

GREENPEACE

NATURE CRIME FILES

ROMANIA

DECLASSIFIED

ASSEMBLE THE TRUTH: OLD-GROWTH FOREST
DESTRUCTION IN THE ROMANIAN CARPATHIANS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. THE CARPATHIAN FOREST IN ROMANIA

- What happens with wood from old forests?
- IKEA in Romania

2. FROM THE FOREST TO THE STORE: INVESTIGATION FINDINGS

3. WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE?

ANNEX

1. METHODOLOGY OF THE INVESTIGATION

2. INVESTIGATION CASES: INTO DETAIL

- #1 Masifpanel SRL
- #2 Aramis Invest SRL
- #3: Taparo SA
- #4 CH Industrial Prod SRL
- #5 IRIS Service Ciuc SA
- #6 Plimob SA
- #7: AVIVA SRL

3. LIST OF SOURCES

APPENDIX

1. TABLE OF IKEA PRODUCTS FROM IDENTIFIED MANUFACTURERS BY COUNTRY

NATURE 'CRIME' FILES

Europe has long presented itself as a defender of biodiversity and protector of the environment. But crimes against nature are being committed in Europe every day, often with impunity.

These appalling acts of destruction (referred to in this report as "nature crimes") are not committed with guns and knives but with bulldozers and chainsaws. Centuries-old forests in Czechia, Carpathian forests in Romania and Poland, and the boreal forests of Sweden and Finland - all central to Europe's fight against the nature and climate crisis - are being destroyed to produce short-lived products for sale worldwide. These "nature crimes" are happening legally, sometimes even inside Natura 2000 areas, but we are calling them crimes because it is a scandal that destroying our last high conservation value forests is still allowed.

It is important to many consumers that they are not complicit in deforestation, but with complex supply chains, contradictory laws, and corporations located in various jurisdictions, it becomes impossible for consumers to identify the products of corporate greed that are destroying our last natural treasures.

The following case is part of a series that we have called 'The Nature Crime Files - Declassified' - a clarion call for proper protection of ecosystems, which are the basis of our life.



#1 Europe's old-growth forests - vital to our survival - are not effectively protected.

#2 The extraction of wood from Europe's oldest forests exemplifies the failure of the EU's implementation of biodiversity protection targets.

#3 Wood products made from old-growth forests may end up in European homes.

#4 Corporates must take immediate action to stop sourcing wood from all the remaining old-growth forests and other high conservation-value forests. These forests must be left undisturbed from harmful activities such as logging to be effectively protected.

1. THE CARPATHIAN FORESTS IN ROMANIA

Old-growth and other high conservation-value forests are particularly vital to the health and well-being of the planet. They are rich in biodiversity and play an important role in preventing and mitigating the effects of the climate and nature crisis. Unfortunately, within the EU, these forests are scarce, limited in size and exist only in fragmented pockets.

The Carpathian Mountains are home to Europe's largest area of virgin and old-growth forests outside Scandinavia and the Russian Taiga. They are the second-longest mountain range in Europe, crossing eight countries in continental Europe (Austria, Czechia, Poland, Slovakia, Ukraine, Romania, Serbia, Hungary) and covering a surface of 209,000 km²¹, larger than the territory of Austria, Hungary and Slovenia combined. This is also one of the most biologically unique ecosystems in the world. But this enormous area of outstanding natural beauty and profound ecological importance is shrinking every day. For the past 100 years, new industrial operations have altered the Carpathian forests, and even now new forestry roads are being built to make extracting timber ever more accessible.²

Unmapped primeval and old-growth forests are disappearing at extreme rates. Over 7350 km² of Carpathian tree canopy have been lost to timber extraction in the last two decades. Throughout the Carpathians, an area of five football fields is logged every hour.³

ROMANIAN CARPATHIAN FOREST IN FIGURES:

43.7% of the Carpathian forests are in Romania and of that just 2.4% (1700 km²) are currently under strict protection.⁴

Around 7% of the Romanian forests are over 120 years old:⁵

- 120 - 140 yo = 4.7% [2640km²]
- 140 - 160 yo = 2.4% [1120km²]
- >160 yo = 0.7% [450km²]

It is estimated that in the past 20 years, Romania has lost more than 50% of its primary intact forests⁶ to logging activities.



If destroyed, the Carpathian forests will take with them fundamental natural heritage and important climate and biodiversity safety nets in Central and Eastern Europe. These are not areas that can be replaced or regrown with managed forests, and their exploitation must end immediately. In the Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, the EU committed to enlarge strict protection of its most biodiverse areas to 10%.⁷



The EU, which is good at promoting itself as a champion of biodiversity, has so far failed to protect its oldest forests. Approximately 93% of mapped old-growth forests are included in the Natura 2000 network⁸, a system of protected areas established by the EU, and 87% of mapped old-growth forests are under strict protection from human interference.⁹ This sounds great, but the reality couldn't be more different. 'Protected' old-growth forests are often only protected on paper¹⁰, and remain exposed to logging. Meanwhile, the remaining forest is not even officially recognised as old-growth by the authorities and therefore exposed to exploitation too. According to the EU's Joint Research Centre report, Europe has a mapping deficit of 4.4 million hectares of old-growth forests, which is an area bigger than the Netherlands.¹¹

This lack of proper mapping combined with unclear legal frameworks on strict protection¹² is allowing these vital forests to be exploited for wood production. A clear example of the EU's failure to implement effective biodiversity commitments.



WHAT HAPPENS WITH WOOD FROM OLD FORESTS?

The Greenpeace Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) investigations team started with these simple questions: Who is destroying the last old-growth, pristine forests in Europe? Where does the wood go? What is this precious resource being used for?

Our investigation team followed the traces and they led us to suppliers of furniture companies, such as the much-loved, widely celebrated European brand, IKEA.

IKEA operates nearly 500 retail stores around the world, with more than half of those based in Europe. As one of the world's biggest consumers of wood¹³, IKEA has a global responsibility to live up to its sustainability commitments. According to some estimates, a tree is logged every two seconds for IKEA furniture production.¹⁴

“We’re promoting responsible forestry methods. We do this to influence the industry and also to contribute to the important work of ending deforestation.”

– Mikhail Tarasov,
Global Forestry Manager, IKEA of Sweden

©Greenpeace // Clearcut
in an old-growth forests in
the Romanian Carpathians



But is this really the case?

Despite all their efforts on sustainability, IKEA, like a long list of companies, is doing business with companies that source wood from old-growth forests that are not effectively protected.

According to IKEA, almost 98% of the wood they use is FSC-certified¹⁵. However, as demonstrated by these cases of nature destruction, the FSC certification scheme does not always recognize old-growth forests for their true biodiversity value. This, in turn, allows industrial forestry and logging practices under FSC certification, even in forests that should be strictly protected. Meanwhile, the EU's last remaining old-growth forests are being decimated, with permission, and those centuries-old trees are appearing in living rooms, kitchens and kids' bedrooms all over the EU and beyond.

IKEA IN ROMANIA

IKEA sources most of its wood from Poland, Lithuania and Sweden. It claims that only 4% of the virgin wood in IKEA supply chains comes from Romania.¹⁶

According to Greenpeace CEE analysis, of the biggest 15 Romanian furniture manufacturers, seven supply IKEA, and their combined turnover for 2022 was approximately €480m.¹⁷

In this report, we are focusing on a system of sourcing wood, where furniture manufacturing companies process round wood and/or sawn wood delivered straight from forests, or (more often) from intermediary suppliers and their depots.

2. FROM THE FOREST TO THE STORE: INVESTIGATION FINDINGS

Greenpeace CEE in Romania visited old-growth forests throughout Romania, where the average tree age was 120 to 180 years, according to publicly available forestry management plans.¹⁸

By closely examining the entire supply chain, from logging sites to wood depots, including scrutinizing transport permits with geolocation attributes, and visiting processing facilities, Greenpeace CEE uncovered the systematic destruction of old-growth forests, including two Natura 2000 protected sites. Old-growth or other high conservation value forest destruction was linked to at least seven different IKEA suppliers in Romania.

The majority of those IKEA suppliers manufacture products for multiple European and international companies. However, based on manufacturers' websites, online articles and other publicly available information, IKEA is without doubt the biggest customer of most of the companies, whom the Greenpeace CEE investigation linked to the destruction of old-growth forests. One of the manufacturers, Plimob, produces virtually exclusively for IKEA. Investigations linked those producers to at least 30 IKEA products, and some of IKEA's well-known furniture, raising a concern that wood from old-growth forests could ultimately end up in homes all over Europe and beyond. Greenpeace CEE identified these links based on IKEA's own unique producers' identification system, with product labels that identify the manufacturer.

From one of the most iconic IKEA pieces of furniture, the beloved SNIGLAR crib and bed frame for children, INGOLF chairs, BEKVÄM step stool, KIVIK sofas to smaller household items like PROPPMÄTT cutting board or wooden hangers BUMERANG - Greenpeace visited IKEA stores across Europe between September 2023 and March 2024 and found products from manufacturers associated with wood sourced from old-growth forests in 13 countries: Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, and the UK.

Given the widespread presence of wood from old-growth forests in IKEA's supply chain, it appears extremely likely this wood ends up in these identified IKEA products. Greenpeace CEE has given IKEA the opportunity to comment on the findings of this investigation. IKEA didn't dispute the information.

DO NOT ENTER

CAUTION

A GOOD NIGHTS SLEEP

One of IKEA's iconic collections, SNIGLAR, which offers cribs and bed frames for children, is advertised¹⁹ as a collection of products that are durable and made from renewable natural materials that are good for both your wallet and the planet.

Greenpeace CEE investigations linked bed frames with slatted bed bases and cribs made of solid beech wood, to two Romanian manufacturers, Masifpanel SRL and Iris Service Ciuc SA. Both manufacturers were linked with old-growth forest destruction.

Masifpanel bought their beech wood from S.C Colcear Servcom SRL, who were granted concession to harvest 3150 m³ of (mainly) beech forest in Caraş-Severin, 500 km west of Bucharest. This is a near pristine area of outstanding beauty, in a forest at least 120 years old that is part of Natura 2000 network of protected areas in the EU.

Iris Service Ciuc SA has a diverse network of suppliers, with wood coming from at least 15 different entities, and multiple logging sites around Romania. They also accept wood directly from a beautiful, 160-year-old forest which is managed by Ocolul Silvic Moinesti.

Cribs and bed frames for children, produced by either Masifpanel or Iris Service Ciuc SA²⁰ were found in IKEA stores in Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Finland, France, Hungary, Italy, Israel, Poland and Sweden.

Masifpanel, when given an opportunity to comment, acknowledged receipt of timber from the observed Natura 2000 area, stating that the destruction is not illegal. Iris Service Ciuc SA did not respond.

INGOLF is one of IKEA's most recognisable chair collections. Made out of solid wood, which IKEA says is one of their favorite materials, and part of their Scandinavian heritage.

INGOLF chairs are produced by Plimob SA, located in the Maramureş region, which has long wood-crafting traditions. Maramureş County in Northern Romania is a hub of furniture producers (four out of five of the top producers manufacture products for IKEA). It's estimated that 20% of Romanian furniture is produced here, because of the presence of large volumes of timber resources.²¹

One of the five production units that Plimob runs in Romania is a modern fast-furniture plant with a capacity of 2.5 million chairs per year.²²

According to Greenpeace CEE investigations based on publicly available data, Plimob SA wood comes from a network of companies that largely overlaps with other IKEA suppliers. The biggest supplier of these is Silva Grup, who have transported at least 8000 m³ of round wood harvested mainly in central Romania between early 2023 and Feb 2024. One of the areas where Silva Grup has a concession to log 1600 m³ has an average tree age of 140 years.

INGOLF chairs produced by Plimob SA were found in stores in Austria, Czechia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Israel, Poland, Sweden and Switzerland.



IKEA product INGOLF chair



3. WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE

The examples above clearly illustrate how industrial forestry and corporations take advantage of the lack of effective protection and recklessly damage the natural complexity of our most biodiverse forests. Recognising the systemic problem IKEA and other companies face in sourcing from manufacturers who are destroying our last old-growth forests, there is only one way to tackle the problem:

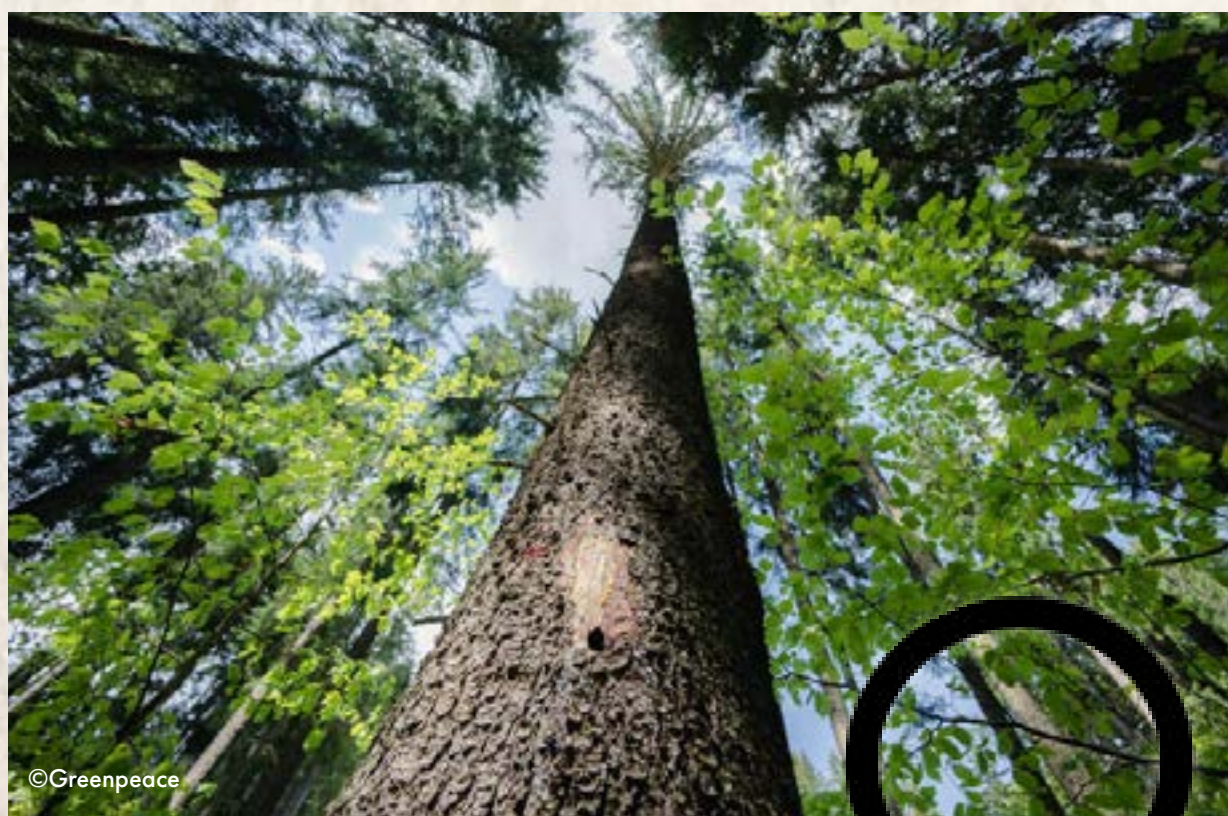
- IKEA must take immediate steps to ensure that no wood from old-growth forests and other high conservation value forests enters its supply chain. These forests must be left undisturbed from harmful activities such as logging, and become effectively protected.
- IKEA must ensure timebound engagement with the manufacturers of their products and other actors involved in logging or sourcing wood from old-growth or other valuable forests, followed by divestment or end of contractual relationships where actors fail to implement a credible action plan to stop sourcing wood from these forests.
- We call on IKEA to be the frontrunner on biodiversity commitments and publicly advocate for the implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework and European biodiversity strategy for 2030, in particular, IKEA must support reaching the target of at least 10% of EU land strict protection.

Detailed set of demands by Greenpeace organisations to effectively protect forests can be found [here](#).

1. METHODOLOGY OF THE INVESTIGATION

The Greenpeace CEE investigation was based on:

1. Analysis of publicly available data provided by SUMAL (<https://inspectorulpadurii.ro/#/>) together with the Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA NGO), a system administered by the Ministry of Environment of Romania that offers access to public information like administrative forest boundaries, logging permits and permits of transport with geolocation attributes
2. Analysis of high-resolution satellite imagery from various providers
3. Analysis of forest management plans, partially available from the Ministry of Environment websites
4. Multiple field visits to logging sites and wood processing units as well as IKEA direct suppliers
5. Visits to IKEA retail stores across Europe.



2. INVESTIGATION CASES: INTO DETAIL

● NATURE DESTRUCTION CASE #1 Masifpanel SRL

The Sniglar single bed frame is for children. It retails from IKEA at under €100 and is made from pure beech wood.²³

The Sniglar bed frame is supplied to IKEA by a company called Masifpanel SRL. In 2022 Masifpanel reportedly had a turnover of €14.5 million.²⁴ The Sniglar bed frame has been a staple IKEA product for more than two decades.²⁵

Other IKEA products Greenpeace CEE investigated linked to Masifpanel include legs for STUBBARP, BURFJORD, BRYNILEN collections, ARTISTISK and PROPPMÄTT cutting boards, and BEKVÄM step stool. Those products were found in IKEA stores in Belgium, Czechia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland and Sweden.

Masifpanel buys their beech wood from S.C Colcear Servcom SRL, who were granted concession to harvest 3150 m³ of (mainly) beech forest in Caraş-Severin, 500km west of Bucharest. This is a near pristine area, with waterfalls and outstanding beauty, in a forest at least 120 years old.

Over a 10-week period, almost 90 trucks loaded with round wood (primarily) left the logging site. Final destinations of the logged wood include, amongst others, the premises of Masifpanel, producer of beloved IKEA children bed frames, raising a concern that they ultimately could end up in bedrooms of forest-loving families all over Europe.

Masifpanel, when given an opportunity to comment, acknowledged receipt of timber from the observed Natura 2000 area, stating that the destruction is not illegal.

Logging site: APV 2200135800670
Beech forest in Caraş-Severin, 500km west of Bucharest.
Average tree age: 120 years
Natura 2000 site: ROSCI0126
Location: 45.338596, 22.532108

Logged by [SC Colcear Servcom SRL](#)
Logs transported to the wood depot in Zavoi
Location: 45.52130066744171, 22.40120473551729



Left: [Masifpanel SRL](#) production unit in Însurăţei, Romania
Middle: Wood depot in Zavoi, Romania
Right: Sniglar products available on IKEA shelves in Czechia, January 2024

©Greenpeace



INVESTIGATION CASES: INTO DETAIL

● NATURE DESTRUCTION CASE #2 Aramis Invest SRL

You may be sitting on one of these popular pieces of furniture right now. They are some of IKEA's most recognisable items. These products are regularly manufactured by Aramis Invest, the biggest furniture producer in Romania with a turnover of approximately €420 million in 2022.²⁶

Aramis Invest specialises in upholstered furniture.²⁷ They are a customer of a company called Gricon SRL who were granted concession to harvest 2670 m³ of (primarily) beech forest in a logging site in the eastern part of Maramures County, almost 1000m above sea level, in an area of forest where the average tree is 140-years-old. The logging site is surrounded by areas under strict protection from the Romanian Virgin Forest Catalog.

Between March 2023, and Feb 2024, a significant portion of wood transported from this site by Gricon went to Vipromel Prod SRL to cut round wood into sawn slices, load them onto trucks and send them to Aramis Invest's facility in Baia Mare.

Maramures County in Northern Romania is reportedly a hub of furniture producers²⁸ (four out of five of the top producers manufacture products for IKEA).

Aramis Invest products like frames for armchairs and beds and footstools for various series like STRANDMON, MUREN, EKTORP, SABOVIK, FRIHETEN, KIVIK were found in IKEA stores in Czechia, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Israel, Poland, Sweden and Switzerland.

Logging site: APV2200145900950
Average tree age 140 years
Location: 47.610298156738, 24.068239212036



Logged by Gricon SRL
Logs transported to [Vipromel Prod SRL](#) wood depot in Rogoz
Location: 47.46207634956137, 23.92351262958274



INVESTIGATION CASES: INTO DETAIL

● NATURE DESTRUCTION CASE #3: Taparo SA

The 6th biggest furniture producer in Romania (by turnover) is called Taparo.²⁹ They too are based in Maramures and supply TULLSTA and EKTORP armchair wooden frames and KIVIK, KLIPPAN and SÖDERHAMN sofa frames to IKEA and reportedly had an annual turnover of ~€46m in 2022.³⁰

According to Greenpeace CEE investigation findings, Taparo does not accept round wood directly into its premises. In this case, Taparo is a customer of a company called VCM Prod Impex SRL (VCM).

VCM was granted a concession to exploit several sites in the Strimbu Baiut forest management unit. One such site is at least 180 years old forest from which V.C.M. Prod Impex SRL was granted a concession to log 1726 m³ of wood between September and December 2023.

VCM Prod Impex SRL is a relatively small company and had, according to publicly available data, turnover of less than €1.5m in 2022.³¹ In 2023, VCM supplied sawn wood to Taparo as well as other IKEA suppliers.

Logging site no. APV2300145901080
Average tree age: 180 years
Location: 47.653930664062,23.990238189697



Logged by [V.C.M. Prod Impex SRL](#)
Logs transported to the wood depot Targu Lapus
Location: 47.457993126832356, 23.834817253114572



[Taparo SA:](#)
Production unit in sat. Borcut
Location: 47.47834077328753, 23.82236540316612

INVESTIGATION CASES: INTO DETAIL

● NATURE DESTRUCTION CASE #4 CH Industrial Prod SRL

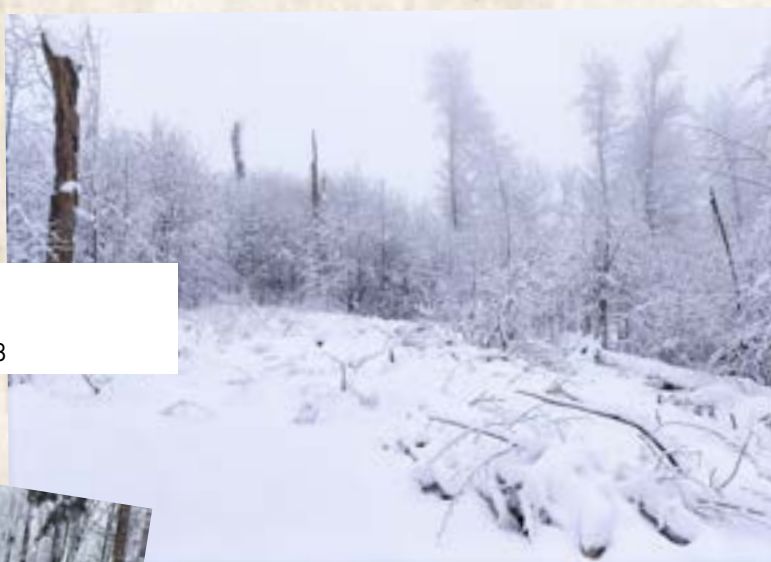
Across the road from VCM, a company called LCB PACK SRL runs a wood processing facility. In 2022, their turnover was reportedly more than €2,8m.³²

LCB has been exploiting logging site no. APV2200145900990, a forest of at least 170 years old. Since early Nov 2023, LCB has transported 630 m³ of wood, of a planned 2303 m³.

LCB brings wood directly from forests or from depots managed by Strimbu Baiut Forest Management Authority. The storage conditions at their facility make it difficult to believe that they can effectively track the origins of the wood they saw and transport.

LCB has transported sawn timber to CH Industrial Prod SRL, a producer of BUMERANG hangers.

Their products were found in IKEA stores in Austria and Poland.



Logging site no. APV2200145900990
Average tree age: 170 years
Location: 47.638019561768,23.97533416748



Logged by [LCB PACK SRL](#)
Logs transported to the wood depot Targu Lapus
Location: 47.452690116817266, 23.837832055987693



INVESTIGATION CASES: INTO DETAIL

● NATURE DESTRUCTION CASE #5 IRIS Service Ciuc SA

The next company the investigations could link to old-growth forest destruction is Iris Service Ciuc SA, based in Miercurea Ciuc, a town in central Romania. In 2022, Iris had a turnover of more than €35 million.³³ The company has a diverse network of suppliers, with at least 15 entities and multiple logging sites around Romania. It claims to use only FSC-certified wood, but the Greenpeace CEE investigation found it has a dirty wood supply and a direct transport of logs from a beautiful 160-year-old forest managed by Oculul Silvic Moinesti, to this manufacturer, raising the question whether it could end up in one of their IKEA products.

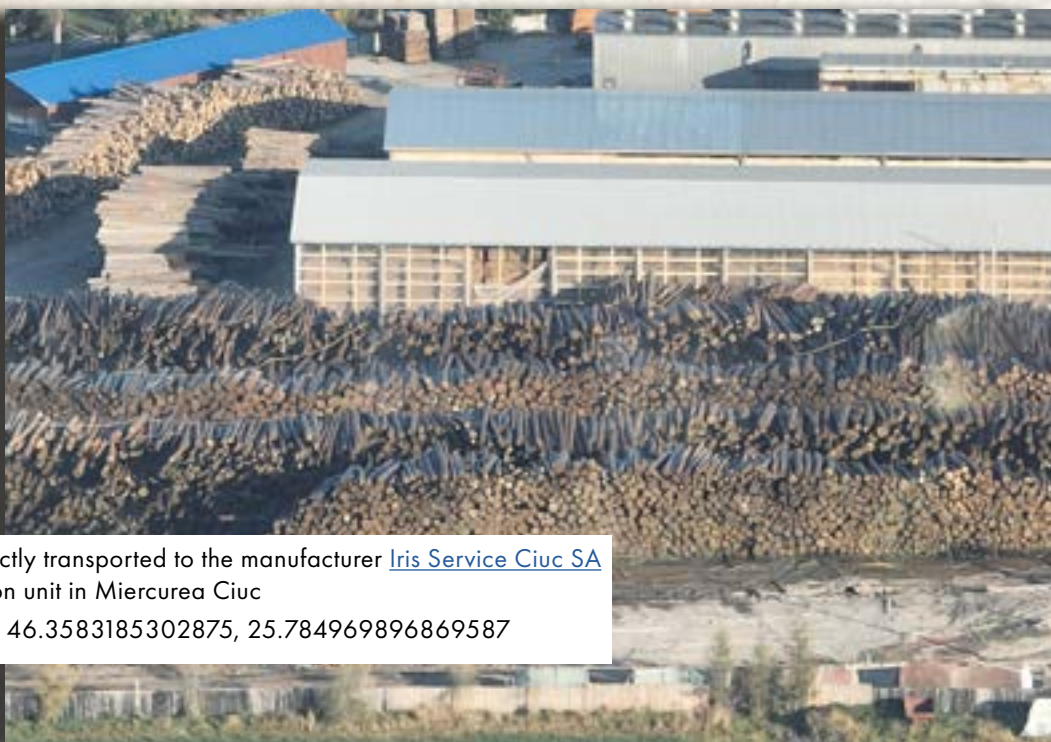
They produce various products for IKEA, from beloved SNIGLAR cribs, PROPPMÄTT, NORRSJON and ARTISTISK cutting boards to STUBBARP, BURFJORD and BRYNILEN legs. Those products were spotted in almost all countries where Greenpeace staff and volunteers visited IKEA retail shops: Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Israel, Poland, Sweden and Switzerland.



Logging site no. APV2200006203410

Average tree age: 160 years

Location: 46.654819488525, 26.432195663452



Logs directly transported to the manufacturer [Iris Service Ciuc SA](#)

Production unit in Miercurea Ciuc

Location: 46.3583185302875, 25.784969896869587

INVESTIGATION CASES: INTO DETAIL

● NATURE DESTRUCTION CASE #6 Plimob SA

In Sighetu Marmăției, Maramureș, a region in the North of Romania on the border with Ukraine, is a company called Plimob SA.

Plimob is a major employer in the Maramureș region, which has long wood-crafting traditions. One of the five production units that Plimob runs in Romania is a modern fast-furniture plant with a capacity of 2.5 million chairs per year.³⁴ Plimob works closely with VGSM sawmill, in Velikii Bichkiv, UA (also allegedly sourcing wood from old growth forest in Ukrainian Carpathians).³⁵

Plimob SA is supplied by a network of companies that largely overlaps with other IKEA suppliers. The biggest supplier of these is Silva Grup, who have transported at least 8000m³ of round wood harvested mainly in central Romania between early 2023 and Feb 2024. One of the areas where Silva Grup has concessions to log 1600 m³ has an average tree age of 140 years.

Plimob produces chairs almost exclusively for IKEA.³⁶ Greenpeace found Plimob's chairs across IKEA stores in Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Israel, Poland, Sweden and Switzerland. Products that Plimob produces for IKEA include: INGOLF, IDOLF, KÄTTIL, EKEDALEN, FRÖSVI, RÖNNINGE, BEKVÄM.

Logging site no. APV2300170501440
Average tree age: 140 years
Location: 45.827621459961,25.264905929565



Logged by [Silva Grup SRL](#)
Logs transported to the wood depot in Tălmăciu,
Location: 45.67103558333282, 24.268840747514012



[Plimob SA](#)
Plimob factory in Sarasau
Location: 47.94516555734113, 23.832509858242332

INVESTIGATION CASES: INTO DETAIL

● NATURE DESTRUCTION CASE #7: AVIVA SRL

Aviva is a British-Israeli shareholding and their main factory is in the same premises as Plimob. Aviva and Plimob also use a similar network of wood suppliers although Aviva uses more oak. They supply IKEA and produce flooring for the UK market.³⁷

Aviva wood supply relies heavily on Silvador Forest SRL. Between September 2023 and February 2024, Silvador transported round wood logged in a 110 years old forest (APV2300141800140) via their depot in the village of Făget to Aviva directly and to a sawmill in Gavodja, run by Xilobaia SRL, from where processed wood also got delivered to Aviva.

Another major supplier of Aviva is Silva Grup, who also supplies Plimob and has - as exposed in the previous case - exploited several sites in central Romania, including parts of a forest that is at least 140 years old.

By investigating products in various stores, Greenpeace CEE was able to link the following products with Aviva: MÖCKELBY oak table, MÖRBYLÅNGA bench, VADHOLMA wall shelve, TORNVIKEN kitchen island and KARLBY countertops. Those products were found in stores in Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Israel, Sweden and Switzerland.

Logging site APV2300141800140
Natura 2000 site: ROSCI0355
Location: 45.730007171631,22.410402297974

Logged by [Silvador Forest SRL](#)
Logs transported to the wood depot in Făget
Location: 45.84870778010635, 22.174320624118035



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ANNEX

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