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Ms Anke Schulmeister-Oldenhove
Senior Forest Policy Officer & Coordinator EU Budget
WWF European Policy Office
123 Rue de Commerce
1000 Brussels

Dear Ms Schulmeister-Oldenhove,

On behalf of First Vice-President Timmermans, I would like to thank you and the other 8 civil society organisations for your letter of 15 April 2019. I appreciate your active interest in and support to action aiming at addressing deforestation and forest degradation. This is a very important matter for the EU.

The EU is a significant importer and consumer of a number of commodities that are associated with deforestation and forest degradation. The Commission therefore has to play its part in fighting against global deforestation.

The EU already has a number of policies in place to tackle global deforestation and forest degradation. Nevertheless, the Commission recognises that there is a need to strengthen efforts to halt deforestation and forest degradation. Therefore the Communication on stepping up EU action to protect and restore the world's forests adopted on 23 July contains a coherent set of actions to minimise the impact of the EUs internal and external policies on deforestation and forest degradation. Tackling deforestation and forest degradation requires active involvement of actors at international, national, regional and local levels. Therefore, it will also be important to propose a partnership approach with producer and consumer countries as well as business and civil society to reduce pressure on forests.

The Communication aims to support the implementation and reinforcement of existing commitments, promote the exchange of good practices and raise awareness across all stakeholders. It has the objective of protecting and improving the health of existing forests, especially primary forests, and significantly increasing sustainable, biodiverse forest coverage worldwide. As identified in the Roadmap that was published on 14 December 2018, the initiative seeks to address the main direct and indirect drivers of deforestation and forest degradation

through a combination of supply and demand side measures. In line with your proposal, I can confirm that the Commission will indeed assess additional demand side regulatory and non-regulatory measures in order to increase supply chain transparency. Complementary actions are also being considered on research, monitoring, green finance and multilateral cooperation with, among others, major market importers.

I would like to thank you again for your contribution and look forward to further exchanges on this matter.

Yours sincerely,



Karmenu Vella