



*Western Balkan countries largely rely on biomass fuels for heating (mainly firewood), because of their low cost and widespread availability.*

Biomass combustion in small-scale heating appliances, however, is frequently marked as one of the main channels through which particles and pollutant gases enter the atmosphere. Although the efficiency and other technical specifications of the system are important factors, the level of particle emissions is mainly driven by the fuel combusted.

During biomass combustion, particulate matter (PM) emissions are dominated by small particles that can cause severe health effects such as lung cancer, and chronic lung and heart diseases. According to report about Global Disease, it is estimated that in 2010 approximately 3.5 million deaths worldwide were attributed to smoke exposure from residential solid fuel combustion. The effect of particulate matter goes beyond risks to human health as they also affect weather and reduce visibility. Also, black smoke that is produced through incomplete combustion contributes to global warming because these particles absorb solar light.

Hence, increased use of biomass for heating must be achieved without increasing other harmful emissions such as particulate matter, nitric oxides, carbon monoxide, and organic compounds.

## **BUY ONLY LEGAL AND SUSTAINABLY PRODUCED BIOMASS**

58% of biomass consumed in the Western Balkans came from an unregistered source. Major component of unregistered consumption is unregistered (illegal) logging by local communities near forest areas and by private forest owners. Illegal logging is a term that describes forestry practices including wood harvesting, processing and trade - that do not conform to the laws. Illegal processing and export, the harvesting, the access to the forest and logging without permission as well as logging in excess of quota are just some of the many examples of illegalities.

The effects of illegal logging are wide ranging: loss of habitat and biodiversity to erosion and land degradation, desertification and climate change to social disruption and economic impacts. Illegal logging also resolves in erosion and degradation of river basins and water quality.

Even though biomass is renewable – there are limits to the amount of biomass that can be produced without harming areas under forests or food supply. To protect forest against illegal

A deliverable of Heat Wisely, public awareness raising project on biomass-based heating in the Western Balkans



logging - restoring degraded forest areas through natural regeneration must be undertaken. Protect forests and save them for your kids!

Biomass originates from a LEGAL and SUSTAINABLE source if it has been legally harvested, in accordance with the national legislation, and if complies with the sustainability criteria.

Buy certified biomass only

- Coming from [PEFC](#) and [FSC](#) certified forests: visit to find a certified retailer nearest you
- Verified independently by [EU recognized certification schemes](#)

A deliverable of Heat Wisely, public awareness raising project on biomass-based heating in the Western Balkans

