

October 12, 2016

Dear Prime Minister Dacian Cioloș,

We the undersigned civil society organizations are writing to ask that you create an improved traceability system for transparent public access to comprehensive information covering forest management, harvesting, timber transport and processing.

Over the past year, your government and Minister of the Environment Cristiana Pașca Palmer have taken steps to strengthen forest governance, increase transparency, and protect Romania's unique biodiversity. Improvements to the Forest Guard, efforts to safeguard virgin forests, and the new *Inspectorul Padurii* app have already begun to have an impact. Now there is a need for increasing performance by strengthening existing tools to become more efficient and transparent. However, illegal logging will continue to remain a serious concern unless new measures are taken which build on your and others' reforms. This letter asks for specific achievable steps in the near term that we believe would increase transparency and produce a major impact.

We believe that an integrated electronic system which would make the following four types of information public and searchable would be a world-leading foundation on which to build effective and sustainable forestry governance in Romania:

1. **Forest management plans and maps (for public and private forests).** 10-year forest management plans describe the type of forest management authorized for each forest parcel. The harvest area should be georeferenced with exact GPS coordinates and boundary maps. This information should be updated as new and more detailed information becomes available.
2. ***Acte de punere in valoare* (APVs).** Key information from these harvesting authorization plans should be included, in particular the APV number, the GPS coordinates of the harvesting area, the cutting method, volumes, and species of wood permitted to be harvested, and the duration of the cutting period.
3. **Transport documents (*avize*).** Key information for every transport of logs via trucks or rail including license plate numbers, volume, species and type of timber, GPS coordinates of the loading points, the corresponding APV number, and the exact time the journey began should be included. This information needs to be made immediately available to the public at the moment each *aviz* is registered.
4. **Depot transparent alerts.** Log storage and sorting yards can serve important roles in local forest economies, but can also break the link between forests and log buyers, obscuring illegal logging. Therefore the application has to be designed to highlight the alerts generated by the cross-checks of the registries covering volumes, species, and types entering and exiting all depots in the country. The alerts should be made public on an immediate and ongoing basis, with corresponding APVs included for all incoming logs completed by clear and transparent control procedures following a risk-based approach.

All of this information should be immediately and continuously updated in the system as it is registered with the government. This information should be fully linked, to connect log trucks to forest harvesting sites. Access to the database should be made through an API, allowing for third party development of apps to promote public use of the data. Such an open database system can improve efficiency and facilitate compliance of the administrative requirements by industry users,

for example by permitting automatic calculation of the APV, allowing thematic reports for users, and facilitating planning and monitoring of forest operations.

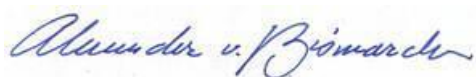
In addition to this information release, the government should enact mechanisms to enable it to respond to public concerns, provide safe and public access to forests, protect whistleblowers, and hold violators accountable. In particular, information about automatic alerts and control reports should be made public on a regular basis, including regarding corrective measures imposed. Aside from company names and ID numbers, all information in this system should be made public.

Transparent, public access to information about forest supply chains is a key principle being implemented around the world. For over three years, wood product manufacturers in the European Union have been required to verify the legal origin of their wood purchases. Across the world forest producing countries are developing electronic systems to enable comprehensive management of forests and tracking of logs from stump to end product. Increasingly, all buyers of wood around the world are forced to ask the question, "Where was my wood logged?"

Creating public access to key information about forest management and wood transport in Romania will permit buyers to track their own supply chains, and give the Romanian timber sector the power to become a "low risk" source of wood for the global market place. It would also allow the Romanian people to support and ensure the continued effective implementation of Romania's new Forest Code.

Romania's forests are a key natural resource, invaluable to Romania's people for their unique biodiversity and many sustainable economic values, from timber to tourism. We hereby request that you create a world-leading example by providing reasonable access to information across the supply chain, and show the world that Romania is dedicated to being a global leader in forest governance. We humbly request a response to this letter including your proposed actions within one week of receipt. We look forward to discussing the details of how to implement these measures and existing tools in further public consultations organized by the Environment Ministry in the coming weeks and months.

Sincerely,



Alexander von Bismarck
Executive Director
Environmental Investigation Agency
Washington, DC



Orieta Hulea
Country Director
WWF Romania



Ionuț Apostol
Director de campanii
Greenpeace Romania

The Greenpeace logo consists of the word 'GREENPEACE' in a bold, green, sans-serif font. The letters are slightly irregular, giving it a hand-drawn or activist feel.

CC: Ms. Cristiana Pașca Palmer, Minister of the Environment