

Dear Commissioner Malmström,

We are writing as members of the Greens/EFA group to express our concern about the recent proposals by President Temer of the Federative Republic of Brazil to open up a large area of the Amazon Renca reserve to mining exploitation and large-scale agroindustry. As the Commission is close to finalising the political agreement of the EU-Mercosur free trade deal by the end of 2017, we feel that is an excellent opportunity for the Commission to stand by its principles regarding sustainable development by indicating that minerals taken from a protected reserve should not enter the EU single market.

The Renca covers some 46,000 square kilometers of the Amazonian rainforest in the Pará and Amapá regions of Brazil, and is one of the most biodiverse regions on the planet. It is also home to Aparai, Wajapi and Wayana indigenous communities. Yet under Temer's current proposals, 30% of Renca will now be opened up for extractive exploitation. Not only will this be destructive for the earth's climate and for biodiversity in the Amazonian region, but it also leaves the local indigenous and rural communities vulnerable to exploitation by large mining companies, who are often followed by illegal land grabbers, artisanal miners and road builders.

The EU's existing imports from Brazil are dominated by primary products, over a quarter of which are mineral products, so the new EU-Mercosur Agreement could have a tremendous impact on the rate of resource extraction in Brazil and potentially from this formerly protected region. We have yet to see what the chapter on raw materials will detail under the EU-Mercosur Agreement, but there are strong concerns that this chapter will facilitate the further degradation of the rainforest and the intimidation of indigenous peoples and rural communities by attracting European extractive and agribusiness and encouraging mineral and agricultural exports from the Renca reserve. In light of the current circumstances, the lack of transparency and clarity on this chapter is deeply concerning.

Within the upcoming inter-sessional talks between the Commission and Mercosur representatives during the week of the 4th of September 2017, and within the next round of formal negotiations between the 4th-6th of October 2017, we ask that Commission address this issue and keep up the pressure on the Temer administration to retract plans to open up parts of the Renca reserve. We also ask that the Commission cite Brazil's commitment to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity as well as ILO Convention 169 and other relevant international and multilateral commitments which would directly conflict with plans to open up areas of the Renca reserve.

We would also ask that the Commission would act under GATT Article XX (b), wherein trading parties have a legitimate right to ban imports on products if it is "necessary to protect human, animal or plant life or health", thereby banning products that have cause significant damage to the Renca reserve and its inhabitants.

Finally, we would also like to draw your attention to 2008/2288(INI) EU-Brazil strategic partnership, which highlights the Parliament's existing commitment to rainforest conservation and sustainable forest management in Brazil. This must be prioritised within EU-Mercosur trade negotiations and we ask that the Commission strongly condemn the Renca decree without exception.

Yours sincerely,

Members of the European Parliament:

Molly Scott Cato

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