HUMAN RIGHTS AT WORK

CORE THE HUMAN SIDE OF BUSINESS

Webinar: Let's Get to the Core of EUFLR Implementation: What Companies Need to Know

Questions and answers from webinar 2 June 2026

These are the webinar questions we could not answer live, grouped by topic with duplicates removed.
The answers reflect our reading of the EUFLR at 2 June 2026 and are for general information only, not legal advice.

Scope & Definitions · 7 questions

N°	Question	Answer
1	**Can you share your views on how the FLR covers child labour?**	The EUFLR covers forced child labour, which is one of the worst forms of child labour. Not all child labour is considered forced labour.
2	**Are services in scope of EUFLR?**	The prohibition applied to "products" that are made in part or in whole with forced labour at any stage of it production, i.e. extraction, harvesting, manufacturing, incl. in the working and processing related to such product. Service sectors such a construction, hospitality, data centers or tourism are not included.
3	**Is there a difference regarding the obligations of the EUFLR due to their position in the supply chain, e.g. retailer vs. producer vs. importer?**	The only obligation imposed by the Regulation on all economic operators is not to "place or make available" products made with forced labour on the EU market or exporting them (Art. 1.1). If a preliminary investigation is initiated on a particular product, certain operators will be asked to provide information on due diligence processes to the authorities (Art.17). The focus on certain economic operators, and where relevant, product suppliers, will be decided on a case by case basis taking into account the concrete circumstances of the case and the criteria established by the Regulation itself in Art. 14, including e.g. size and resources, proximity to the forced labour risk, capacity to exert leverage on business partners. While it may often be the case that information may be required from importers, sometimes other operators in the EU market may be in a better position to provide relevant information.
4	**Will the EUFLR regulation be applicable to suppliers from Asian countries? What steps are to be taken by them? Are there any penalties if they get detected?**	Yes, the reach of the EUFLR is global. This means Asian suppliers are affected in two ways: *Direct exposure*: If an Asian supplier sells directly to EU buyers or makes products available on the EU market (including via online sales targeting EU customers), they are directly subject to the Regulation. *Indirect exposure* (often the more significant risk): their EU-based customers, as economic operators placing products on the EU market will demand evidence from them that their products are not made with forced labour. Without that assurance, the EU customer risks having their products blocked, withdrawn, or destroyed. This creates strong commercial pressure on Asian suppliers to comply, even if they are not technically falling within the scope of the Regulation.

5	**For companies with other parts of the value chain to consider, should we build a risk approach for more than 'just' the supply chain, also encompassing retail, own operations, production, distribution and office locations?**	At the heart of a company's preparation for the Regulation should be a robust due diligence framework to identify, prevent, mitigate, bring to an end, or remediate risks of forced labour, including within its own operations and the supply chain, depending where the risks lie. Depending on the type of company, business model, the production or manufacture, including in the working or processing of the product can be part of a company's own operations as opposed to its supply chain. Following the definition of the Regulation on what "product made with forced labour" means (Art.2 (7)), "distribution" does not relate in principle to the production or manufacture of the product, but rather to the actual distribution of the product, so it would not be included.
6	**How will the legislation apply to Northern Ireland?**	The Regulation applies to any product placed on the EU Market and, in accordance with the arrangements established by the Windsor Framework, would also apply to products placed on the market in Northern Ireland.
7	**Are the investigations focused on products from outside the EU? Or also on sectors within the EU?**	The ban applies to any product placed on the EU market that is made with forced labour irrespective of its origin within or outside the EU. Therefore, investigations can focus on domestic EU products placed on the EU market or exported from the EU and on non-EU products imported into the EU.

Regulatory Alignment · 3 questions

N°	Question	Answer
1	**Would you say that the substantiated concern definition and logic will be similar to the substantiated concern within the EUDR?**	A substantiated concern under the EUDR is defined as a duly reasoned claim, based on objective and verifiable information, that points to non-compliance with the regulation (FAQ 4.15). Concerns can be raised by any natural or legal person and brought to a Competent Authority or directly to an operator, downstream operator, or trader. Under the EUFLR a 'substantiated concern' means a reasonable indication based on objective, factual and verifiable information, for the competent authorities to suspect that products were likely made with forced labour. The substantiated concern here is primarily a threshold the authority itself must reach (following a preliminary assessment) before it can launch a formal investigation; it is a gatekeeping concept internal to the enforcement process, not a "claim" in the sense of the EUDR. The burden rests with the lead competent authority to establish that there is a substantiated concern in order to launch a full investigation.
2	**Please comment on the value chain cap in CSDDD regarding data requests to SMEs. Isn't that in contradiction with EUFLR? What is your advice to companies?**	The CSDDD only applies to the largest companies. Generally, companies should follow the OECD guidelines and consider the Commission guidelines. However, SMEs can always be asked for data that cannot be retrieved in any other way. Publicly available data could be collected by the buyers. It is key to engage suppliers and collaborate to understand where the risk factors are and what suppliers can do and how they can be supported in prevention, mitigation and remediation.

3	**CSDDD is about obligation of means, and FLR is about obligation of results. Do we understand the approach of FLR correctly? Even 'all reasonable efforts' were done, it still does not guarantee that there is no FL in supply chains, and the products can be banned.**	Yes, even a good and robust due diligence process might not lead to the right results. Remediation is very important and not always included in a companies' due diligence process. Forced labour should be addressed by ending it and providing for (or cooperating in) remediation to the victims. If a preliminary investigation takes place, it is important to bear in mind that it will focus on *a specific product* (not an entire supply chain) and the company in question would need to provide evidence on the actions taken to 'identify, prevent, mitigate, bring to an end or remediate risks of forced labour in their operations and supply chains with respect to the products under assessment'. So, the company will need to provide evidence that forced labour has been brought to an end or remediated. In the case of an imposition of a ban (following an investigation), the company will need to show that forced labour has been eliminated to have the ban lifted.

Enforcement & Investigation · 12 questions

N°	Question	Answer
1	**Who will control the ban and the regulation in general? Are these authorities defined already?**	In addition to the European Commission, each Member State will have to appoint its competent authorities responsible for implementing the obligations set out in the Regulation. As Art.5 establishes, Member States authorities will cooperate closely with the Commission and among them to ensure an effective and uniform implementation. The list of competent authorities will be published in the EU Forced Labour Portal.
2	**If we get information on forced labour via our grievance channel, do we need to report this to the Commission?**	No, there is no obligation to report this to the Commission. It is a signal of a good functioning grievance mechanism and can be a start of a process to remediate forced labour before any investigation by the competent authorities would start.
3	**Will products be withheld during the investigation or only after a final decision has been taken?**	The investigation phase (preliminary phase + formal investigation) does not itself suspend the free movement of goods already on the market. Only after conducting a full investigation and finding that a product has been produced with forced labour, does the authority adopt a decision, which must then prohibit the product from being placed or made available on, or exported from the EU market, require economic operators to withdraw the product from the market, or require disposal.
4	**Are there any learnings from the implementation of the UFLPA (appreciating it's region specific)?**	The following source could be of interest to learn about the impact of the UFLPA: Assessing the Impact of the Uyghur Forced Labour Prevention Act After Thress Years (2025) by Laura T. Murphy and Charlotte Tate. Link: https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2025-08/250829_Murphy_Uyghur_Labor.pdf?VersionId=TmXC2QRdwJtrwnDLmwVhN1E9DqXD6Ltk
5	**If pre-investigations substantiate forced labour, do companies still have the opportunity to mitigate and remediate forced labour or does it automatically trigger Article 20.4?**	Companies will be able to address their forced labour risks at any time during an investigation. However, due diligence efforts as such will not prevent a competent authority from pursuing the investigation and eventually impose a ban. In order to avoid the ban, such efforts must address the forced labour risks effectively.

6	**Are there plans to give guidance for public companies and how to include criteria/clauses in public tenders?**	The Regulation requires the Commission to provide guidance for companies on how to carry out due diligence in relation to forced labour. Such guidance will not be specific to public procurement processes but may be useful in such processes too.
7	**Will there be further information on who in a company will be contacted in case of a complaint? Can companies name a contact point?**	The competent authorities will request a contact point in the first phase of the investigation. Yes, economic operators can name a contact point.
8	**What is the exact scope of the ban? If investigation concludes forced labour, does the ban apply only to those products, or the supplier/factory, or does it extend to a region (e.g. Xinjiang)?**	The EUFLR ban is product-specific and supply-chain-specific, not entity-wide or region-wide.
9	**Will investigation be done solely based on risk indication from the database, or is there always the need for further 'proof' that there has been forced labour? Will all products from Xinjiang be considered high risk?**	The database is only a tool for further prioritization for economic operators as well as competent authorities, not an automatic trigger for investigation. Some risks may not be in the database but investigations could still be triggered by other relevant information. There will always be a need for further proof. Under Article 14 (risk-based approach), the Commission and competent authorities must use a risk-based approach to prioritise which products to investigate, taking into account the scale and severity of suspected forced labour (including state-imposed forced labour), the volume of products on the market, and the share of the suspected forced-labour component in the final product.
10	**If the company identifies a potential forced labour case within their supply chain, would we ourselves apply the prioritization criteria described and then report to the Commission?**	The prioritization criteria in Art. 14 are meant for the competent authorities. However, they can be used by economic operators as useful criteria as well. The risks identified by economic operators do not have to be reported directly to the Commission. They can be used to prevent, mitigate and remediate forced labour before any investigation takes place.
11	**How many investigations does the Commission expect to conduct every year?**	It is too soon to know how many investigations will be conducted. That will depend on many factors such as the number of complaints received, the size of a potential investigation or the amount of resources available to investigate.
12	**What is the evidentiary threshold under the EUFLR for finding a violation? How does it compare to the 'probable cause' standard used for adopting a Finding under the US Tariff Act?**	The decision to open a preliminary assessment is risk-based (Article 14) and can be triggered by database listings, NGO reports, stakeholder submissions, or the authority's own initiative. A formal investigation under Article 18 can only be opened if the preliminary phase produces a "substantiated concern" that Article 3 has been violated. Article 2(n) defines this as "a well-founded reason, based on objective and verifiable information, for the competent authorities to suspect that products were likely made with forced labour." Article 20(1) states that the lead competent authority must "assess all information and evidence gathered pursuant to Chapter III, and, on that basis, establish whether the products … are in violation of Article 3. The burden of proof lies with the competent authorities, which must establish that a violation has occurred.

Risk Database & Guidelines · 7 questions

N°	Question	Answer

1	**Can you please advise some public information sources which could be used for risk assessment of forced labour (to prioritize)?**	The data base will provide relevant sources that could support the assessment of forced labor risks in different products linked to specific countries. The report developed jointly by Human Rights at Work and CORE for the Dutch Ministry provides a comprehensive overview of the highest forced labor risks by product category and import country, which may be of interest in this context (Link here: https://www.government.nl/documents/2025/02/28/assessing-forced-labour-risks-in-Dutch-)
2	**The risk database seems very theoretical and document based. How can we make sure that the impact of the regulation is more impactful and less bureaucratic?**	The database identifies forced labour risks for specific product categories linked to a specific geographic area or country from independent, verifiable and evidence-based sources. It is too soon to assess the impact of the EUFLR, we will need to wait for the implementation of the Regulation by the competent authorities and how companies are addressing this topic in a meaningful way.
3	**Is it possible to share this report for the Dutch Ministry?**	Please note the overview of risks in countries and product categories can be found in the annexes of the report. The link to the report developed by CORE and Human Rights at Work, commissioned by the Dutch Ministry can be found here: https://www.government.nl/documents/2025/02/28/assessing-forced-labour-risks-in-Dutch-imports
4	**Within the database will there be support/information on industries such as road haulage & rail where goods are transported across multiple borders?**	Only when studies are available that show risks in these countries related to these products.
5	**How will the EUFLR risk database help companies prioritize forced labour due diligence beyond Tier 1, especially where supply chains are complex and visibility is limited?**	When the company knows the products or components of its supply chain, it can check whether any of those are mentioned in the database. These will be the most known risks. However, other risk factors can also be used to prioritize, e.g. prevalence of forced labor in a specific sector/ country.
6	**When will the EU guidelines and risk database be published?**	The publication of the database and relevant guidelines will take place in June 2026. We suggest monitoring the EU Commission's website on this: https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/single-market/goods/forced-labour-regulation_en#supporting-tools
7	**Will the database match the List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor from ILAB?**	The database takes into account the US List of Goods from ILAB, yet it is important to bear in mind that the EUFLR database's sources need to qualify as "independent, verifiable and evidence-based sources" in order to be in the database, so the source qualifier is stricter in this sense than in the US List.

DD Methodology & Audits · 9 questions

N°	Question	Answer
1	**Is there any practical guidance on how to perform product-level HRDD? Or do we wait for guidance from the Commission due 14th June?**	A lot of guidance already exists. E.g. The ILO employers handbook (https://www.ilo.org/publications/combating-forced-labour-handbook-employers-and-business-1) and the former EU Commission guidance (https://circabc.europa.eu/rest/download/de3d9ab5-dca1-4037-aeb8-8704a379c67b

2	**What additional aspects should companies pay attention to when conducting due diligence if operating in a context with risk of state-imposed forced labour?**	When a link to state-imposed forced labour has been identified, companies will need to consider disengagement carefully and responsibly, since not all situations are equivalent. In some contexts it may be possible to switch suppliers, sourcing regions or materials to avoid participation in state-sponsored labour programmes. In others, companies may have more leverage to push for change through direct engagements with authorities, collective actions via industry associations or coordination with peer companies and governments. Often companies should responsibly disengage by planning a phased exit that minimizes harm to workers, avoiding abrupt withdrawal that could worsen the conditions for those affected and ensuring that any decision to stay or leave is regularly reviewed as circumstances change.
3	**In my work, the actual risks are beyond Tier 1. The challenge is the openness and transparency of Tier 1 suppliers. Any suggestions what to do in case of unwillingness of Tier 1 to cooperate and share information of their supply chain?**	In many cases, it is possible to identify and assess risks without directly engaging suppliers beyond Tier 1. Companies can use publicly available information on sector- and country-specific risks, consult organizations with expertise in workers' rights, and draw on insights from trade unions, NGOs, or other relevant stakeholders. In some situations, working with proxies and external sources of information is sufficient to gain a reasonable understanding of potential risks and prioritize due diligence efforts.
4	**In the absence of a formal HRDD framework, what identification methodology should we use? What guidelines apply, and do we follow the OECD Guidelines?**	Even though the EUFLR does not impose a human rights due diligence (HRDD) obligation, it is supportive of it, as one can see through the recitals of the law and the obligation of the Commission to issue guidelines on HRDD specific to forced labour. The Implementation Guidelines of the Commission will include guidance on HRDD frameworks that can be used for forced labor risks, using the OECD six-step HRDD framework.
5	**What is the role or what would be the role of MSIs to address and prevent FL?**	Based on our experience, multi-stakeholder initiatives (MSIs) are relevant for addressing a wide range of human rights risks, including forced labor. They can play an important role in tackling the root causes of these risks and in addressing the systemic issues that often drive forced labor.
6	**Do certifications (social audit, fair trade) fulfil the requirements? Or do certification bodies need to fulfil some sort of requirements?**	The Regulation itself contains no provisions establishing a formal role for certification schemes or social audits, and no accreditation or recognition regime for certification bodies. In case of a certified product, the economic operator may need to provide information to the competent authorities about its due diligence process, which may have been partly carried out by a certification body. The certification body may be requested by the economic operator to provide information on the process.
7	**How will the logic of 'how much of the product is made with forced labour' prioritization apply to products made with commodities where traceability is very difficult (e.g. chocolate with cocoa butter, cocoa liquor, palm oil)?**	Indeed, greater clarity is needed to identify *the share of the part suspected to have been made with forced labour in the final product.* It is expected that the guidance will provide indication on how this prioritization will work.
8	**How to envisage the Trade Unions playing a role in supporting business to identify & mitigate forced labour?**	Trade unions are generally an important stakeholder in identifying and addressing labor rights risks. As organizations that work closely with workers on the ground, they often have valuable knowledge of working conditions throughout the supply chain, including beyond Tier 1 suppliers. They can therefore provide important insights into labour rights issues, working conditions, and indicators of forced labor risk that may not be visible through company-led assessments alone.

9	**Under the EU Forced Labour Regulation, how should companies move beyond site-level supplier audits toward indicator-based forced labour assessments that test risk maturity across recruitment, worker voice, remediation, and product-level evidence, especially for migrant labour, subcontracting, and risks hidden beyond Tier 1?**	Under the EU Forced Labour Regulation, audits checking whether a single site is compliant on a given day are insufficient where forced labour risks are systemic, geographically dispersed, or hidden in sub-contracting chains. Companies need to shift toward assessing risk maturity across the system as a whole, using indicators that test how robust controls actually are rather than whether a snapshot looks clean. On recruitment, this means checking for recruitment fees, document retention, and visibility into agents used for migrant workers. On worker voice, it means assessing whether grievance mechanisms are genuinely accessible, trusted, and used, not just present on paper. On remediation, it means looking for evidence of cases raised, how they were resolved, and whether issues recur. Product-level evidence, such as traceability data and input-output ratios, helps verify production where supply chains are opaque. For risks beyond Tier 1, mapping needs to extend past direct contracts to identify who is actually supplying labour and materials further down the chain, where the highest risks are often hidden.

Remediation & Supplier Engagement · 6 questions

N°	Question	Answer
1	**Has the risk been considered that as a product ban, the EUFLR may incentivise companies to cut business with supply chain entities at the first hint of FL risk, instead of following HREDD best practices?**	The EUFLR does not intend to punish companies that find forced labour risks. There will be consequences if companies don't act on the risks. It is very important to create trust with suppliers to discuss forced labour issues and address them before they escalate. The text of the EUFLR supports indeed the concept of responsible disengagement (See recitals 59 and 36). From our perspective, an import ban should be seen a last resort tool; companies that are genuinely tackling forced labour, including though remediation, should not fear an import ban.
2	**How do you expect sectors like the cocoa industry, where child labour is omnipresent and the whole industry is aware of it, to react to this regulation?**	The scope of the EUFLR covers forced labour, including forced child labour. Investigations will be triggered by risks associated with a specific product, rather than an entire sector, which may make it easier to identify and address the relevant risks. In any case, it is important for companies in this sector to enhance their child labour risk assessments, including with regard to forced child labour as one of the worst forms of child labour.
3	**If an EUFL authority detects FL at a supplier a company is working with on corrective measures, would the company be penalized with a product ban, even if it is working with the supplier to implement corrective measures to stop FL?**	Once the decision is taken, the product will still be prohibited to enter the EU market until forced labour has been eliminated from the supply chain of the product. Corrective measures and other due diligence efforts will be taken into account but they will not prevent a ban unless they demonstrate the absence of forced labour.
4	**If the EU bans products stemming from forced labour, how can you build trust with companies admitting to some forced labour in their activities? There is no development perspective.**	The EUFLR does not intend to punish companies that find forced labour risks. There will be consequences if companies don't act on the risks. It is very important to create trust with suppliers to discuss forced labour issues and address them before they escalate. Please note, the competent authorities are the ones having the burden to prove there is forced labour present in a specific product from a specific company.

5	**Can remediation be a way for companies to avoid bans/sanctions? If a company has a forced labour strategy in place that includes immediate response to a FL alert and clear steps on providing remediation, are those sufficient grounds to avoid a ban?**	Absolutely. The regulation aims to fight forced labour. When companies have taken sufficient measures to remediate forced labour in such a way that it no longer exists, the product will not be banned from the market. Soley having a robust due diligence system in place in itself will not be sufficient to ensure forced labour is no longer there, although the expectation is that it will prevent, mitigate and remediate forced labour.
6	**How can companies create supplier transparency under EUFLR when many suppliers may fear that disclosing forced labour indicators will lead to immediate disengagement or loss of business?**	There is a lot to say on this topic. In general, companies can address this by separating disclosure from punishment: making clear upfront that identifying indicators of forced labour will trigger a remediation process rather than automatic delisting, except in cases of severe or uncooperative non-compliance. Without this assurance, suppliers have a strong incentive to conceal rather than report.

Evidence & Compliance Proof · 4 questions

N°	Question	Answer
1	**What documents are required from companies to show compliance of EUFLR that need to be submitted to authorities?**	This information will be provided by the Commission. Examples of potential information to be provided by companies will be provided in the implementation guidelines.
2	**What is the weight of having done your DD when forced labour is found in your supply chain? And what constitutes evidence of having addressed FL effectively so products are released?**	See above. A due diligence process itself is not enough proof. It is up to the authorities to decide, based on all the information they have collected, whether forced labour has been effecitvely remediated. Examples of potential evidence will be provided in the implementation guidelines.
3	**How should companies document their decision-making when a product or country is not highlighted in the EUFLR risk database, but internal indicators still suggest possible forced labour risk?**	As we have explained above, the database will be an indicative/risk awareness tool that will provide information on forced labour risks in a product linked to a specific country or region. It is not exhaustive, so the absence of a specific product or country risk in the database should not be interpreted as an absence of forced labour risk for that product. Companies should continue to conduct and document their due diligence process to tackle forced labour, despite the absence of mention of the product in the database.
4	**Could companies use the EUFLR risk database as one input into a forced labour maturity assessment to show how they prioritize, investigate, remediate, and monitor higher-risk supply chains?**	While the tool can be used to inform their forced labour risk assessment and guide prioritization, companies should conduct their forced labour risk assessment tailored to their business context and supply chain.

Proportionality & SMEs · 1 question

N°	Question	Answer

1	**For the de facto requirements for companies: Is there a consideration of proportionality of measures to the company's business model and linkage to the risk, in line with what is expected by UNGP, OECD Guidelines and CSDDD? Or are companies de facto expected to have full transparency of all entities in their supply chain?**	Proportionality is indeed a key element in a company's HRDD and also reflected in international standards. In fact, the competent authorities in their risk-based approach to investigations will focus on, to the extent possible, "*the economic operators and, where relevant, product suppliers involved in the steps of the supply chain as close as possible to where the forced labour is likely occurring, and with the highest leverage to prevent, mitigate and bring to an end the use of forced labour*" and they will also consider *"the size and economic resources*" of the company concerned, including whether it is an SME and the complexity of the supply chain. (See Art. 14 and also 18.3 of the EUFLR).