

Brussels, 26th April 2019

Dear Mrs Mendes,

Fedustria hereby wishes to respond to your email concerning the latest “Amazon Watch” titled *“Complicity in destruction: How Northern consumers and financiers enable Bolsonaro’s assault on the Brazilian Amazon”*. Fedustria is the Belgian federation for the textile, wood and furniture industries, including timber import companies.

A number of Belgian timber importing companies are mentioned as buying timber and timber products from the companies Benevides Madeiras, Nordisk Timber Eireli and Tradelink Madeiras. In the report, these companies are linked to illegal operations, and mention is made of fines for various violations by the companies or their owners, thereby implicitly implying that the wood purchased by the Belgian companies is also of illegal nature and putting their reputation in a negative spotlight.

We want to stress that the importing companies mentioned are strongly opposed to any trade in illegal timber and have, as required by the European Union Timber Regulation, taken all possible measures and due diligence actions to ensure that no illegal timber is sourced or traded. In order to start operating with a supplier, the operators are making a thorough due diligence process to mitigate the risks. In the context of the EUTR processes put in place – monitored by national authorities in the EU, information contained in the Amazon Watch report will now first be verified and controlled and corrective measures will be taken should these be required.

The EU Timber Regulation (EUTR) came into force in 2013 prohibiting the placing of illegally harvested timber in the European market. The regulation is a major part of the EU’s effort to reduce deforestation and protect at risk tree species as part of the EU Forest, Law, Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Action Plan. This EUTR is legally binding for timber and timber products entering the EU. For the other commodities mentioned in the report, namely soy, beef, leather and sugar, there is no such law. In a recent study (12 th April 2019), the researchers come to the conclusion that the main commodities driving deforestation in South America are beef and soy (<https://www.foodnavigator.com/Article/2019/04/12/Study-links-EU-diet-to-deforestation-footprint-in-the-tropics>).

Our members share the same objective as governments and NGOs, namely, preventing illegally harvested timber from ending up on the European market. That's why we are always open to constructive feedback from NGOs or other parties, as long as they do not act as judge, jury and executioner.

Yours faithfully,



Filip De Jaeger  
Deputy Director-General

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