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One strategic investment would stop illegal logging in Romania and close the infringement

Romania must urgently invest in intelligent video monitoring systems to allow the digital measurement of the harvested wood and to create its digital footprint, shows the [WWF report](#) based on professionals' and the civil society's answers within "The EU forest crime initiative" project. These investments, for which WWF has already developed a [functional pilot project](#), would be the answer the European Union is expecting from Romania to close the infringement and would stop illegal logging.

[WWF's recommendations](#) to improve law enforcement against forestry crimes target mainly the European Union, respectively each authority within the law enforcement chain. It is the case of the security and control staff within the forestry administration, of the Forestry Guards, of the Police, Customs, Prosecution or the Justice Offices.

The **main problems** identified by WWF are:

- The current control system based on marking and stump location must be urgently transformed into a system oriented towards the [control of the wood placed on the market](#) and must use the graphic footprint of wood transports. The wood is now sold as "standing stock", directly in the wood, and errors regarding wood volumes exceed 20%.
- In case of an investigation, controls are neither made in the areas with the highest risk for illegal logging, nor based on objective and transparent criteria. Less than 1% of the wood transports are verified.
- SUMAL 2.0 gives operators the possibility to transport a higher volume of wood than written in the contract.
- The judiciary system focuses too much on small loggers instead of focusing on large players. The lack of success in solving forestry crimes cases is obvious. The current system is costly, slow, imprecise, inefficient and lacks results in court.

Context:

The current challenges are numerous and systemic: poverty, corruption and conflicts of interests, political interference in the forestry sector, lack of infrastructure to apply a sustainable forestry management, lack of a national forestry strategy and a legal framework that imposes useless administrative tasks, wastes resources and tolerates illegal logging.

Some of these challenges require urgent solutions, as in the case of the infringement against Romania for not respecting the [EUTR](#) norms. That is why the country needs an active and constructive collaboration among institutions and the civil society to stop illegal logging and implement correctly the Reg. (UE) 995/2010 (EUTR).

About the project:

The project “The EU forest crime initiative”, in partnership with INTERPOL and Client Earth, is implemented in 6 countries: Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Romania, Slovakia and Ukraine. Its target is to make law enforcement more efficient by stimulating the networks that are capable of detecting forest crime and to act on it. The project includes a comprehensive analysis on the existing flaws in fighting against forest crimes, as well as recommendations on how to approach the problems.

In Romania, WWF plans to understand the forest crime phenomenon better by analyzing the deficiencies and challenges along the law enforcement chain. It also analyzes the opportunities to make the control and guard system more efficient, to support the forest governance frameworks and to improve the law that fights illegal logging.