



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
ENVIRONMENT
Directorate F - Global Sustainable Development
ENV.F.3 - Multilateral Environmental Cooperation
Head of Unit

Brussels,

Subject: Reply to: Petition of Friends of Forests via Change.org “Don’t Let The Amazon Burn Again”

Dear Petitioner,

Thank you for your mail of 15 June 2020 requesting Commissioner Virginijus Sinkevičius to respond to the petition “Don’t Let The Amazon Burn Again”. He asked me to respond to you.

Your petition demands Brazil's government to take immediately lasting and meaningful measures in order to protect the Amazon before it erupts in flames.

I would like to reassure you that the Commissioner shares your concerns regarding the threats through forest fires, but also illegal logging and mining, to the Amazon, a rainforest without equal. Tackling deforestation and forest degradation in the Amazon is essential not only to fight global biodiversity loss and climate change, but also to achieve sustainable development and poverty eradication.

The EU is determined to work in partnership with and support efforts by partner countries in the Amazon, in particular Brazil, to tackle deforestation. Human rights, including those of indigenous peoples and local communities in the Amazon, as well as environmental protection, are at the core of the values underpinning EU relations with third countries, including Brazil. Therefore, these issues are systematically raised within our established mechanisms for political dialogue and cooperation.

We are also actively engaging with a broad range of stakeholders, including sub-national local governments, judiciary authorities, civil society, and progressive business associations.

Also through free trade agreements, we engage and promote cooperation on international commitments on climate and environment, in particular in the context of their trade and sustainable development chapters. Thus the future EU-Mercosur Association Agreement, to which Brazil will be a party, includes a comprehensive Trade and Sustainable Development chapter containing legally binding commitments on environmental protection as well as climate change, including a commitment to the implementation of Paris Agreement. Where a party fails to comply with a commitment, we can resort to the dispute settlement mechanism tailored to the specifics of labour and environment.

We have repeatedly reiterated our call on national Brazilian authorities to take decisive action to address deforestation, in particular through forest fires, and to cooperate regionally and internationally to this end. We have urged Brazil to maintain the protection of the Amazon and enhance monitoring and enforcement measures to prevent deforestation and in particular forest fires. We stand ready to provide technical assistance in order to ensure that deforestation decreases rapidly, substantially and permanently, including with regard to forest fires, should there be a clear willingness for cooperation on this issue.

We are hopeful that the recent positive developments with regard to the enhanced political legitimacy of the leadership of the Amazon Council and signs that Amazon Fund may return to operability, will lead to an improved fight against forest fires on the ground. Many Brazilian actors seem to be constructively active to enhance the protection of the Amazon in particular from fires, such as parliamentary groups, the army, environmentalists, the judiciary and very active Civil Society Organisations. The Amazon as an important part of our relation and cooperation with Brazil and we will continue to encourage Brazil to protect this unique jewel.

Sincerely,

(E-signed)
Hugo-Maria SCHALLY
Head of Unit