



Ms. Federica Mogherini
High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs
and Security Policy
European Commission

High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy,
Federica Mogherini,

Let me assure you my deep appreciation to the efforts you have already devoted to tackling the on-going forest fires in the Amazon region. I was very pleased to hear this issue will be on the agenda of the Informal Meeting of Foreign Ministers you are gathering in the end of this week in Helsinki.

As the Minister of the Environment and Climate of Finland I would like to express my deep concern on the urgency of action needed to protect the world's forests. According to the IPCC, the land biosphere acts as a natural net sink for nearly 30 % of anthropogenic CO₂ emissions. However, this land sink is vulnerable to climate change impacts, biodiversity loss, as well as other environmental and human pressures – such as the ones currently at play in Amazonas.

The Amazon rainforest is also home to one in ten species on Earth. The rainforest is uniquely rich and diverse. Deforestation causes drastic loss of species and tropical forest while the earth is in the midst of a mass extinction of life, mostly due to human caused habitat destruction and climate change.

In this vein, recent actions in Brazil in particular, risk leading towards a vicious spiral towards further destruction of the rainforest. The international community cannot let the development reach a point of no return. I would like to urge you, together with your colleagues and Ministers for Foreign Affairs, to use all tools at your disposal to bring these fires to a halt.

Combating deforestation, land degradation and restoring degraded land is an urgent priority to protect the biodiversity and ecosystem services vital to all life on earth. We must reverse the loss of forest cover and natural habitats, prevent irreversible land and forest degradation and accelerate the implementation of restoration measures.

The European Commission has recently published a “Commission Communication on Stepping up EU Action to Protect and Restore the World's Forest”. As the Presidency, Finland will prepare Council Conclusions on the Communication, and will seek inter alia to find an agreement on how to ensure sustainable and deforestation free forest and agricultural product supply chains for the European market.

The urgency of enhanced global climate action will be reflected also in the Council Conclusions on preparations for the UNFCCC meetings in Chile to be adopted in the Environment Council meeting in October.

Underlining the global impact of the recent and expanding deliberate forest fires and burn-clearing in the Amazonas, I would like to request you as the High Representative of the Union, and the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the EU urgently to assess, how EU foreign and trade policy means can be employed to reverse the destructive trend.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Mikkonen', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Krista Mikkonen

Minister of the Environment and Climate