THE EU DEFORESTATION REGULATION'S "MYTH BUSTER": A CRITICAL MULTIMODAL ANALYSIS OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE WEBPAGE AND ITS AUTOMATED TRANSLATION INTO ITALIAN

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Abstract

This paper undertakes a critical examination of the European Union's communication strategy for the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR), focusing on the "Myth Buster" webpage and its Italian automated translation. The website employs a strategy aimed at broad accessibility, which, however, seems to reinforce the epistemic authority of English. The Italian translation is positioned as a provisional access point, shaping public engagement and perceptions of EU environmental policies across a linguistically and culturally diverse citizenry. The paper also evaluates the role of visual discourse in this strategy, particularly in terms of its effectiveness in debunking the "myths" addressed by the webpage, which forms part of the EUDR implementation procedures, and the communicative challenges this strategy entails. The insights presented in this paper relate to the theme of the international seminar *Social Media, Disinformation and the Future of Open Debate* insofar as the efforts to correct misguided interpretations of the EUDR risk generating a further round of misinterpretation. The paper is thus set against the backdrop of potential political manipulation and disinformation, a risk which always arises in the EU's complex cultural reality when carefully checked translations are not used.

1. Introduction

The European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR), formally Regulation (EU) 2023/1115[1], constitutes one of the most ambitious recent attempts to reduce the EU's contribution to global deforestation and forest degradation (European Parliament and Council 2023). In force since June 2023, the EUDR introduces stringent due diligence obligations, including the provision of verifiable geolocation data and traceability mechanisms capable of demonstrating that supply chains are deforestation-free (European Commission 2020). Given the technical complexity of the Regulation and the diversity of actors involved – from smallholder farmers to multinational corporations and third-country governments – it is unsurprising that the EUDR has generated extensive

[1] The full text of the EUDR can be accessed here: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32023R1115.

debate and, crucially, interpretative issues. These misunderstandings have circulated widely in public discourse and have required targeted communicative interventions by the European Commission. One such intervention is the "EUDR – Myth Buster" webpage[2] (European Commission 2023), designed to clarify common misconceptions and provide accessible explanations of the Regulation's aims and requirements.

Communicating such a complex policy across the European Union's 27 Member States presents a significant challenge. The EU is characterized by its vast linguistic and cultural diversity, with 24 official languages forming part of Europe's "immense and diverse cultural heritage" (Gotti 2014: 195). Ensuring that all citizens have equitable access to institutional information is not only a legal obligation but also a fundamental condition for democratic legitimacy and public participation (Gazzola 2016: 547). This challenge becomes even more pronounced in policy domains – such as environmental regulation – where technical terminology, specialized procedures, and high political sensitivity converge. As Maci *et al*. (2024: 5) observe, "the generation, circulation, and application of information is a highly complex phenomenon which has immense bearing on how society operates".

In this context, the European Commission increasingly relies on digital tools to disseminate information rapidly and efficiently. Among these tools, machine translation (MT) has become a central component of the EU's multilingual communication infrastructure. MT promises speed and scalability in contexts where large volumes of information must be made available across multiple languages (Hutchins 2005: 8; Giampieri 2023: 12). However, its use in sensitive policy communication raises important questions about accuracy, register, and the potential for misinterpretation – particularly when translation quality is understood as a dynamic, negotiated concept shaped by purpose, utility, time, and cost (Biel 2017: 33). The Myth Buster webpage is a case in point, as it is translated into multiple languages using MT. Interestingly, the webpage explicitly refers to its English version as the most reliable source, which raises doubts about what can be trusted when the whole goal of the webpage is to convey the message "trust us, not others". At the same time, however, it cites the text of the EUDR, a multilingual official document produced by the European Commission, where both the English and Italian versions hold equal authority[3]. Arguably, in legal translation, "each authentic text is deemed independent for the purpose of interpretation by the courts and no single text (not even the original) should prevail in the event of an ambiguity or textual diversity between the various language versions" (Šarcević 1997: 71). As equally authentic instruments of the law, "parallel legal texts can be effective only if all indirect addressees are guaranteed equality before the law" (Šarcević 2000: 71). One reason for this is that "the practice of giving priority to the original text has been declared incompatible with the principle of equal authenticity" (Šarcević 1997: 200). Thus, citing the EU's multilingual legal texts serves to re-establish parity between the

[2] https://green-forum.ec.europa.eu/nature-and-biodiversity/deforestation-regulation-implementation/eudr-myth-buster_en.

[3] Machine translation was not employed in the translation of either the EUDR official text (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32023R1115&qid=1687867231461) or the EUDR Guidance Document (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52025XC04524.

two languages, and indirectly substantiates the Italian version of the "Myth Buster" webpage[4] as a reliable text.

Against this background, this paper examines the "EUDR – Myth Buster" webpage. More specifically, it analyses the multimodal structure of the English webpage, focusing on how visual and verbal resources work together to construct clarity, authority, and persuasive force; examines the automated Italian translation, assessing whether and how MT-related limitations affect nuance, register, and the communicative effectiveness of the myth-busting strategy; and explores the broader implications of relying on automated translation for EU policy communication, particularly in relation to linguistic equality and the risk of generating further misunderstanding.

The working hypothesis is that while the multimodal design of the webpage is intended to enhance accessibility and reduce cognitive load, the automated translation may introduce subtle shifts in meaning and tone that cumulatively weaken the persuasive intent of the myth-busting discourse. Moreover, the presence of an explicit disclaimer directing users back to the English version suggests an implicit hierarchy of epistemic authority that merits critical examination.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows: Section 2 introduces the EUDR and outlines the communicative role of the "Myth Buster" webpage; Section 3 examines multilingual and machine-translated communication in the EU as the contextual framework for the case study; Section 4 analyses the English webpage and discusses selected instances of the Italian automated translation; Section 5 discusses the broader implications of the findings; and Section 6 presents concluding reflections on the challenges and potential future directions for multilingual EU communication.

2. The EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) and the "Myth Buster" webpage

The implementation of the EUDR has generated a wide range of reactions among stakeholders, including producers, traders, civil society organizations, and third-country governments. As documented in recent studies and policy reports, concerns have emerged regarding administrative burdens, compliance costs, fairness of risk classification, and the potential impact on smallholders and SMEs (Judijanto 2025; Villiers 2022; Gallemore *et al.* 2025; Harrison and Paulini 2024; EuroCommerce 2024). These concerns have circulated widely in public debate and have contributed to the formation of a series of "myths" about the Regulation. In response, the European Commission created the "EUDR – Myth Buster" webpage (Figure 1), a digital communication tool designed to clarify misconceptions and provide accessible explanations of the Regulation's aims and requirements:

[4] https://green-forum.ec.europa.eu/nature-and-biodiversity/deforestation-regulation-implementation/eudr-myth-buster_en?prefLang=it. As specified by the European Commission this "translation is generated by eTranslation, a machine translation tool provided by the European Commission. Machine translation can give you a basic idea of the content in a language you understand. It is fully automated and involves no human intervention" (European Commission 2025: n.p.). Further information about the automated translation process can be accessed here: https://commission.europa.eu/languages-our-websites/use-machine-translation-europa_en.



Figure 1. "EUDR – Myth Buster" webpage (March 12, 2026)

The webpage presents ten commonly circulated myths about the EUDR (Figure 2), each followed by a corresponding "Reality" statement. These myths reflect concrete and widely expressed challenges articulated by diverse stakeholders across the globe (Berning *et al.* 2025: 3). For example, they include fears of excessive bureaucracy ("A mountain of paperwork"), concerns about protectionism ("A trade ban"), anxieties about competitiveness ("A death sentence for competitiveness"), doubts about the fairness of country risk classification, perceptions of insufficient consultation, worries about price increases, and apprehensions about the impact on smallholders, SMEs, due diligence procedures, and border controls. The list summarizes objections that have been raised in public debate and documented in academic and policy literature, providing the contextual foundation for the Commission's myth-busting intervention.

The ten myths addressed on the webpage can be summarized as follows:

a) Administrative Burden (Myth 1: "A mountain of paperwork") – concerns about the complexity and cost of due diligence requirements, particularly for SMEs and producers in developing countries (Judijanto 2025; Villiers 2022).

b) Commercial Prohibition (Myth 2: "A trade ban") – misinterpretations of the EUDR as a protectionist trade barrier (Ministry of Trade of Indonesia 2022).

c) Impact on Competitiveness (Myth 3: "A death sentence for competitiveness") – fears that compliance costs will undermine competitiveness, especially for operators unable to adapt quickly (European Commission 2020).

d) Fairness of Risk Classification (Myth 4: "Risk classification is unfair and outdated") – concerns that the methodology for classifying countries by deforestation risk may be outdated or biased (Gallemore *et al.* 2025).

e) Lack of Consultation (Myth 5: "The EU has not been listening") – perceptions among some groups that their concerns were not adequately addressed during the legislative process (Harrison and Paulini 2024).

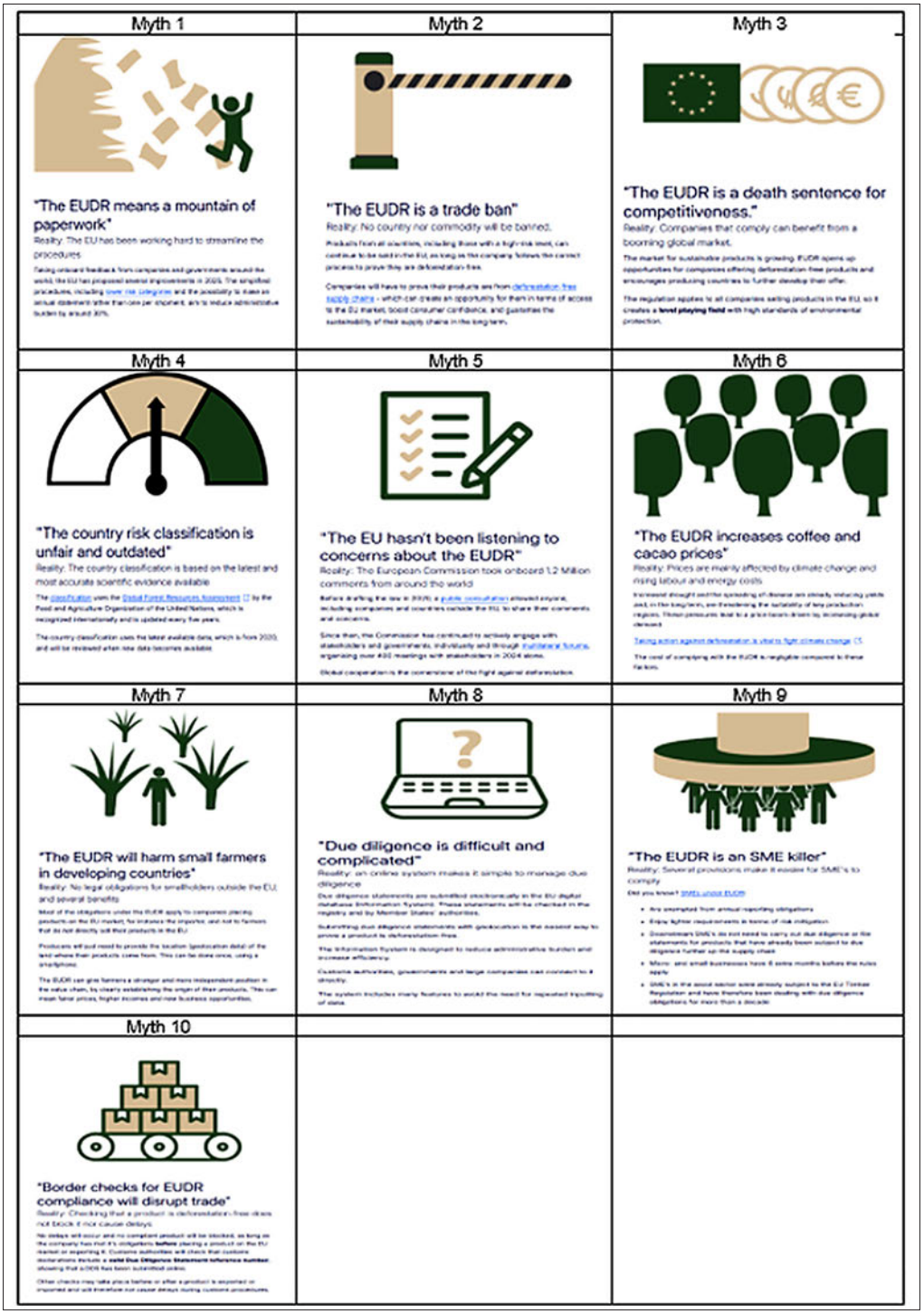

Figure 2. The 10 myths from the "EUDR Myth Buster" webpage (March 12, 2026)

f) Price Increases (Myth 6: "The EUDR increases coffee and cocoa prices") – fears that the EUDR will drive up commodity prices, despite evidence that climate-related factors are the primary drivers of volatility (Gilbert 2024; Cilas and Bastide 2020).

g) Harm to Smallholders (Myth 7: "The EUDR will harm small farmers") – concerns that small-scale farmers may lack the resources and digital literacy needed for compliance (Gneiting and Sonenshine 2018).

h) Difficulty of Due Diligence (Myth 8: "Due diligence is difficult and complicated") – anxieties about the technical demands of geolocation and verification systems (Solar *et al.* 2025).

i) Impact on SMEs (Myth 9: "A killer for SMEs") – fears that compliance costs will disproportionately affect smaller operators (EuroCommerce 2024).

l) Disruption of Border Controls (Myth 10: "It disrupts trade") – concerns that new customs checks will delay trade flows (Pauwelyn 2024).

By presenting these myths alongside concise "Reality" statements, the webpage seeks to mitigate anxieties, clarify regulatory requirements, and foster smoother implementation. The combination of visual and verbal resources is intended to make the information accessible to a broad audience, including non-experts and stakeholders with varying levels of familiarity with EU regulatory processes, in consideration of "the strict relationship existing between the community of users and the meaning representation of legal discourse" (Gotti and Williams 2010: 11) in the EU. The "Myth Buster" webpage thus constitutes a key component of the Commission's broader communication strategy for the EUDR.

3. Multilingual and Machine-translated communication in the EU

Multilingual communication is a defining feature of the European Union's institutional identity; it is essential for democratic legitimacy, transparency, and public participation. Yet the practical implementation of multilingualism is complex, particularly when the EU must communicate highly technical or politically sensitive policies such as the EUDR.

Communicating specialized regulatory content across such diverse groups requires balancing precision with accessibility. In an awareness of the language problems and the need to promote clarity (Williams 2011: 148), the EU has increasingly relied on digital communication strategies that combine simplification and multimodality. Multimodal strategies reflect broader trends in institutional communication, where visual and verbal resources co-construct meaning (Kress and van Leeuwen 2001, 2006; Baldry and Thibault 2006a; Sindoni 2013; Sindoni and Moschini 2021; Vasta 2001). However, the volume of material to be translated, combined with the need for rapid dissemination, has led to the increasing integration of MT into institutional workflows. Traditionally, MT has been subject to human correction (Hutchins 2002: 159, emphasis added):

> Many large organizations have large volumes of technical and administrative documentation that have to be translated into many languages. For many years, MT with human assistance has been a cost-effective option for multinational corporations and other multilingual bodies (e.g. *the European Union*).

But this is not the case for the "EUDR – Myth Buster" webpage, where the output of neural machine translation is directly offered to the user.

Neural machine translation (NMT)[5] systems such as the European Commission's eTranslation tool are trained on extensive multilingual corpora and are capable of producing fluent, contextually plausible output (Way 2019: 332). Their scalability makes them particularly attractive for institutional communication, where speed and efficiency are essential. Yet the use of MT in sensitive policy contexts raises important considerations. While MT can provide a general understanding of content, it may struggle with specialized terminology, idiomatic expressions, or register-specific nuances (O'Hagan and Ashworth 2002: 38). These limitations are especially relevant in domains such as environmental regulation, where precision is crucial. As has been noted (Adami and Pinto 2019: 71; Manzella 2025: 91-93), linguistic choices in institutional communication are never neutral: they contribute to constructing authority, legitimacy, and the perceived reliability of the message.

The EU explicitly acknowledges the limitations of its automated translation. Machine-translated webpages are accompanied by disclaimers indicating that the content is generated automatically (and may contain inaccuracies) and users are encouraged to consult the English version for authoritative information. This practice implicitly reinforces the epistemic primacy of English within the EU's digital communication ecosystem, positioning translated versions as provisional access points rather than fully equivalent texts. Such dynamics resonate with broader discussions on the evolving role of English as a transnational lingua franca in EU communication (Williams 2011: 146; Zollo 2024: 185).

The "EUDR – Myth Buster" webpage exemplifies this communicative configuration. To access the Italian page, three distinct steps are necessary: (1) clicking on "EN"; (2) selecting the desired language (e.g. Italian); and (3) clicking on "Tradurre in italiano" (Translate into Italian) as the page displayed after Step 2 remains in English. The resulting Italian version is produced entirely through eTranslation and includes a prominent disclaimer inviting users to "return to the original language." This signals both transparency about the translation process and a recognition that automated output may not fully capture the nuances of the Source Text (ST). The implications of this configuration – particularly in relation to register, metaphor, and persuasive intent – are central to understanding how automated translation interacts with multimodal design in EU policy communication.

The next section examines these issues in detail by analysing the multimodal structure of the English webpage and the linguistic features of its Italian automated translation.

[5] "Neural machine translation is a new breed of corpus-based machine translation (also called data-driven or, less often, corpus-driven machine translation). It is trained on huge corpora of pairs of source language segments (usually sentences) and their translations, that is, basically from huge translation memories containing hundreds of thousands or even millions of translation units. In this sense, it is similar to the statistical machine translation technology that was the state of the art until very recently, but uses a completely different computational approach: neural networks (Forcada 2017: 293).

4. Analysis

4.1. Multimodal analysis of the English "Myth Buster" webpage

The "EUDR – Myth Buster" webpage is organized around a highly regular and visually coherent structure that plays a central role in shaping the reader's engagement with the content. From a multimodal perspective, the webpage exemplifies what Baldry and Thibault (2006b: 177-180) describe as a "supercluster": a higher-level unit composed of multiple coordinated clusters, each functioning as a recognizable mini-genre. As shown in Figure 2, the page consists of ten clusters, each dedicated to a specific myth and its corresponding "Reality" statement. These clusters share the same chromatic palette, layout, and internal organization, creating a repeated pattern that guides the user through the content with minimal cognitive effort. The uniformity of these clusters – each comprising a visual element, a title, and a block of explanatory text – creates a predictable reading pathway that supports comprehension and reinforces the rhetorical purpose of the webpage. As Baldry and O'Halloran (2010: 187) also note, such clusters become the basic units with which users interact, shaping both navigation and meaning-making. Icons, illustrations, and simplified graphic representations are used to instantiate both the "myth" and the "reality," providing immediate visual cues that anchor the reader's interpretation. This aligns with Kress's (2010: 162) notion of 'multimodal orchestration', in which visual and verbal modes are coordinated to produce persuasive meaning. The icons are not decorative: they function as semiotic resources that frame the problem and its solution, reinforcing the intended reading of the text. The following examples (see Figure 2) analyse the relationship between visual elements and accompanying English texts, investigating how their interplay contributes to the construction of 'myth-busting' discourse.

a) "Mountain of paperwork" (Myth 1):

Visual: An icon depicting a tiny person dwarfed by a huge pile of documents, visually embodying overwhelming bureaucracy (myth), followed by a person leaping over a stack of papers, symbolizing overcoming the hurdle (reality).

Verbal: "The EUDR means a mountain of paperwork" (Myth);

"The EU has been working hard to streamline the procedures" (Reality).

This is a highly effective visual-verbal pairing. The image of bureaucratic overload is universally understood, directly reinforcing the "myth." The subsequent verbal resource illustrating how to overcome the obstacle powerfully supports the "reality" of streamlined procedures. The visual functions as a robust, non-linguistic anchor, solidifying the message regardless of subtle translational shifts. This reinforces a clear Problem-Solution (PS) pattern (Hoey 2001: 123), whereby a problem is posed ("The myth", instantiated both visually and verbally) followed by a solution to this misleading information ("Reality").

b) "Trade ban" (Myth 2):

Visual: an icon of a standard road barrier or checkpoint, raised to allow passage (for the reality statement). For the myth, the implication is a closed barrier.

Verbal: "The EUDR is a trade ban" (Myth); "No country nor commodity will be banned" (Reality).

The barrier gate icon visually encodes restriction, yet its green post subtly signals environmental legitimacy, undermining the notion of exclusion. It is to be noted that green can also be associated with hope (Kress and van Leeuwen 2002: 354). The term "ban" has strong prohibitive force, thus the multimodal texts under examination are shown to strategically construct and construe (Vasta 2024: 17) the initial myth of exclusion, thereby heightening the rhetorical impact of its subsequent textual refutation.

c) "The EUDR will harm small farmers" (Myth 7):

Visual: A stylized image of crops growing, with a small human figure standing among them, representing smallholders and their agricultural livelihood.

Verbal: "EUDR will harm small farmers in developing countries" (Myth); "No legal obligations for smallholders outside the EU, and several benefits" (Reality).

This visual directly depicts the *subject* of the myth – small farmers and their crops. Importantly, it does not visually endorse the "harm" but simply establishes the context. This is a common multimodal strategy in persuasive communication: illustrating the topic of concern while allowing the verbal text to provide the corrective or reassuring message (Song *et al.* 2022; Hameleers *et al.* 2020). The directness of the image helps to maintain focus on the vulnerable group discussed.

d) "Due diligence is difficult and complicated" (Myth 8)

Visual: A laptop screen displaying a large question mark, symbolizing confusion or uncertainty with digital processes.

Verbal : "Due diligence is difficult and complicated" (Myth); "An online system makes it simple to manage due diligence" (Reality).

The laptop with a question mark immediately visualizes the technical apprehension and complexity associated with digital compliance, directly aligning with the "myth". The subsequent text, explaining the online system as the "reality," gains immediate visual context and becomes more readily understandable.

The design of the webpage thus serves several functions simultaneously: it simplifies complex regulatory information; it guides the reader through a predictable rhetorical structure; it anchors interpretation through visual metaphors; it reinforces the authority of the "Reality" statements; it reduces cognitive load by providing consistent visual cues.

These features make the English webpage a compelling example of how multimodal resources can be mobilized to support institutional communication in a digital environment. They also provide the baseline against which the Italian automated translation must be evaluated, since any shift in verbal nuance interacts with a highly structured visual framework. The next subsection examines how the automated Italian translation aligns with – or diverges from – this multimodal configuration.

4.2. Analysis of the Italian automated translation

The Italian version of the "EUDR – Myth Buster" webpage is produced entirely through the European Commission's eTranslation system and is accompanied by a prominent disclaimer: *"Questa pagina è stata tradotta grazie alla traduzione automatica. Aiutaci a migliorare il nostro servizio rispondendo a due domande. Ritorna alla*

lingua originale (English)" ("This page has been translated using automatic translation. Help us improve our service by answering two questions. Return to the original language (English)"). This metalinguistic signal frames the translated text as a provisional aid rather than an authoritative version, implicitly reinforcing the primacy of the English ST.

Within this communicative configuration, the automated translation must be examined not only for semantic accuracy but also for its handling of register, metaphor, and institutional tone – elements that are central to the persuasive intent of the myth-busting discourse.

A close examination of selected expressions reveals several patterns characteristic of machine translation: semantic adequacy is generally maintained, but subtle shifts in nuance, idiomaticity, and pragmatic force emerge. These shifts, although individually minor, may cumulatively affect the clarity and rhetorical effectiveness of the message.

a) "Riscontri" for "Feedback"

English Version	Italian Version
Taking onboard *feedback* from companies and governments around the world, the EU has proposed several improvements in 2025	Prendendo in considerazione i *riscontri* delle imprese e dei governi di tutto il mondo, l'UE ha proposto diversi miglioramenti nel 2025

Table 1. Example of ENG-to-ITA translation from Myth 1

The English term *feedback* in policy contexts typically denotes active input, reactions, or constructive criticism from stakeholders, implying a dynamic and participatory process. More generally, "policy feedback denotes the potential for policies to transform politics and, as a result, influence future courses of policy development" (Moynihan and Soss 2014: 321). While *riscontri* can, in certain contexts, approximate to "feedback," its primary meanings in Italian lean towards "findings," "results," "verifications," or "confirmation" (Gabrielli 2011). The choice of *riscontri* subtly shifts the meaning towards a more passive reception of established findings rather than an active engagement with diverse perspectives, potentially dampening the persuasive argument that the EU actively *listened* and EU stakeholders' opinions matter. Arguably, a more contextually appropriate translation in Italian would be *contributi*, *pareri,* or *osservazioni* ("contributions", "opinions", "observations"), which better capture the democratic nature of putting forward alternative views.

b) "Trade ban" → "Divieto commerciale"

English Version	Italian Version
The EUDR is a *trade ban*	L'EUDR è un *divieto commerciale*

Table 2. Example of ENG-to-ITA translation from Myth 2

"Trade ban" in the EUDR myth context is used to express a fear of exclusion or market restriction – not to denote a literal embargo; it thus refers to a misconception, not an actual policy. The wording *divieto commerciale*, on the other hand, implies a formal and total prohibition, which may mislead readers into believing the EU has enacted a real ban. While the English metaphorical "ban" only evokes concern, the Italian *divieto* risks reinforcing that concern as fact. Translating 'trade ban' as *divieto commerciale* introduces a formal, legalistic tone that implies an actual prohibition, thereby distorting the original rhetorical intent. This can be seen as a case of "demetaphorisation", whereby "the metaphorical expression in the ST has been replaced by a more general expression in the target text" (Schäffner 2004b: 139). Such an approach is problematic especially in policy discourse, where nuance shapes institutional and societal power relations (Fairclough 1989: 163), public understanding and stakeholder response.

c) "Death sentence for competitiveness" → "Condanna a morte per la competitività"

English Version	Italian Version
EUDR is a *death sentence* for competitiveness	L'EUDR è una *condanna a morte* per la competitività

Table 3. Example of ENG-to-ITA translation from Myth 3

In collocation with "competitiveness", the metaphorical expression 'death sentence' acquires the meaning of absolute ruin or inevitable failure. *Condanna a morte* is a literal translation of the English phrase. In Italian, a human translator might have chosen more naturally sounding alternatives such as *un colpo mortale per la competitività* (a fatal blow) or *la fine/morte della competitività* (the end/death of competitiveness) to maintain the appropriate register for a formal myth-busting exercise in keeping with the principle that "good translators implement fluent strategies: they avoid syntactical fragmentation, polysemy […] and shifts in *register*" (Venuti 2007: 59, emphasis added).

d) "Killer for SMEs" → "Killer per le PMI"

English Version	Italian Version
The EUDR is an SME *killer*	L'EUDR è un *killer* per le PMI

Table 4. Example of ENG-to-ITA translation from Myth 9

The MT's literal transfer, while conveying the strong negative sentiment of the "myth," fails to adapt to the Target Text (TT)'s stylistic expectations for institutional communication. Figurative meanings are certainly employed in the intensification of processes (Martin and White 2005: 147). Yet the direct borrowing of the English word "killer" into Italian, while understandable, could have been rephrased as *un duro colpo per le PMI* (a hard blow for SMEs), *deleterio per le PMI* (deleterious for SMEs), or even *la rovina delle PMI* (the ruin of SMEs) as "the existence of experiential motivation does

not necessarily mean expressions will have identical uses in different languages" (Deignan and Potter 2004: 1250).

These examples, while generally allowing for comprehension, highlight that automated translation often prioritizes semantic transfer over stylistic nuance, idiomaticity, and register adaptation; it attempts to emulate human translators' decisions by learning patterns from large quantities of bilingual texts (Vieira 2018: 3), yet "there are also limitations for the neural models [like the EU's eTranslation] that cannot be overlooked and still need to be addressed" (Castilho *et al*. 2017: 108). In myth-busting policy communication, where persuasion, clarity, and authority are paramount, such inaccuracies, though subtle, can cumulatively weaken the message. This substantiates the EU's own implicit judgement, as conveyed by the "return to English" disclaimer, that the automated translation serves as a provisional access point, not an epistemically equivalent version. Particularly when using eTranslation to translate EU texts, it has been stressed (Somssich 2025: 118) that:

> AI could bring uniformity, provided that such uniformity is needed. Although not at the current level of sophistication of the tools, it can also help in time to create and suggest new words, offers [sic] alternatives. But the choice of what should be the authentic and official text is one of the people, and the responsibility lies with the institutions, ultimately with the EU.

e) "Boost consumer confidence" → "Aumentare la fiducia dei consumatori"

English Version	Italian Version
Companies will have to prove their products are from deforestation-free supply chains - which can create an opportunity for them in terms of access to the EU market, *boost consumer confidence*	Le imprese dovranno dimostrare che i loro prodotti provengono da catene di approvvigionamento a deforestazione zero, il che può creare loro un'opportunità in termini di accesso al mercato dell'UE, *aumentare la fiducia dei consumatori*

Table 5. Example of ENG-to-ITA translation from Myth 2

The translation of "boost consumer confidence" as "*aumentare la fiducia dei consumatori*" is linguistically accurate but results in a significant attenuation of evaluative and promotional force. In English, *boost* carries a dynamic, upward-driving semantic prosody, evoking acceleration, stimulus, and economic momentum. By contrast, *aumentare* is semantically flatter, signalling quantitative growth without the market-oriented connotations embedded in the ST. Furthermore, the absence of the metaphor in Italian reduces the intended amplification of consumer trust, particularly given that metaphor in economic discourse is frequently employed with a persuasive function (McCloskey 1982; Charteris Black 2000). To restore the evaluative and persuasive force of the original, more appropriate alternatives could include "*dare un nuovo slancio alla fiducia dei consumatori*" or "*dare una spinta alla fiducia dei consumatori*".

f) "Mountain of paperwork" → "Montagna di scartoffie"

English Version	Italian Version
The EUDR means a mountain of *paperwork*	L'EUDR significa una montagna di *scartoffie*

Table 6. Example of ENG-to-ITA translation from Myth 1

The translation of "mountain of paperwork" as "*montagna di scartoffie*" introduces a shift in evaluative meaning at both metaphorical and lexical levels. While *mountain* already conveys excess and burden in English, *paperwork* remains relatively neutral, as this word is defined as "the part of a job that involves writing letters and reports and keeping records" (Cambridge Dictionary 2026, n.p.). In Italian, however, *scartoffie* adds an explicitly pejorative and colloquial tone, amplifying negativity and shifting the register. This can be seen as a case of overtranslation (Baker 1992); the result is a stronger, more anti-bureaucratic tone, which risks undermining the institutional intent.

More balanced alternatives would preserve neutrality, such as "*una montagna di adempimenti amministrativi*", or reduce metaphorical force altogether with "*un eccesso di oneri amministrativi*".

5. Discussion

The analysis of the "EUDR – Myth Buster" webpage shows how multimodal design and automated translation jointly influence public understanding of complex EU environmental regulation, supporting the claim that "twenty-first century literacy requires the ability to analyse critically the multimodal meaning-making practices we encounter every day in contemporary culture" (Vasta and Baldry 2020: 7). The integration of "verbal caption and visual image" (Baldry and Thibault 2008: 30) into repeated clusters reduces cognitive load and enhances accessibility. Familiar visual metaphors – mountains of paperwork, trade barriers, small farmers, digital confusion – anchor interpretation, enabling visual and verbal modes to fulfil "two strategic steps fulfilling shared needs and solving common problems by engaging and connecting with the audience" (Vasta 2022: 237). This reflects a broader shift towards visually-driven communication for multilingual audiences.

Automated translation, however, limits the effectiveness of this strategy. The Italian version remains intelligible but shows issues of register, metaphor handling, idiomaticity, and terminological precision. Renderings such as *riscontri* for *feedback*, *divieto commerciale* for *trade ban*, and *killer per le PMI* weaken the rhetorical force of the myth-busting approach. Since the page seeks to clarify misconceptions and instil trust in institutional authority (van Leeuwen 2007: 92), these nuances matter. As Doherty (2016: 947) observes, knowledge is often confined "within language silos," and translation choices can either foreground or downplay the EU's democratic image (Constantinou 2019: 203).

The webpage's disclaimer encouraging readers to "return to the original language (English)" highlights this asymmetry. While presented as transparency, such a move

implicitly constructs English as epistemically superior (Modiano 2017: 375; see also Seidlhofer 2011), positioning machine-translated texts as merely provisional. This dynamic is difficult to reconcile with the EU's commitment to multilingual equality: automated translation increases reach, but simultaneously reinforces English-mediated meaning.

Despite these challenges, the visual layer significantly aids comprehension. Visual cues offer immediate orientation even when the translated verbal text lacks precision. For non-expert readers, images function as cognitive scaffolding that "regulates the flow of information within the learner's working memory, thereby reducing cognitive load" (van Nooijen *et al*. 2024: 36). The page thus provides an accessible entry point to the EUDR, though the Italian version supports rather than replaces engagement with the English original.

The case aligns with broader research showing how digital platforms bridge gaps between expert regulatory discourse and non-expert publics (Bondi and Cacchiani 2021: 119; Ravazzani and Maier 2017: 510). Effective communication with non-specialists requires rethinking "the roles of participants, their communicative purposes, and their existing knowledge" (Xia 2022: 71). While the EUDR webpage exemplifies persuasive, visually anchored public information design, it also reveals limitations: it responds to misconceptions but does not engage with broader socio-economic dimensions of the EUDR, such as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) (Vasta 2024; Manzella 2025), smallholder inclusion, or long-term sustainability transitions.

Moreover, the site foregrounds policies and institutional perspectives rather than people, raising questions about whether the multimodal approach merely constitutes political spin, echoing longstanding concerns about public disengagement. As Williams and Milizia (2008: 2) note, debates on the "unreadability of the EU Constitution" reflect wider efforts to bring "the language of EU officialdom […] closer to the citizen and not just the domain of specialists."

Finally, the sustainability dimension prompts reflection on how visual elements might be more effectively integrated into legal documents themselves (Williams 2023: 178-187), moving beyond the defensive use of visuals seen here. Article 11 of the EUDR emphasizes that "enhanced Union action is needed" to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), supported by Member State endorsement of initiatives such as the UN Decade of Action for the SDGs, the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, and the UN Decade of Family Farming. If sustainability is to remain central to EU regulatory practice, multimodal communication must evolve into more integrated, multilingual, and participatory models.

6. Conclusion

This study has shown that the "EUDR – Myth Buster" webpage represents an important step in the European Commission's efforts to communicate a highly complex regulation to a diverse public. By examining both its multimodal design and the automated Italian translation, the analysis highlights how the Commission is attempting to balance clarity, accessibility, and speed of dissemination within the constraints of its multilingual environment. However, this analysis also highlights that sustainability carries cross-cultural, socio-cultural, and socio-economic implications, shaping

how diverse communities perceive, experience, and are affected by policies such as the EUDR.

At the same time, the findings indicate that automated translation – despite its usefulness – cannot yet guarantee the level of nuance and precision required in strategic policy communication, and that the epistemic hierarchy implicitly established through the "return to English" disclaimer remains problematic for an institution committed to linguistic equality. More broadly, the case suggests that improving public understanding of the EUDR requires approaches that extend beyond myth-correction alone. Ensuring that stakeholders across linguistic and cultural contexts can meaningfully engage with EU environmental policy will depend on combining reliable translation practices with communication strategies that are transparent, participatory, and sensitive to the socioeconomic implications of the Regulation. In this sense, the current webpage can be seen as a transitional tool: effective in countering misinformation but also indicative of the need for more robust, multilingual, and inclusive communication models as the EUDR continues to unfold.

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