Guidelines on the EU Forced Labour Regulation

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Commission Notice – Guidelines on the application of Regulation (EU) 2024/3015 on prohibiting products made with forced labour on the Union market

What is changing and why?

The European Commission has published Guidelines for implementing the Forced Labour Regulation 2024/3015. These Guidelines are not legally binding (only the Regulation itself is legally binding). They aim to clarify the requirements of the Forced Labour Regulation, including the following:

- Companies cannot place products made with forced labour on the EU market or export them from the EU. This applies whether forced labour occurs within the company or anywhere in its supply chain (Chapter 1 of the Guidelines).
- The ban covers all types of products, regardless of where they are made. It also applies if only part of a product, or any stage of its supply chain, involves forced labour (Chapter 3).
- The Guidelines clarify what is considered as forced labour, and provide risk indicators that companies and authorities can use to identify potential forced labour risks (Chapter 3).
- Authorities should follow an evidence-based process from identifying a risk through investigation to a final decision, with the possibility of review and appeal (Chapter 4).
- If suspected forced labour takes place outside the EU, the European Commission is responsible for investigating and deciding whether to ban the product (Chapter 4).
- If a product is banned, authorities can require companies to withdraw or dispose of it, restrict access to it, or remove online listings. Perishable products should be donated (Chapter 5). Penalties may depend on the seriousness and duration of the violation.
- Customs authorities can identify and stop affected products at the border once they have been notified of a prohibition decision.
- Although the Regulation does not tell companies how to comply, they are encouraged to carry out due diligence (Chapter 6):
  - include forced labour risks in internal policies, procedures, and training
  - identify and assess risks in operations and supply chains
  - prevent, reduce, and address forced labour risks
  - monitor implementation and results in their own and suppliers' operations
  - provide or support appropriate remediation for people affected by forced labour.
- Third parties can report concerns and provide information about possible forced labour violations (Chapter 7).

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Actions

Non-EU suppliers and importers are advised to put in place monitoring and reporting systems that will reduce the risk of investigations by their EU buyers on the use of forced labour.

Timeline

The Forced Labour Regulation will apply from **14 December 2027**.

For more information see the full record on the AGRINFO website – where you can also view the latest AGRINFO Update newsletters and search the database.

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