



Mitglied des Europäischen Parlaments

Mr Frans Timmermans
Executive Vice President of the European Commission for the European Green Deal

Mr Phil Hogan
Commissioner for Trade

Mr Virginijus Sinkevičius
Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries

Brussels, March 11 2020

Dear Vice-President Timmermans,
dear Commissioner Hogan,
dear Commissioner Sinkevičius

on March 4 Reuters has come forward with a report on unauthorized wood exports from Brazil: over the past year thousands of cargoes of wood have been exported out of the Amazon state of Pará without authorisation from the federal environment agency (Ibama). Shipments are reported to have gone to United States, the Netherlands, France, Germany, Belgium and possibly other countries. When custom officials in Europe and the United States alerted Brazil, the president of Ibama changed regulations on February 25 to do away with previously required export authorisations and retroactively granting the authorisations.

According to insiders from the Ibama the changes in the regulation will further weaken Brazil's ability to control the export of illegally deforested wood. Illegal deforestation in the Amazon is likely to worsen without checks on timber exports. Without export authorisation it also becomes difficult to impossible for people to know whether the wood offered for sale is of legal or illegal origin.

FAO ranked Brazil the world's ninth-largest exporter of forestry products in 2018. Pará is a hotbed of deforestation. Between August 2018 and July 2019 the state accounted for 40% of all illegal deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon, equalling 3 862 square kilometres, according to government data.

The protection of the Amazon is vital to curbing climate change. Given the huge amount of carbon dioxide absorbed by the Amazon, climate scientists from around the world have warned of the danger of accelerated global warming posed by its continued destruction. The Bolsonaro government repeatedly favours economy over ecosystem protection.

Given the circumstances I hereby ask you to not authorise any timber imports to the EU from Brazil.

Stopping any timber imports from Brazil would be completely in line with the European Commission's Communication on '*Stepping up EU Action to Protect and Restore the World's Forests*' from July 2019. It states as its objective '*protecting and improving the health of existing forests, especially primary forests*'. Among its priorities are to reduce the footprint of EU consumption on land and to 'deforest-proof' EU development cooperation.

Non-authorisation for timber imports from Brazil is an absolute necessity. A clear signal is needed to Brazilian authorities that the EU is no market for wood of illegal origin, likely to have exacerbated the disruption of the Amazon rainforest and its ecosystem.

I am looking forward to your response,

Best regards,
Martin Häusling, MEP