

Brussels, March 12th, 2024

To: the Executive Vice-President of the European Commission and Commissioner for Trade, Mr Valdis Dombrovskis
Cc: DG TRADE Officers responsible for Japan, Delegation of the European Union to Japan, Permanent Representations Trade Attachés

EOS and CEI-Bois Statement: Possible Japanese Imports Ban on Russian Wood Products

Dear Commissioner Dombrovskis,

With this statement the European Organisation of the Sawmill Industry (EOS) and the European Confederation of Woodworking Industries (CEI-Bois) would like to encourage you in your discussions with your Japanese counterparts to raise the question of a possible Japanese ban on the imports of Russian wood products, in particular lumber and glue laminated timber.

According to figures shared by the Japanese Lumber Importers Association, Japan in 2023 was still importing 13% of its total lumber imports from Russia. This is regrettable as Russia is a major global power in the woodworking industry and Japan is an important market for many Russian exporters.

We believe that a concerted effort to persuade Japan to stop importing Russian lumber would be a significant step in further impacting the Russian economy and its war machine. Our trade posture towards Russia, and sanctions in particular, should be coordinated and coherent among the coalition of countries that have decided to punish Russia's unprovoked, unjustified, and barbaric invasion of Ukraine.

Up until 2021 the European Union imported significant quantities of wood products from Russia (and Belarus), much more than what Japan is currently importing, even in proportion to the larger EU population and economy. As an industry and a society, we should be proud that in the space of some months we were able to give up importing Russian wood products, swiftly readjusting and adapting to the new reality.

We have thus shown that this is feasible, and we believe that Japan should join Europe in banning imports of wood products originating from Russia.

We would be grateful if you could help us achieve that.

We remain available for any clarification you might need.

Sincerely,

Herbert Jöbstl, EOS President

Sampsa J. Auvinen, CEI-Bois President

