

Tropical forests, developing countries: conservation and sustainable management

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The Committee adopted a draft report from José Javier POMES RUIZ (EPP, E) on a Commission proposal which deals with the conservation and sustainable management of tropical forests in the developing countries. The Committee modified the Commission's proposal for EU regulation with over 40 amendments. In its amendments, the Committee stresses the need for improving the coordination and flow of information between the EU and Member States projects in order to ensure coherent actions in this field. It calls for the active participation of forest peoples and the local community in the development of national forest policies and development planning. Forest conservation should respect the economic, social and cultural rights of local communities, and should be carried out only after their consultation and full participation in the decision-making processes. According to the Committee, particular attention should be given to encouraging private, environmentally responsible entrepreneurship in the wood processing and marketing chain. This should take into account existing social systems and community-based economic activities. Operations carried out under the EU regulation should be preceded by environmental and socio-cultural impact assessments, taking into account the development needs of the respective forest peoples. Funding should be rejected if there are serious doubts whether the environmental and social sustainability requirements of these operations can be met.