



European Commission

1 November 2018

First Vice-President for Better Regulation, Interinstitutional Relations, the Rule of Law and the Charter of Fundamental Rights, Frans Timmermans

Vice-President for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, Jyrki Katainen

Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Karmenu Vella

Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, Phil Hogan

Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy, Miguel Arias Cañete

Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Neven Mimica

Call for an ambitious EU Action Plan on deforestation and forest degradation

Dear commissioners,

I am writing on behalf of the Amsterdam Declarations Partnership, which consists of the signatory countries to the Amsterdam Declarations on eliminating deforestation from Agricultural Commodity Chains and on a Fully Sustainable Palm Oil Supply Chain by 2020. These countries are Germany, the Netherlands, France, Italy, United Kingdom, Norway and Denmark. In that capacity, I would first of all like to thank the European Commission for presenting the results of the feasibility study on options to step up EU action against deforestation in March 2018.

The Partnership recalls that already with the decisions on the 7th Environment Action Programme of 2013, the European Parliament and the Council called for and assessment of the environmental impact, in a global context, of EU consumption of food and non-food commodities. The decisions also called, if appropriate, for the development of policy proposals to address the findings, as well as considerations of the development of an EU Action Plan on deforestation and forest degradation. Also, the Commission's trade policy strategy "Trade for All" of 2015 aims at economic opportunities going hand in hand with responsible management of global supply chains, good governance and sustainable development.

We emphasise the relevance of measures in this area for pursuing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and targets, notably goal 15, which include the target to halt deforestation by 2020, and goal 12 on ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns. We also stress the possible positive contributions to policy goals, objectives and decisions of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, including the Paris Agreement, the UN Convention on Biological Diversity as well as the UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2017 - 2030.

We remind of the earlier briefings on the work of the signatories of the Amsterdam declarations as well as calls for the feasibility study to be finalized and of appropriate follow-up EU action, e.g. in the Council (Agriculture and Fisheries) in October 2017 and in the Council (Environment) in March 2018.

We stress that despite progress in recent years, deforestation and forest degradation continue at alarming rates, in particular in tropical and subtropical regions, with as much as 80 % of global forest loss being driven by expansion of agricultural land, according to FAO estimates.

The feasibility study concludes that, as a major importer and consumer of many commodities which include embodied deforestation, the EU is both part of the problem and can be part of the solution by stepping up its efforts to address the impacts of the consumption and adopt a more coherent and comprehensive EU approach to the problem of deforestation. It shows that a variety of possible measures are at hand, backed up with thorough analysis of significance, possible impact, as well as overall feasibility. It also highlights that the EU can provide a positive impact through showing a leadership role, mobilising its political and market leverage, and promoting broader international dialogue and cooperation.

In line with the aim of the Amsterdam Declarations Partnership strategy, we consider the feasibility study an excellent basis for further considerations of possible EU interventions, and urge the European Commission on the basis thereof, to present, as soon as possible, a roadmap for the development, in the course of 2018, of an ambitious EU Action Plan on deforestation and forest degradation. We would suggest for consideration that relevant meetings and short term actions that would suit the purpose be integrated into the roadmap towards the final Commission proposal for the action plan.

Finally, we would like to draw the attention to our joint work in the Amsterdam Declarations Partnership. We work together in pursuit of the aims set out in the Amsterdam declarations. The work includes inter alia the development of a joint strategy and the conduct of larger multi-stakeholder meetings, most recently the conference held in Paris 27 June 2018 “Towards deforestation-free sustainable commodities: focus on key drivers”.

Yours sincerely,



Jakob Ellemann-Jensen

Minister for Environment and Food of Denmark
Chair of the Amsterdam Declarations Partnership