

# Tropical forests, developing countries: conservation and sustainable management

1999/0015(COD) - 03/02/1999 - Legislative proposal

**PURPOSE** : Proposal for a Council Regulation on measures to promote the conservation and sustainable management of tropical forests and other forests in developing countries. **CONTENT** : The proposed Regulation will be an important instrument to enable the Community to meet its commitments to the conservation and management of forests in the context of sustainable development. It will ensure the continuation of activities implemented under Council Regulation 3062/95/EC, after its expiry on 31/12/1999. The proposed legal instrument takes into account relevant developments within the Community, the results of the international discussion on Forests through the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests /Intergovernmental Forum on Forests process, the evolution in the forest sector, as well as experience acquired during the implementation of the existing regulation. EC development co-operation in forestry stems from clear Community commitments to the conservation of forests and sustainability of development activities. Arts. 130u and 130r of the Treaty are of specific relevance. Art. 130u states that Community policy in the sphere of development co-operation shall foster the sustainable economic and social development of the developing countries. Art. 130r states that the Community shall promote measures at international level to deal with regional or worldwide environmental problems, and also that environmental protection shall be integrated into the definition and implementation of other Community policies/ Recognising the importance of forests at local and global levels, the European Parliament has called on the Commission to prepare an integrated international strategy for the conservation and sustainable management of forests. The proposed Regulation is a key means by which this strategy will be implemented. An independent evaluation of the EC contribution to the forest sector development co-operation was finalised in 1998. It recognised the positive achievements of the actions funded by budget line B7-6201 while emphasising its complementary role with respect to other financial instruments. The proposed regulation sets the framework for the management of budget line B7-6201, the most specific financial instrument available to the EC for the implementation of the above commitments. This instrument will finance strategic actions such as : - pilot projects and innovative actions in developing countries, and - studies to increase the effectiveness of Community assistance and of developing countries' efforts for the conservation and sustainable management of forests. The priorities set out form a coherent framework for the Community's development co-operation on forests, addressing the development of appropriate national and international policy frameworks, forest conservation, sustainable forest management, improvement of downstream processing and marketing of forest products and applied research, with an overall objective of achieving sustainable development, as well as poverty reduction. Under this overall framework, the activities financed may address a broad range of forest issues, allowing for the necessary flexibility to respond adequately to new ideas and challenges, according to regional and countries' specific needs. Since forest sector development co-operation is a long-term commitment, it is suggested that the regulation be given an unlimited duration. Four years after the entry into force of this regulation, the Commission will submit to the European Parliament and to the Council an overall assessment of the operations financed together with suggestions concerning the future of this regulation. Meanwhile, the Commission will ensure regular assessments of the progress of operations. In order to allow for the continued funding of measures to promote the conservation and sustainable management of tropical forests and other forests in developing countries under budget line B7-6201, the Commission urges that this new regulation should be adopted as soon as possible and be applicable from 1 January 2000.