



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

14th May 2020

Re: Old-growth and primary forests

Thank you for your continuous and consistent support to scientifically-sound policy objectives towards forests, and their contribution to the Green Deal objectives.

We, undersigned MEPs would like to express our consistent support to leadership in the European Commission which aims to set the best example to the world at the time when we need to show ambitious, science-based and no regret action on both climate and biodiversity. Biodiversity Strategy should rightly recognize the contribution of both, our primary and old-growth forests for goals we set ourselves to achieve. If we recognize their value in other parts of the world, understanding the incomparable level of habitat and regulatory services they provide to mankind, it would be erroneous to turn a blind eye to the fact that in the European Union they provide the same to us.

Letting forests grow (old) is not an ideological misconception, it is an application of our knowledge of complexity, adaptability and functionality of forest in its natural stage and form. It is a strategy relevant both from biodiversity and climate perspective. Unlogged forests store more carbon than logged ones. When old forests are cut down, two-thirds or more of their stored carbon is released to the atmosphere. Logging emissions are not offset by planting trees in 80-year rotations or by storing carbon in short-lived wood products. In terms of biodiversity there is no doubt about the importance of old growth and primary forests for the whole range of forest species and their diverse communities. Large old trees and primary and old-growth forests are keystone and bio-cultural elements of our natural inheritance, nevertheless they are declining worldwide due to deforestation and forest degradation. They simply have no space and time to grow in an actively managed forest stand in an 80-year rotation period.

Stating the contrary, that any managed forest, with their respective harvesting intensity and rotation length brings the same benefits is simply wrong and should by no means pollute the text of the Biodiversity Strategy.

Sincerely,

Maria Arena (S&D)
Sven Giegold (Greens/EFA)
Heidi Hautala (Greens/EFA)
Anja Hazekamp (GUE)
Radan Kanev (EPP)
Tilly Metz (Greens)
Jutta Paulus (Greens)
Nicolae Ștefănuță (Renew)
Michal Wiezik (EPP)

Anna Deparnay-Grunenberg (Greens/EFA)
Nicolás González Casares (S&D)
Martin Häusling (Greens/EFA)
Martin Hojsík (Renew)
César Luena (S&D)
Ville Niinistö (Greens)
Sirpa Pietikäinen (EPP)
Thomas Waitz (Greens/EFA)

cc:

Mr Virginijus Sinkevičius
Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries