

**Illegal Logging Cases in
Romanian Forests - 2012**

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Introduction

During 2012, Greenpeace Romania launched a report about illegal logging in Romanian forests during 2009-2011. The results were based on answers from the authorities, respectively the Regional Hunting and Forestry Inspectorate, Police Inspectorates and Romanian Gendarmerie. The latter had, at that time, the attribution to make field inspections and give fines to timber thieves.

The results of the analysis were alarming: over 30,000 cases of illegal logging during 2009 and 2011 that is almost 30 cases per day. In 2013, Greenpeace made a follow-up of the analysis and sent again dozens of information requests to the authorities with forest responsibilities and which should have

1. Since 2013 the forests became the responsibility of the Delegated Ministry of Water, Forestry and Fisheries, from the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change.

2. http://ec/euroeeu/agriculture/fore/characteristics/index_en.htm

records on the illegal logging cases: the Forest Departments (coordinated by the Romanian Forest Enterprise-Romsilva, which owns and manages almost half of the state forest fund) Regional Hunting and Forestry Inspectorate (that has offices in each county and also nine regional offices, coordinated and financed by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry) and Police Inspectorates.

Without healthy and rich forests, the planet cannot sustain life. Until now, 80% of the world's forests have been degraded or destroyed.

Greenpeace has a worldwide campaign to stop deforestations until 2020, to protect what is left of these extraordinary ecosystems.

In Romania, forests cover approximately 29% of the country's total area, compared to the average of the EU, which is over 40%. Approximately 51.9% of the forest areas are in mountain areas and the rest in hill and lowland areas.

The logo for Greenpeace, featuring the word "GREENPEACE" in a bold, green, sans-serif font with a slightly irregular, hand-drawn appearance.

From the species structure point of view, forests are comprised of the following main species: beech (32%), spruce (23%), oak (17%), fir (5%), different species of hardwood (5%), other species of softwood (15%) and other resinous (2%). The tree species are distributed, mainly, according to landscape and phytoclimatic floors. Forests have a crucial role in maintaining the characteristics of the climate. Globally, deforestation is one of the main causes of climate change.

Sadly, the illegal logging cases phenomenon is very common worldwide and also in Romania. Greenpeace makes recurring investigations on that topic, in order to document the situation and to make a comprehensive inventory of the number of illegal logging cases that are reported by the authorities responsible for these aspects.



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Investigation results: Damage impact increases

According to the replies from the authorities, in 2012 there were a total of 19,495 illegal logging cases that is almost 53 cases per day that were sanctioned with fines or criminal records.

The Regional Hunting and Forestry Inspectorate, Police Inspectorates, reported a total of 3,008 cases, the Forest Departments registered 3,732 cases and the Police 14,513 cases.

Compared with the status from 2009-2011, when there have been 31,456 cases of illegal logging recorded, the number of cases registered in 2012 is almost double than the average number registered over the three years previously analyzed.

Total cases 2009-2011	Three year average	Cases 2012
31.456	10.485	19.495

Table 1

Evolution of illegal logging cases

Most cases of illegal logging were registered in Prahova county, on top of the list with 2,067 cases, Mures, Bacau, Suceava, Brasov and Maramures counties registering over 1,000 cases of illegal logging in 2012.

Tab le2

No	Județ	Numărul cazurilor de tăieri ilegale de arbori
1	Prahova	2.067
2	Mureș	1.532
3	Bacău	1.339
4	Suceava	1.158
5	Brașov	1.131
6	Maramureș	1.058
7	Covasna	970
8	Vâlcea	908
9	Gorj	853
10	Bihor	798

Top ten counties by number of illegal logging in 2012.

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Prahova county registered almost three times the number of the average registered between 2009-2011, in the report Greenpeace launched in 2012.

Also, a significant increase in the numbers of illegal logging is registered in Mures, Bacau, Suceava and Maramures counties.

Brasov county is a special case: there, during the last 3 years (2009-2011) only 87 cases were registered, but in 2012 there have been 1,131 cases of illegal logging.

County	No. of cases 2009-2011	Average 2009-2011	Cases 2012
Prahova	2.297	765	2.067
Mureş	438	136	1.532
Bacău	1.910	636	1.339
Suceava	1.160	386	1.158
Braşov	87	29	1.131
Maramureş	1.535	511	1.058
Covasna	494	164	970
Vâlcea	1.655	551	908
Gorj	2.503	834	853
Bihor	80	26	798

Table 3

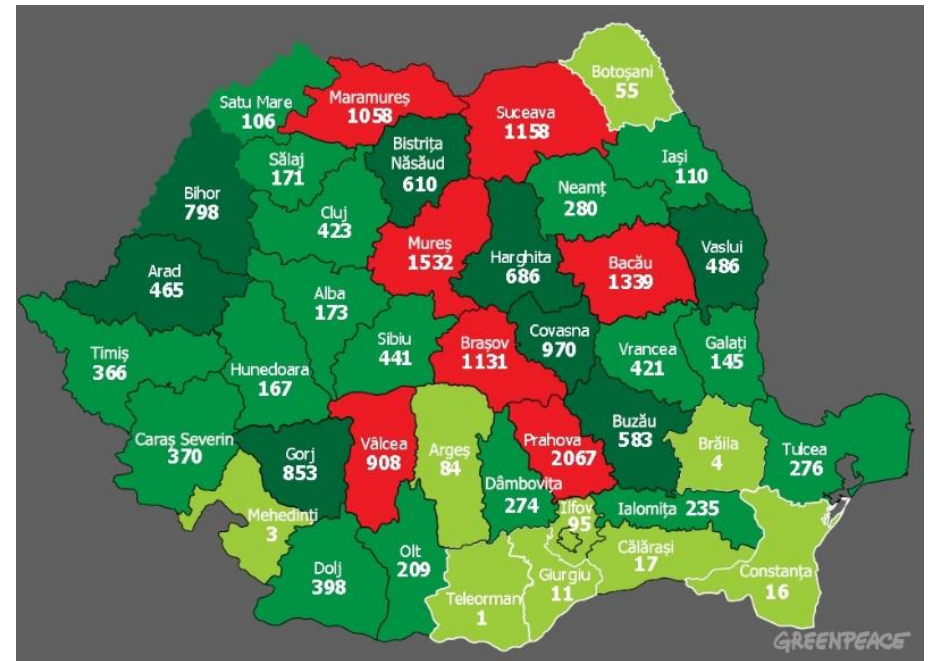
Top ten counties according to the numbers of illegal logging cases in 2012, comparing to the 2009-2011 time frame.

Comparing to the last years' analysis, the authorities replied more promptly to information requests, some making more detailed and complete reports for each case.

No.	County	Number of cases 2009-2011	Average 2009-2011	Number of cases 2012
1.	Argeş	6.458	2.152	84
2.	Gorj	2.503	834	853
3.	Prahova	2.297	765	2.067
4.	Bacău	1.910	636	1.339
5.	Vâlcea	1.655	551	908
6.	Maramureş	1.535	511	1.058
7.	Vrancea	1.302	434	421
8.	Neamţ	1.290	430	260
9.	Suceava	1.160	386	1.158
10.	Cluj	1.025	341	423

Table 4

First ten counties by number of illegal logging cases



Number of illegal logging cases registered by the authorities in 2012, listed by county.



Quantity of timber taken illegally from forests

According to the official sources, the total volume of timber exploited illegally in 2012 is of 120,836 cubic meters, which represents a loss of 17,357,598 lei (almost 4 million euros), taking into account only the timber illegally extracted.

In three counties it was reported an illegal timber extraction of over 10,000 cubic meters of timber, and in Maramures, the quantity was more than double: 21,135 cubic meters of illegal timber.

In 2009-2011, according to the replies from the authorities, there has been a 201,451,963 cubic meters illegal timber extraction.

According to official data recently published by the National Statistics Institute, in 2012, a quantity of

19,081 thousand cubic meters (brutto volume) of timber were collected legally, that is 376 thousands more than in 2011. Comparing to 2008 in 2012 the timber volume extracted was 14% higher, following the increasing trend in the last year. Practically, during 2009-2012, the official timber quantity legally harvested was increasing constantly, the highest increase being in 2011, compared to 2010, so 10%, respectively.

According to Romsilva, in 2012, out of the total state forest fund that it administers, a total volume of 9,5785 thousand cubic meters of timber was harvested.

For 2013, Romsilva has a target to harvest 9,770 thousand cubic meters of timber.

According to official statistical data, in 2012 the counties with the highest volume of timber harvested were Suceava (2,595.3 thousand cubic meters), Neamt (1,240 thousand cubic meters), Harghita (983.9 thousand cubic meters), Bacau (921.2 thousand cubic meters), Mures (921.2 thousand cubic meters), Arges (794.3 thousand cubic meters), Caras Severin (779.7 thousand cubic meters), Brasov (738.7 thousand cubic meters), Maramures (707.2 thousand cubic meters), Alba (664.7 thousand cubic meters), Hunedoara (596.3 thousand cubic meters), Bistrita-Nasaud (592.8 thousand cubic meters), Arad (587.5 thousand cubic meters), Covasna (576.4 thousand cubic meters) and Vrancea (568.4 thousand cubic meters).

It is noticed that Mures, Bacau, Suceava, Brasov, Maramures and Covasna are also among the counties with most cases of illegal logging registered by the authorities.

Tabel 5

County	Volume of illegally extracted timber in 2012
Maramureş	21.135
Suceava	16.574
Dâmbovița	16.240,451
Caraş-Severin	7.898
Satu Mare	6.400,231
Argeş	5.842
Bistrița-Năsăud	5.616,93
Hunedoara	5.564
Mureş	4.251
Harghita	3.103

Top ten counties ordered by county and decreasing volume of timber illegally extracted in 2012, according to the authorities.

Institutions with attributions of administration and control in forestry

Romania has 6.515.000 hectares of forests. From that amount, 3.339.000 belong to the state, 2.079.000 belong to physical and juridical entities, 1.024.000 million hectares are the public property of administrative units and 73 thousand hectares are private property of administrative units.

51% of the forest fund is public property, administered mainly by Romsilva – National Forestry Enterprise and 49% is private property, being administrated largely by private forest structures.

By the end of 2010 (according to Ministry order 904/2010) 463 forest administration structures were authorized and reauthorized, of which 325 forest districts from the Romsilva structure and 138 private forest districts.

In Romania, deforestation is very wide spread, especially in mountain counties and the authorities are responsible with the management and monitoring of forestry interventions. Also, in the case of illegal logging, it is the responsibility of the authorities to make inspections and to apply sanctions – and to file criminal cases where needed.

According to the current Forest Code, approved in March 2008 and updated in 2010, forest management is the responsibility of the Environment and Forest Ministry, which has, in turn, several institutions under it: Romsilva, Regional Forestry and Hunting Inspectorates, National Environmental Guard the National Environmental Protection Agency and the Forest Research and Management Institute.

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National Forest Enterprise - Romsilva

Romsilva's purpose is to sustainably and unitary manage the state owned forest fund, according to the forest plans and forest regime norms, in order to raise the forests' contribution to the improvement of the environmental conditions and to ensure the supply of timber, forest products and other specific forest services to the national economy.

It also handles the coordination and implementation of the national program of genetic improvement of horses, nationally and internationally promotion of valuable horses by organizing sports events, fairs and exhibitions, as well as research and development for raising fur animals.

Romsilva is functioning based on the Law no. 46/2008 (The Forest Code) and on the Government Decision no. 229/2009 regarding the reorganization of the National Forest Enterprise – Romsilva.

Within the structure of the National Forest Enterprise - Romsilva, there are also regional units with no juridical entity, such as Forest Departments and the Research and Development facility for fur animals in Targu Mureş and also The Forest Research and Management Institute.

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National Environmental Guard

The National Environmental Guard is a public institution that acts as a specialized department of the central public authority, with juridical form, financed entirely from the state budget and overseen by the public central authority for environmental protection. The National Environmental Guard is a specialized inspection and control body, and the commissaries are public servants with a specific statute and who can give sanctions, suspend or stop activities because of pollution or environment degradation or for not respecting the conditions imposed by the regulation acts and the established measures in the inspection and control reports.

The personnel with control attributions is invested with the state public authority during their service and in regards to their work responsibilities. The Environmental Guard controls the way the biological resources: wild flora, fauna and fisheries are capitalized; it organizes prevention and control actions, in order to avoid the damages to natural habitats in protected areas, controls the enforcement of environmental legislation in protected areas, by organizing mutual actions together with their representatives in order to protect natural habitats.

The Police

The department for fighting against forest crimes in the Romanian Police is carrying on direct and specific activities to prevent and fight against illegal logging and timber transports coming from the state and private forest fund, in each county.

It also carries on informative and operational activities, reports on crimes and applies sanctions in the forest and fishery regimes, cooperates with the county Forest District, the Forest and Regional Hunting and Forest Inspectorate, the territorial units of the Environmental Guard, Financial Guard, National Fishing and Aquaculture Agency and other institutions or organizations with attributions in this field.

Regarding forestry, the policemen make field controls, report the acts and file criminal records, according to each case.

The Regional Forest and Hunting Inspectorate (ITRSV)

Has representatives in all counties and nine regional offices. They coordinate the state and private forest districts.

ITRSV is an institution coordinated by the Environment and Forestry Ministry. It is organized as a zonal structure with inspectorates that has limited competences to the field. It coordinates, oversees and performs forestry and hunting field inspections and also implements and controls the forest regime in the respective counties. The forest and hunting inspectorates do not have juridical form, they are organized as compartments in the counties of ITRSV except where ITRSV head office is located. It is operating as a public institution and it is financed through the state budget.

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The exercised roles, the objectives and own attributions of ITRSV are established based on the provisions of Governmental Decision no. 333/2005 for reorganising the regional forestry and hunting inspectorates and on the provisions from the forestry and hunting regulations.

ITRSV has the responsibility to make field inspections, and report if there have been illegal logging cases. Also, the inspectors of these institutions can apply sanctions and make penal, criminal notifications in the case of illegal logging.

ITRSV București	ITRSV Focșani	ITRSV Brașov	ITRSV Vâlcea	ITRSV Suceava	ITRSV Cluj	ITRSV Oradea	ITRSV Timișoara	ITRSV Ploiești
Ifov	Brăila	Mureș	Vâlcea	Suceava	Cluj	Satu Mare	Timiș	Dâmbovița
Teleorman	Buzău	Harghita	Gorj	Bacău	Bistrița Năsăud	Sălaj	Caraș Severin	Argeș
Giurgiu	Galați	Covasna	Dolj	Iași	Maramureș	Bihor	Hunedoara	Prahova
Ialomița	Tulcea	Sibiu	Mehedinți	Botoșani	Alba	Arad	Regional structure of ITRSV	
Călărași	Vaslui	Brașov	Olt	Neamț				
Constanța	Vrancea							

Table 6

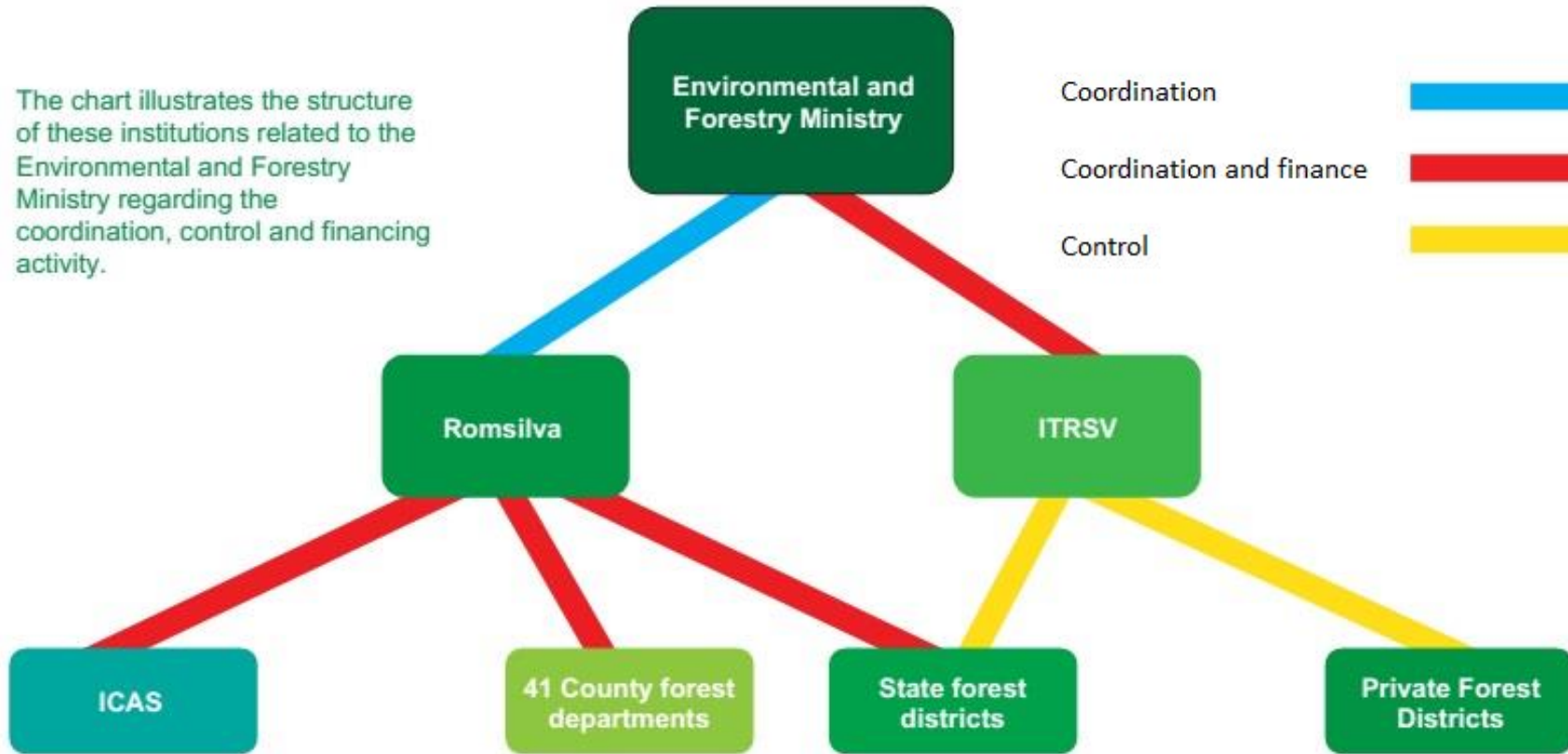
The Forest Research and Management Institute

The Forest Research and Management Institute (ICAS) was established in 1933 as a public institution of national interest, specialized in research and implementation of the new technologies in the public and private forest sector, in order to ensure a sustainable management of Romanian forests .

ICAS is an IUFRO member (International Union of Forest Research Organizations), EFI (European Forest Institute), IPGRI (International Plant Genetic Resources Institute), ISTA (International Seed Testing Association) and EARSeL (European Association of Teledetection Labs).



The chart illustrates the structure of these institutions related to the Environmental and Forestry Ministry regarding the coordination, control and financing activity.



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Methodology

Greenpeace has undergone, during the months April-July 2013, an investigation about the number of cases of illegal logging in 2012.

The investigation was based on the answers given by the authorities (Regional Hunting and Forestry Inspectorate, Police Inspectorates and Forest Districts) that were asked for information about illegal logging cases, fines, criminal records, related to illegal logging in all the country's counties.

Greenpeace Romania sent written information requests to the institutions and received official answers regarding the number of illegal logging, crimes and criminal records.

95 written requests were sent and 87 answers were received from the authorities.

Conclusions

- The illegal logging phenomena is getting worse. The number of illegal logging cases registered by the authorities has risen to an alarming rate from 30 per day during 2009-2011 to 53 per day in 2012.
- Among the most affected counties are Prahova, Mures, Bacau, Suceava, Brasov, Maramures, Covasna, Gorj and Cluj, with an increased number of illegal logging.
- Comparing to the previous analysis made by Greenpeace, the authorities replied, this time, more promptly to the information requests, some making detailed and complete reports for each case individually.

Greenpeace is an independent campaigning organization using non-violent, creative confrontation to expose global environmental problems and to force solutions which are essential to a green and peaceful future

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