

PRIORITIES ON FORESTS FOR THE NEW PARLIAMENTARY TERM.

1. EU ACTION PLAN ON DEFORESTATION

The Commission is required to consider the development of an action plan on deforestation under the **7th European Environmental Programme (7EAP)**. Our wish is that the new Commission intensifies multi-stakeholder consultations with a view to publishing an ambitious and comprehensive Action Plan on deforestation by the end of 2015.

The aim of this action plan should be to minimise the EU's forest footprint through specific demand-side interventions, while providing support to developing countries to tackle the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation in their own territories, such as by strengthening community tenure rights, ensuring the respect of forest peoples' rights as well as supporting sustainable land use planning and development. **The European Parliament should take all the necessary steps to ensure the Commission honors the commitments it made in the 7EAP and support the speedy development of an EU Action Plan.**

2. REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EU ACTION PLAN ON FOREST LAW ENFORCEMENT GOVERNANCE AND TRADE (FLEGT) AND THE EU TIMBER REGULATION (EUTR)

In 2015, the European Commission is undertaking a review of the FLEGT Action Plan. The action plan established a package of measures to improve forest governance and tackle illegal logging and the associated international trade in illegally sourced timber products. This includes the EU Timber Regulation (EUTR) which prohibits illegal timber entering the EU market, Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPAs) between the EU and forested countries to improve forest governance and implement timber legality assurance schemes, as well as Green public procurement policies (GPPP) to incentivize the buying of sustainable timber and timber products.

Next year's review of the EUTR and the FLEGT Action Plan will be crucial for assessing progress and contribution towards the EU's flagship objectives and commitments towards illegal and unsustainable timber trade. Whilst the time-frame for the review of the FLEGT Action Plan still needs to be further elaborated, the Commission has to present a report on the effectiveness of the EUTR by 3 December 2015. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss how you can play a leadership role to ensure stronger and more effective European action in this field.

In particular we consider that the following challenges need to be addressed as a priority:

- Ensure effective implementation, uniform interpretation, application and enforcement of the EU Timber Regulation and closing of loopholes to stop the flow of illegal timber into the EU market.
- Ensure the implementation of the FLEGT VPAs works towards the attainment of their stated goals and objectives, namely, halting illegal logging, improving forest governance and promoting sustainable forest management, inter alia through strengthening forest laws, land tenure and access rights for of indigenous peoples and forest-dependent communities, ensuring effective participation of non-state actors, increasing transparency and reducing corruption.
- Increase the uptake, scope and ambition of green public procurement in Member States through the new GPP framework.

3. ENSURING THAT, IF FORESTS ARE INCLUDED IN THE EU CLIMATE POLICY FRAMEWORK, A SEPARATE PILLAR FOR FORESTS IS ESTABLISHED

EU climate policy has traditionally capped emissions on industrial sectors, but the European Commission is now considering including forests and land sectors (LULUCF) in the new 2030 climate and energy package. This poses a significant risk, which urgently needs to be addressed. The European Parliament must ensure that any contribution of the LULUCF sector to climate change mitigation is additional to the abatement of fossil fuel emissions, raises the overall level of EU climate ambition and does not serve to offset emissions from other sectors.

In addition, LULUCF measures should occur in a way that will recognise the broader environmental and social benefits that forests provide and that will deliver optimal outcomes for other EU environmental policy objectives (e.g. safeguarding biodiversity, soil quality and water resources). In the forestry sector, the European Parliament should advocate specific policies to improve the health and resilience of forest ecosystems, prevent forest loss and degradation, and stop the conversion of other carbon-rich ecosystems in Europe (e.g. peatland).

4. SUSTAINABILITY OF BIOENERGY AND BIOFUELS.

Forests are currently the EU's main source of renewable energy. Bioenergy is expected to make up at least a half of all renewable energy in the EU by 2020, with wood accounting for 2/3 of all bioenergy used. Compared to 2010, the use of wood for energy will at least double by 2020.

EU's growing hunger for energy-related biomass has multiple impacts on forest ecosystems in the EU as well as globally. Use of agricultural land for the production of biofuels has already led to clearance of new agricultural land and deforestation in other parts of the world (known as 'indirect land use change'). Growing use of wood for energy has increased the pressure on EU's forests, fuelled unsustainable logging practices in regions exporting to the EU, such as in the South East United States, and incentivized inefficient use of wood resources.

If climate policies lead to deforestation or depletion of the carbon stocks of forests, the true carbon savings will be negligible. The measures to support development of renewable energy in the 2030 climate framework should therefore consider the full carbon balance of bioenergy use and incentivize only the use of bioenergy that's beneficial for the climate and the environment, such as different kinds of woody residues, side-products of other industries and waste.