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European Organisation of Agricultural, Rural and Forestry Contractors

Confédération Européenne des Entrepreneurs de Travaux Techniques Agricoles, Ruraux et Forestiers

Europäischer Zentralverband der land- und forstwirtschaftlichen Lohnunternehmer und ländlichen Dienstleistungsunternehmer

Brussels, 12<sup>th</sup> of May 2026

## **EUDR Simplification Package: a welcome step, but still not workable enough for contractors**

### **CEETAR Statement**

The European Confederation of Agricultural, Rural and Forestry Contractors (CEETAR) takes note of the European Commission's EUDR simplification package, published on 4 May 2026. We welcome the effort to bring clarity through updated guidance, FAQs, refinements to the product scope and improvements to the EUDR Information System.

CEETAR remains fully committed to the environmental objectives of the EUDR. Fighting deforestation and forest degradation is essential, and European agricultural, rural and forestry contractors have a direct interest in healthy forests, sustainable land management and resilient rural economies.

But simplification must also work in practice. On this point, CEETAR shares the concerns expressed by CEPF and by the wider farming and forestry community, including Copa-Cogeca, ELO, FECOF, UEF and USSE. The package is a step forward — it does not yet solve the structural problems faced by primary operators, small forest owners, cooperatives, associations and the contractors who work alongside them.

For contractors, the issue is simple. Even when they are not the legal operator placing timber on the market, they are very often the people doing the work on the ground: harvesting, forwarding, managing plots, operating machinery, collecting geolocation data, recording quantities, producing the practical information that feeds into due diligence systems. This field-level burden is not adequately reflected in the Commission's assessment. A reduction in compliance costs for formal operators does not automatically mean a reduction in workload for rural SMEs — in practice, additional reporting obligations on forest owners and primary operators translate into more time spent by contractors on documentation, repeated data collection, operational delays, and payment uncertainty.

It is also important to recognise that contractors are not only service providers working behind a forest owner or primary operator. In a significant number of cases, contractors themselves buy standing timber, harvest it and place the resulting wood products on the market. In these situations, contractors are the operator within the meaning of the Regulation and carry the full weight of EUDR due diligence obligations directly on their own shoulders. Many of these



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contracting businesses are SMEs with limited administrative capacity, and the cumulative effect of these obligations on their day-to-day operations must not be underestimated. Any simplification effort therefore needs to address both situations: contractors acting as service providers within someone else's due diligence chain, and contractors acting as operators in their own right.

CEETTAR therefore calls for further targeted simplification before the EUDR enters into application. We ask the EU institutions to:

- **Recognise the practical role of contractors in EUDR implementation.** Contractors should not become the hidden administrative layer of the Regulation without clear rules, workable procedures and appropriate recognition of their role in the value chain, whether they act as service providers or as operators themselves.
- **Ensure full interoperability between the EUDR Information System and national forestry, cadastral and harvest-declaration databases.** Data that already exists in national systems should not have to be collected again manually at field level.
- **Recognise existing certification and chain-of-custody systems, including PEFC and FSC.** These should be used to reduce duplication and provide a practical basis for legality and traceability checks.

CEETTAR supports the objective of making supply chains deforestation-free. But a regulation that depends on field-level implementation must be designed around field-level realities. Contractors stand ready to contribute — the rules just need to be simple, interoperable and workable for the rural SMEs who will make the EUDR function in practice.

We therefore urge the Commission, Parliament and Council to continue the simplification process and to address the remaining shortcomings before the Regulation applies at the end of 2026.