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## **Forests and climate will suffer from Council's decision**

*(Brussels), October 13, 2017 – EU Environment ministers today bowed to pressure from a small nucleus of nations led by Finland, and opted for damaging new carbon accounting rules on land and forests (known as the LULUCF Regulation).*

“The Council today made a decision that supports more logging and will decrease the amount of carbon our forests hold in the future. This undermines the Paris Agreement and is simply unforgivable. The forest sector is being allowed to increase their emissions while everyone else is being asked to reduce them,” said Hanna Aho, Fern’s forest and climate campaigner.

“Forests are the best and most reliable tool we have to suck carbon from the atmosphere and cool the climate. We should be doing everything to protect them,” she said.

Supporting increased harvesting also allows for more logging in the name of bioenergy.

The Commission has been unable to introduce effective measures to stop subsidising the burning of biomass for energy like roundwood and stumps that are harmful for the climate.

Two weeks ago [almost 200 scientists urged the Council for more effective safeguards, but to no avail.](#)

“The LULUCF Regulation doesn't ensure bioenergy use reduces emissions. It's kind of a no-brainer, but in order to ensure burning wood is truly climate-friendly, the EU needs bioenergy policies which don't increase logging and prevent the burning of whole trees. The Commission proposal for a Renewable Energy Directive doesn't achieve this,” said Linde Zuidema, Fern’s bioenergy campaigner.

“It is now up to the Parliament and the Council to strengthen the sustainability criteria for forest biomass in the proposal for a Renewable Energy Directive. The EU needs to rethink its climate policies if it wants to help not hinder the fight to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees,” Zuidema added.

The Council’s decision on LULUCF also includes a dangerous precedent to allow forest loss in Finland before 2018 to go unaccounted for.

“Deforestation is accelerating climate change across the world. Since international negotiations in Durban in 2011 this has been clear to all. The Parliament and Commission should not be fooled by the Finnish Government’s reluctance to act,” Aho said.

The LULUCF Regulation will be finalised in Trilogue negotiations between the Parliament, Council and Commission. The final compromise should promote positive elements from the Parliament’s position, including accounting for managed wetlands, the introduction of a safeguard to ensure that the EU’s forest carbon sink does not decrease in comparison to the 1990 - 2009 average and giving the Commission the mandate to propose how to increase the climate mitigation role of the land and forest sector.



## **EU LULUCF Regulation process in a nutshell**

**July 2016:** Commission launch their [proposal](#) for a LULUCF Regulation. It was a compromise that relied on “scenario based forest management reference levels” and [allowed countries to decrease their sink slightly](#). [NGOs were not happy with this compromise](#) and asked for net-net accounting and increased ambition.

**2017:** Member States’ [positions](#) have been miles apart. There have been two Council Presidency proposals [the latest of which came from Estonia](#).

**June 2017:** [Prominent academics active in the](#) Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC) warned policy makers of the risks in weakening LULUCF accounting rules.

**September 2017:** [European Parliament finalised its position](#), which is ambiguous, but [a clear weakening of the Commission’s original proposal](#).

In the same month, these developments inspired a group of almost 200 eminent scientists to write the [EU environment ministers an open letter about their grave concern at the policy’s lack of scientific basis](#).