

The background of the entire page is a close-up photograph of a tree trunk, showing the rough, cracked texture of the bark. A thick, vibrant green brushstroke is painted across the middle of the image, starting from the left and extending towards the right, partially obscuring the bark. The title text is written in white on the green brushstroke.

# Illegal logging in Romania 2013-2014

**GREENPEACE**

October  
2015

## FOREWORD

Forests play a fundamental role for life on Earth and provide essential services to humankind. They contribute to people's physical and spiritual wellbeing via: oxygen production; carbon retention; water filtering and retention; protection against floods, erosion and landslides; protecting and sustaining biodiversity; wood, fibre and biomass production; contribution to the construction of cultural identity and spiritual values; providing a recreational frame etc. Even so, 80% of the world's forests have been degraded or destroyed.

The importance of the Romanian forests resides in their wealth of biodiversity. There are still a lot of wild, pristine, virgin forests teeming with unique flora and fauna. They host Europe's largest bear population, endangered and endemic species, as well as large carnivores such as lynx and wolves. The beech and mixed deciduous and coniferous forests are representative of the native composition of Europe's forests of old.

Romanian forest areas decreased dramatically in the 20th century, now constituting 27.45%<sup>1</sup> of country area, under the EU average of 32.4%<sup>2</sup> and well under the estimated optimum of 35%<sup>3</sup>. Currently the national forest fund amounts to 6,544,588 hectares<sup>4</sup>, half of which is public property of the Romanian State under the management of RNP – Romsilva R. A., while the other half is private property of the state, of the territorial administrative units, communities and individuals. About 415,000 hectares<sup>5</sup> of small private properties are not

administered and thus exposed to illegal logging.

A Greenpeace study on forest cover change in Romania between 2000 and 2011 shows that 280,108 hectares of forest have been lost or degraded. A 2015 update of the respective map shows that the rhythm of forest loss has maintained at the same level during 2012-2014.

The current report follows up our monitoring and reporting work, which began in the previous years with the publishing of two reports on illegal logging for 2009 – 2011 and 2012. The study looks at data on illegal logging cases that were identified and investigated by authorities; we need to stress that government reports indicate an average of 8.8 million m<sup>3</sup> of illegal wood per year in 2013 and 2014<sup>6</sup>, while the investigated cases only cover a portion of the above (1 011 892 mil. m<sup>3</sup>).

## ILLEGAL LOGGING CASES IN ROMANIA

In 2013 and 2014 Romanian authorities registered 45,509 cases of illegal logging. This is an average of 62 cases registered every day, indicating a constant increase from 30 cases daily in 2009 and 50 cases/day in 2012.

The counties with the highest number of illegal logging cases are Arges (12.85% of the total cases), Bacau (7.77%) and

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.insse.ro/cms/files/statistici/comunicate/com\\_anuale/silvicultura/silvicultura\\_r2014.pdf](http://www.insse.ro/cms/files/statistici/comunicate/com_anuale/silvicultura/silvicultura_r2014.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/forest/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/forest/index_en.htm)

<sup>3</sup> According to National Rural Development Plan 2014 – 2020

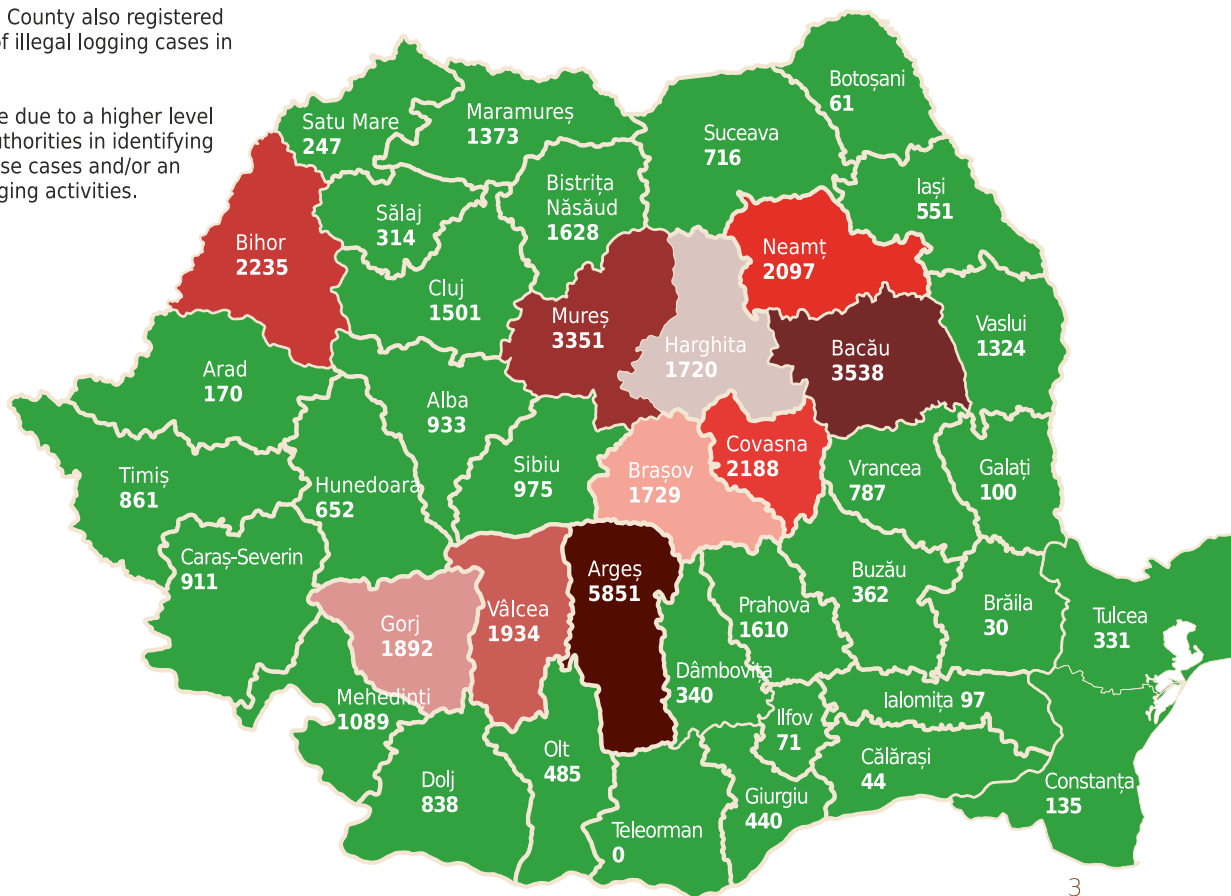
<sup>4</sup> [http://www.insse.ro/cms/files/statistici/comunicate/com\\_anuale/silvicultura/silvicultura\\_r2014.pdf](http://www.insse.ro/cms/files/statistici/comunicate/com_anuale/silvicultura/silvicultura_r2014.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.curteadeconturi.ro/Publicatii/economie7.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Emergency Ordinance no 35/2015 on the establishment of the Forest Guard

Mures (7.36%). Arges County also registered the highest number of illegal logging cases in 2009-2011.

The increase might be due to a higher level of efficiency of the authorities in identifying and documenting those cases and/or an increase in illegal logging activities.





**Table no. 1**  
**Number of illegal logging cases during 2013-2014,**  
**top 10 by county**

No.	County	Illegal logging cases
1	Argeş	5 851
2	Bacău	3 538
3	Mureş	3 351
4	Bihor	2 223
5	Covasna	2 188
6	Neamţ	2 097
7	Vâlcea	1 934
8	Gorj	1 892
9	Braşov	1 729
10	Harghita	1 720

In relation to the volume of the illegally logged timber, at the national level, between 2013-2014, the authorities identified 1,011,892 m3 illegally logged associated with the 45,509 cases described above. This represents an increase, from 120,836 m3 in 2012 and 452,842 m3 during 2009-2011.

This indicates an average volume of 22 m3/case, with significant differences, from cases with less than 1 m3 illegally logged, to cases with hundreds of m3.

When it comes to volumes of illegal wood, the situation is different, compared to the number of illegal logging cases.



Cluj, Alba and Maramures counties, while registering fewer cases of illegal logging compared to the counties mentioned above, indicate a high volume of m3, which makes them the top counties in terms of volume of illegal logging, with 251 m3/case in Cluj, 249 m3/case in Alba and 130 m3/case in Maramures, as shown in the table below.

**Table no. 2**  
**Volume of illegal logging in 2013-2014, top 3 by county**

County	Volume of illegal logging 2013-2014 (m³)	Average volume 2013-2014 (m³/case)
Cluj	377 455	178
Alba	232 388	249
Maramureş	178 535	130

These 3 counties (Cluj, Alba and Maramures) are responsible for 78% of the volume of illegally logged timber at the national level in 2013-2014, Cluj county alone indicating a rate of 37% of total volume, Alba 23% and Maramures 18%. This points to the need for authorities to develop and implement additional measures for the control, and especially prevention, of illegal logging activities.

In terms of damage, the total value at the national level for 2013-2014 was estimated by the authorities at RON 230,937,047 (approximately EUR 52.1 million). Consequent to the facts stated above, Cluj, Alba and Maramures counties registered the highest values, with RON 70,189 of damage/case in Alba, RON 52,742 /case in Cluj and RON 27,227/case in Maramures, as shown in table no. 3.

**Table no. 3: Damage of illegal logging during 2013-2014, top 3 by county**

County	Damage of illegal logging 2013-2014 (RON/Euro)	Average damage 2013-2014 (RON/Euro/case)
Cluj	79 165 257 / 17 863 003	52 742 / 11 900
Alba	65 485 883 / 14 776 362	70 189 / 15 837
Maramureş	37 382 331 / 8 435 022	27 227 / 6 143

Out of total damage at a national level in 2013-2014, Cluj County registered 34%, Alba 28% and Maramures 16%, with the three counties accounting for 79% of the damage.

## THE ROOT OF ILLEGAL LOGGING

In order to better understand the illegal logging phenomenon, Greenpeace Romania asked authorities to provide additional information related to the methods used to identify illegal logging cases, the difficulties encountered, and ways to prevent and reduce illegal logging. This analysis is based on 20 answers from the Police and Forest Guard.

In terms of methods used to identify illegal logging cases, all the respondents indicated regular field checks as well as information received from community members, forest owners or various institutions and organisations.

30% of respondents indicated that investigations are made difficult by the fact that complaints are sent to authorities with some delay, after the illegal logging took place. Also, 20% of respondents indicated that lack of evidence and the inability to identify authors add to difficulties in their investigations.

The lack of security measures taken by the forest owners is indicated by 55% of respondents as the main cause for the illegal logging. Even if the legislation stipulates that all forest owners are obliged to have contracts with specialised institutions in order to assure the security measures needed to prevent illegal logging, still, in reality there are many private forest owners that do not implement this.

50% of respondents indicated poverty as a driver of small scale illegal logging, which provides timber for heating or a source of income.

Related to the ways of conducting illegal logging, 35% of respondents indicated a very well organized network (operating during the night, with high performance equipment; some do the illegal logging, others transport the timber later on etc.); 30% of respondents indicated purely illegal logging (no paperwork) as the main method, while 25% indicated the use of fake documents and the complicity of forestry administration staff.

Related to the ways to prevent and reduce illegal logging, 50% of respondents recommended higher penalties (including the category of criminal offence for all illegal logging cases, no matter the quantity - currently, if the damage is below the

average value of 5 m3 of wood, the offender is fined, it doesn't fall under criminal law compared with other acts of theft). 40% of the respondents see as a solution a better collaboration between the institutions with control attributes (Police, Forest Guard and Gendarmerie). 35% indicated the need to allocate more staff for control, ideally with forestry background in order to better cover the forestry area, including isolated locations, but also to organize a permanent control system (also during the night). Also, 35% consider the Wood Tracking system as a useful tool that can be better used in order to tackle illegal logging.

## PROSECUTOR'S ACTIVITY

Regarding the activity of the Prosecutor's office on illegal logging in Romania, there were 17,357 cases to be investigated at the level of 2013, out of which 60.97% needed further investigation at the end of the year. Out of all the 6,775 cases where investigations were closed in 2013, 15.53% were sent to court. In 2014, the number of cases to be investigated by the Prosecutor's office decreased to 16,541 and 63.58% were not closed at the end of the year, more than in the previous year. Regarding the percentage sent to court, this was lower compared to 2013, at 9.15%.

Counties that registered high numbers of cases sent to court are: Vrancea, Alba, Bacau, Neamt, Suceava, Maramures and Arges, as specified in the following table:

**Tabel no. 4**  
**Cases sent to trial at the level of 2013-2014, top 5 by county**

County	Cases 2013	County	Cases 2014
Vrancea	116	Alba	53
Alba	77	Vrancea	43
Bacău	68	Neamț	42
Neamț	67	Maramureș	38
Suceava	65	Argeș	36

There were several counties that registered more cases sent to court than the annual average of 15.53% in 2013 and 9.15% in 2014:

**Table no. 5**  
**Cases sent to court at the level of 2013-2014, per county**

County	2013 (Cases sent to court)	County	2014 (Cases sent to court)
Bistrița-Năsăud	45,37%	Alba	23,55%
Alba	35,64%	Cluj	18,86%
Neamț	35,52%	Neamț	17,42%
Satu Mare	34,84%	Maramureș	17,27%
Vrancea	31,18%	Prahova	17,09%
Arad	26,02%	Arad	16,66%
Sălaj	24,29%	Mehedinți	15,95%
Maramureș	23,35%	Vrancea	15,19%
Suceava	22,26%	Covasna	14,43%
Cluj	22,14%	Bistrița-Năsăud	14,28%

It is important to mention that the percentage of the forestry related cases sent to court is double the average rate of all the investigated cases that were sent to court, which has a rate of 7.4% in 2013 and 5.4% in 2014.



## FORESTRY MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL BODIES

Forest management in Romania is the responsibility of the Minister of Environment, Waters and Forests according to the Forest Code published in March 2008 and updated in 2015. The Ministry coordinates a number of institutions, including R. N. P. Romsilva R. A. with management duties, Forest Guard with monitoring and control duties, and the Forestry Research and Management Institute.

According to law 133/ 2015 updating the Forest Code, the Gendarmerie, National Agency for Fiscal Administration and Romanian border Police regained the right to apply sanctions in relation to forest crime.

### **Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests**

The Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests is responsible for the national environment, waters and forest policies, acting as state authority, with a control and coordinating role.

### **RNP Romsilva R.A.**

RNP Romsilva R.A. manages the publicly owned state forest through 41 Forestry Districts and 323 Forest Administration offices. Romsilva can also provide management for privately owned forests on request. In this respect there are 1,494

management contracts signed and another 146,472 providing forestry services<sup>7</sup>.

### **Forest Guard**

The Forest Guard is a public body under the Ministry and has the following duties:

- a) Monitoring, implementing and controlling the implementation of forestry regulations in the national forestry fund
- b) Monitoring, implementing and controlling the implementation of hunting regulations
- c) Monitoring and wood traceability inspection

### **Police**

Gendarmerie functions under the Internal Affairs Minister, it has military statute and the competence to apply sanctions. In 2010 Gendarmerie lost most of its prerogatives related to forest crimes, but they were reinstated in 2015 when the new Forest Code was adopted by Parliament.

### **Gendarmerie**

Jandarmeria Română este instituția specializată a statului, cu statut militar, componentă a Ministerului Afacerilor Interne, care potrivit Codului Silvic are competențe să controleze și să constate contravențiile silvice. În 2010 Jandarmeria și-a pierdut majoritatea atribuțiilor legate de delictele silvice, dar acestea au fost reînstate în 2015 odată cu adoptarea noului Cod Silvic.

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.rosilva.ro/articole/paduri\\_private\\_p\\_213.htm](http://www.rosilva.ro/articole/paduri_private_p_213.htm)

# METHODOLOGY

The data that fundaments this report was collected from monitoring and control institutions based on the 544 / 2001 law on access to information of public interest.

The research was carried out from June to September 2015 and took into account the statistical data for 2013 and 2014. The responding institutions are: General prosecutor's Office, Police, RNP Romsilva R. A. and CRSC (Commissariat for Forestry and Hunting) that became the Forest Guard on September 9th 2015.

Greenpeace requested statistical data related to forest crime investigation cases, and the type and number of subsequent measures applied. Greenpeace also requested data on the volume of illegally cut timber and the total associated damage. All targeted bodies answered our requests.

We used the highest number provided for each county (if for example Buzau County Police reported x cases and CRSC Focsani x+n, we used the data from CRSC Focsani).

It so happens that in many instances, when joint inspections and interventions are undertaken, different institutions register the same intervention separately. So as not to duplicate our accounting of the information, the analysis does not use the sum of interventions carried out by the responsible bodies, nor the absolute total.


Consequently the resulting figure is the minimal number and does not reflect the entire extent of the phenomenon.

## CONCLUSIONS

- ▶ The number of illegal logging investigations increased to 62 cases/day in 2013-2014, compared to 50 cases/day in 2012 and 30 cases/day in 2009-2011;
- ▶ 78% of the volume of illegal timber at the national level, and 79% of the total forest damage caused by illegal logging, are found in Cluj, Alba and Maramures counties in 2013-2014;
- ▶ 55% of respondents to the qualitative research indicated the lack of security measures taken by forest owners as the main cause for the illegal logging, despite legislation that stipulates this as compulsory;
- ▶ 35% of respondents indicated a very well organized network (operating during the night, with high performance equipment; some do the illegal logging, others transport the timber later on etc.);
- ▶ 50% of respondents recommended higher penalties to prevent and reduce illegal logging, (including the status of criminal offence for all illegal logging cases, no matter the quantity - currently, if the damage is below the average value of 5 m<sup>3</sup>cubic metres of wood, the offender is fined, it doesn't fall under criminal law/it is not considered theft);
- ▶ From all the cases investigated by the prosecutors, the ones related to the illegal logging cases have a higher rate of sending to court, approximately double compared to the institutional average: 15.53% versus 7.1% in 2013 and 9.15% versus 5.4% in 2014;
- ▶ Governmental reports indicate an average of 8.8 million cubic meters of illegally extracted wood in 2013 and 2014, while the number of investigated cases only covers a fraction of this amount: 0.6 million cubic meters.







Greenpeace este o organizație internațională independentă, prezentă în peste 55 de țări din întreaga lume, care acționează pentru a schimba atitudini și comportamente, pentru a proteja și conserva mediul înconjurător și pentru a promova pacea.

# GREENPEACE

**Greenpeace CEE România**

Strada Ing. Vasile Cristescu, nr. 18

Sector 2, București

Tel./Fax: +40 31 435 57 43

Contact: [info.romania@greenpeace.org](mailto:info.romania@greenpeace.org)

[www.greenpeace.ro](http://www.greenpeace.ro)