



Contact: **Hanna Aho**
Tel: + 32 499 39 33 29 (mob)
Email: hanna@fern.org

MEPs fail dismally on forests and climate

(Brussels), September 13, 2017 – Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) have undermined the EU's fight against climate change and reversed years of painstaking work by scientists, campaigners and others by voting for a last-minute amendment on how EU nations account for emissions from their land and forests sector – the so-called LULUCF Regulation.

The amendment by the centre-right [European People's Party](#) (EPP) seriously excluded the climate impacts of forests. They were backed by the [Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe \(ALDE\)](#) and the European, Conservatives and Reformists (ECR).

“With some honourable exceptions, this vote shows that MEPs have not fulfilled their responsibilities to protect us from climate change. They have buckled under the pressure exerted by countries desperate to increase the harvesting levels of their forests without honestly accounting for them. This leaves us blind in the face of climate change. The final impacts of this compromise are hard to predict,” said Hanna Aho, forest and climate campaigner at Fern.

Today's vote was the penultimate step in determining how EU nations account for emissions from their land and forest sectors. The Parliament now has a mandate to negotiate with the European Commission and European Council on the final text.

The Parliament also weakened the Commission's proposal on bioenergy. MEPs voted to change the forest management reference period from 1990-2009 to 2000-2012 and gave way to policy based reference periods. This means the emissions from increased harvests for bioenergy which were incentivised by the 2009 Renewable Energy Directive will not be accounted for at all.

“Today's vote creates incoherence between the LULUCF and the Renewable Energy Directives. We are subsidising bioenergy on the assumption that we are accounting for its emissions in LULUCF, but the changes made by the Parliament mean this simply will not happen,” said Linde Zuidema bioenergy campaigner at Fern.

“It is now up to the Parliament and the Council to strengthen sustainability criteria for bioenergy from forest biomass in the revision of the Renewable Energy Directive,” Zuidema added.

Aho did however highlight one silver lining in the form of an amendment linked to wetlands. “Including accounting of managed wetlands is an improvement by the Parliament that will make sure climate impacts of drying and modifying wetlands will be taken into account. The Council must take an example from the Parliament and ensure wetlands are included.”