

Due to the import of **raw materials**, Germany, along with Britain, is the biggest driver of mining-related **forest destruction** within the **European Union**.

This is the conclusion of a study by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and the Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration.

The team led by Tobias Kind-Rieper of the **WWF** examined how much forest was destroyed worldwide between 2000 and 2020 through the mining of **coal**, metal ores and industrial minerals.

Germany and Britain were the biggest drivers of mining-related forest destruction at the EU level, with a share of around 19% each, according to the study. For **Germany**, this corresponds to an area of 265 square kilometres of forest.

In Germany, the imported raw materials are used, among other things, in the automotive industry (17%) or in machinery and plant construction (11%).

“Our hunger for raw materials destroys forests elsewhere, poisons groundwater and robs people and animals of their livelihoods,” said Kind-Rieper. Rainforests are often destroyed. More than **80%** of the direct deforestation caused by mining took place in 10 countries alone during the study period. Most forest was cleared in **Indonesia** (about 3,500 square kilometres), Brazil (about 1,700 square kilometres) and Russia (about 1,300 square kilometres).

China (18%), the EU (14%) and the United States (12%) are the most responsible. A large part (71%) of the destroyed forest area is due to the mining of coal and gold. For the calculations, the research team examined international trade flows and analysed satellite images.

For the calculations, the research team examined international trade flows and analysed satellite images. For the study, not only the direct, but in some cases also the indirect destruction of forests within a radius of 50 kilometres was calculated. This includes, for example, transport routes around mining operations.

According to the calculations, a total area of around **755,900 square kilometres** of forest was cleared in the vicinity of raw material mines worldwide between 2000 and 2020. This corresponds to an area more than twice the size of Germany.

However, the data on indirect deforestation should be treated with caution, the study said. It cannot always be clearly determined whether the felling of trees in the vicinity of the mine is directly attributable to the operation.

How can the **environmental damage** be reduced? According to geoecologist Gudrun Franken of the Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources, environmentally sound mining is certainly possible.

“If high [environmental standards](#) are specified and these are also monitored accordingly,” said Franken. An environmental impact assessment is mandatory in mining countries worldwide.

However, demanding good practice also requires a lot of knowledge on the part of the authorities and the enforcement of corresponding conditions. According to Franken, in order to **keep environmental damage as low as possible, it is also important that areas are renaturalized and habitats are restored.**

Source: [starconnect media](#)