper-based Industries please visit: www.paper.org.uk.