

EUDR Regulation and FSC Certification: Timber Traceability Reaches Construction

The European Union has turned into a legal obligation what the sustainable timber sector already practised voluntarily. The EUDR regulation and FSC certification set the new standard for forestry traceability.

The European Union has taken a decisive step in the fight against deforestation with the new EUDR (European Union Deforestation Regulation). The regulation seeks to ensure that products placed on the European market do not contribute to deforestation or forest degradation, one of the most serious environmental problems on a global scale. For the timber construction sector, the requirement translates into something concrete: proving, document by document, where each piece of wood comes from.

What the EUDR is and why it matters

The EUDR originates in the European Union's growing concern about the role its market plays in global deforestation. It was proposed in response to the impact that demand for certain products, such as timber, palm oil and cocoa, has on tropical forests and other valuable ecosystems. The EUDR is an evolution of the FLEGT regulation (Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade), implemented to combat illegal logging and guarantee the sustainability of forestry products imported into the EU.

The EUDR was adopted in December 2022, following the 2019 communication titled "Stepping up EU action to protect and restore the world's forests", and began entering into force progressively from 2023. The regulation requires companies to prove that their products do not come from recently deforested land, with the aim of reducing the EU's ecological footprint and contributing to the fight against climate change.

Its scope goes beyond timber. The regulation applies to a list of specific products, such as soy, palm oil, cocoa, coffee and beef and, among others, timber. The goal is to reduce the deforestation associated with the production of these goods, particularly in regions such as the Amazon, Southeast Asia and Africa.

The regulation's objectives

The EUDR was created with three clear objectives:

- **Protecting forests:** eliminating deforestation from supply chains and protecting tropical, temperate and boreal forests.

- **Reducing the EU's footprint:** ensuring that consumption within the European Union does not contribute to the destruction of forests, which are essential for mitigating climate change.
- **Traceability and transparency:** companies must guarantee the traceability of their products, from production to final sale in Europe, which demands greater transparency in the supply chain and allows consumers to make more informed decisions.

How it affects the construction sector

Timber is an essential material in the construction of sustainable timber houses, one of the sectors most directly affected by this regulation. Construction or timber-processing companies wishing to import wood into the EU will have to certify that it does not come from recently deforested land. The requirement includes measures to guarantee that the timber is sourced sustainably, respecting both natural resources and local communities.

To comply with the regulation, many companies choose materials that already hold sustainability certifications, such as FSC-certified timber (Forest Stewardship Council), a seal that guarantees the wood comes from responsibly managed forests. In this way, the EUDR regulation and FSC certification complement each other to secure sustainability in the timber house construction industry. This is precisely the foundation of systems such as the Eskimohaus®, where material traceability is part of the quality process from the very source.

The global impact of a European regulation

The environment and the climate crisis know no borders. That is why regulations with reach and pressure are needed, acting beyond the administrative limits of the European Union. Implementing the EUDR will have a global impact, not only within the EU but also in the regions that produce natural resources. This effect helps to:

- **Protect biodiversity:** tropical forests host a large number of threatened species, and control over the origin of forestry products prevents the destruction of these habitats.
- **Encourage reforestation:** pressure from regulations such as the EUDR incentivises reforestation practices and better forest management worldwide.
- **Mitigate climate change:** forests are one of the planet's main carbon sinks. Deforestation contributes enormously to greenhouse gas emissions, and reducing it is essential to meeting global climate targets.

The relationship between the EUDR and FSC certification

Until now, companies dedicated to building sustainable timber houses worked while respecting FSC certification, which guarantees that for every tree felled another is planted. At PAPIK Group this practice is accompanied by an additional effort to use local, proximity-sourced raw material. It is a requirement that, for the time being, the Catalan timber industry still cannot fully supply, despite becoming increasingly industrialised: proximity timber often comes from the Basque Country, France or Austria, places with a fully operational forestry sector.

While the EUDR takes a legal and mandatory approach, FSC certification offers a complementary and voluntary solution for companies that want to ensure their practices are sustainable. The FSC seal guarantees that timber is sourced responsibly, ensuring:

- **Sustainable forest management:** forests are managed under criteria that preserve biodiversity, soil and water.
- **Respect for local communities:** forestry operations do not negatively affect local populations or their rights over the land.
- **Quality products:** FSC timber is recognised worldwide for its high quality and sustainability.

Companies that already use FSC-certified timber are therefore in a favourable position to comply with the EUDR. Seals such as FSC simplify the verification process, since they provide guarantees about the origin of materials and their sustainability. The consistency of this approach can also be traced in our view of the wood revolution as the structural material of the future.

How compliance is guaranteed

Companies that import or trade timber or other products regulated by the EUDR must follow a series of procedures to ensure they meet the requirements:

- **Auditing the supply chain:** ensuring that suppliers use sustainable practices and that product traceability is well documented.
- **Choosing certified materials:** selecting products with FSC or other sustainability certifications makes compliance easier.
- **Implementing verification systems:** using systems that guarantee products meet traceability and sustainability requirements.

The EUDR is a decisive measure by the European Union to combat global deforestation and align the European market with climate and sustainability goals. It represents a considerable responsibility for companies that trade products such as timber, but it also opens an opportunity to move towards more sustainable practices. Choosing certified materials such as FSC timber is an effective way to guarantee compliance and contribute to a more responsible future.

At PAPIK Group we have committed to sustainability since our founding. Seeing what we believed in and shared become the regulatory standard confirms a direction we will maintain: to keep building the houses of the future with materials whose origin we know.

Timber traceability has stopped being a voluntary added value and become a legal requirement. Those who already built to that standard need not change course, only document it.