International Tropical Timber Agreement, 2006

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The Committee on International Trade adopted a report drafted by Caroline **LUCAS** (Greens/ALE, UK) and made some amendments to the proposal for a Council decision on the conclusion on behalf of the European Community of the International Tropical Timber Agreement, (ITTA) 2006.

The main amendments were as follows:

- the legal bases are Articles 133 and 175 of the Treaty, read in conjunction with the first sentence of the first subparagraph of Article 300(2) and the second subparagraph of Article 300 (3) (rather than the first) subparagraph. Members argued that the agreement establishes a specific institutional framework by organising cooperation procedures;
- the objectives of the new Agreement should be consistent with both the common commercial policy and environmental and development policies. The committee noted that as it stands, the ITTA 2006 is not consistent with the EC's environment and development policies. The Agreement's primary objective remains to promote the expansion and diversification of international trade, with sustainable use only mentioned as secondary.

The following new recitals are inserted into the text:

- the Commission should submit to the European Parliament and the Council an annual report with an analysis of the implementation of the International Tropical Timber Agreement, 2006 and of measures to minimise the negative impact of trade on tropical forests, including bilateral agreements concluded pursuant to the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) programme. Article 33 of the ITTA 2006 provides for an evaluation of the implementation of this Agreement five years after its entry into force. In the light of this provision, the Commission should forward to the Parliament and the Council a review of the functioning of the International Tropical Timber Agreement, 2006 by the end of 2010;
- when drafting the negotiating mandate for the revision of the ITTA 2006, the Commission should propose that the current text be revised, placing the protection and sustainable management of tropical forests and the restoration of forest areas that have been degraded at the heart of the agreement, stressing the importance of education and information policy in the countries affected by the problem of deforestation in order to enhance public awareness of the negative consequences of exploiting timber resources in an abusive manner. Trade in tropical timber should only be encouraged to the extent compatible with these prior objectives;
- in particular, this mandate for the revision of the ITTA 2006 should propose a voting mechanism for the International Tropical Timber Council that clearly rewards the conservation and sustainable use of tropical forests;
- the Commission should by mid-2008 at the latest: (a)propose a comprehensive legislative proposal that prevents the placing of timber and timber products derived from illegal and destructive sources on the market; (b)present a Communication determining the EU's involvement and support for current and future global funding mechanisms for promoting forest protection and reducing emissions from deforestation under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)/Kyoto Protocol. The Communication should outline the EU's commitment to provide funds to help developing countries protect their forests, finance a network of protected areas and promote economic alternatives to forest destruction. In particular, in order to ensure real benefits for the climate, biodiversity and people, it should outline the minimum principles and criteria that these instruments should adhere to. It should also identify priority actions and priority areas which should receive immediate funding under these incentive mechanisms.

The committee noted that the public consultation of the European Commission on additional options to combat illegal logging showed that a large majority of respondents prefer binding legislation that requires that only legally harvested timber and timber products are placed on the EU market.