



GREENPEACE



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Ms. Federica Mogherini

High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and
Vice-President of the European Commission

Brussels 21 June 2016

Re: Tackling illegal logging, deforestation and forest degradation – a global agenda for the EU.

Dear High Representative Mogherini,

We are writing to you to share a joint briefing on the EU's Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Action Plan, the EU Timber Regulation (EUTR), and the EU's commitment to halt deforestation and restore degraded forests by 2020. We hope that this briefing will inform discussions on the EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy.

Forests play a vital role in climate change mitigation, biodiversity conservation and poverty alleviation. Last year, in signing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Climate Agreement, the EU committed to halt deforestation and forest degradation by 2020 and to protect and restore forests as a contribution towards limiting global warming to 1.5°Celsius. Yet forests continue to be lost and degraded at an alarming rate. In many countries illegal logging and poor governance remain rampant and continue to threaten forest ecosystems, wildlife and forest-dependent communities. Three hundred million people worldwide live in forests and 1.6 billion depend on them for their livelihoods. Over the past two decades, UN reports have increasingly revealed the role played by natural resources such as timber in financing and sustaining armed conflict. Therefore, the future of the world's forests is intrinsically linked to the agenda on trade, security, conflict prevention, and migration, and must feature in the EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy.

80% of global deforestation is caused by commodity-driven commercial agriculture. Traded commodities are the fastest growing threat. By importing certain products such as palm oil, beef, leather, soy, cocoa and timber, the EU is part of this problem. The EU was the leading importer of products linked to deforestation between 1990-2008 causing an area of deforestation at least the size of Portugal.

In addition, the environmental impact of unsustainable and illegal logging remains significant, especially in terms of forest degradation, which is a precursor of deforestation. According to a recent [UNEP-INTERPOL report](#), environmental crime is growing at an alarming pace – at a rate that is two to three times faster than global GDP growth. Illegal logging, often associated with corruption and organised crime, tops the ranking with an estimated value of \$50-152 billion annually. The UNEP-INTERPOL report recommends stronger action, legislation and sanctions at the national and international level.

We hope that these important messages will lead the EU to intensify its diplomatic efforts with major forest-rich countries to tackle illegal logging, deforestation and forest degradation, engage in sustained dialogue at the highest level with its partners internationally, and increase the coherence of its policies to effectively play its part in ending deforestation and the rights violations frequently associated with it.

The attached briefing outlines our position, concerns and recommendations in this area.

We would be happy for an opportunity to meet with you to discuss its content in more depth with you or your staff.

Yours sincerely,

Carl Dolan, Director, Transparency International EU 

Louise Henson, Managing Director, Forest Peoples Program 

Herbert Lust, Managing Director and Vice President, Conservation International Europe 

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CC: Ms. Fabrizia Panzetti, Head of Cabinet