

Stockholm October 2017

Dear Commissioner

Save the Orangutan works for the conservation of the critically endangered orangutan and its habitat in the rainforests of Borneo. Sadly the forests are disappearing at an alarming rate, and our consumption is one of the primary causes for the deforestation.

Since the year 2000 a forest-area the size of Denmark has been cleared on Borneo with extensive consequences to biodiversity and global climate change. In 2015 Indonesia was among the top global CO₂-emitters, and in 2016 IUCN updated the status of the orangutan from “endangered” to “critically endangered” due the deforestation. The orangutan is thereby “at extremely high risk of extinction in the wild” and if the species is to survive, we need to act now!

The primary driver of deforestation on Borneo is the development of oil palm plantations making production and consumption of the palm oil one of the most significant threats to the survival of the orangutan. Indonesia is the largest exporter of palm oil in the world and due to increasing market demand, production is projected to expand to cover an area three times the size of Denmark. Thereby it is crucial for Save the Orangutan to limit this trend before the last habitats of the orangutan are lost forever.

Europe is the world’s second largest importer of palm oil and entire 46% of the imported palm oil is used for biofuels. In the term 2010 to 2014 the proportion of palm oil in biodiesel rose by 606 %, meaning that EU’s transport sector is indirectly occupying an area of 1 mio ha. that was previously covered by rainforest. Biofuels are widely considered to be the sustainable alternative to fossil fuels, but unfortunately this is not the case. According to EU’s Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety the use of biodiesel based on palm oil causes three times the GHG emissions than that of the fossil fuel it replaces, and in addition palm oil production is currently driving extensive destruction of some of the richest ecosystems in the world.

On April 4th 2017 the EU Parliament approved a resolution encouraging the EU Commission to take action to phase out the use of palm oil in biodiesel by 2020 to live up to EU’s commitments to halt tropical deforestation, loss of biodiversity and increasing green house gas emissions.

In the campaign “Fuelled by forest” Save the Orangutan has encouraged the Danes and Swedes to support the message that transport in the EU under no circumstances should lead to tropical deforestation and should neither be supported politically nor financially.

Save the Orangutan encourages the EU Commission to live up to it's responsibility and international commitments regarding safeguarding biodiversity, halting tropical deforestation and halting greenhouse gas emission by the following acts:

- The EU Commission should take steps to phase out the use of palm oil in biofuels by 2020 to prevent that the EU transport sector directly or indirectly contributes to tropical deforestation, loss of biodiversity and green house gas emission.
- EU should by 2020 define sustainability criteria for palm oil imported to EU. The criteria should as a minimum live up the ambitions of the Amsterdam treaty, and ensure that orangutan habitats are not converted to favour palm oil production.
- EU should take steps to ensure that EU live up to its commitments to stop loss of biodiversity, halt tropical deforestation and halt green house gas emission in relation to import of goods.

Save the Orangutan is at your disposal to elaborate this message and the basis for our position. This issue is an overseen negative side effect of EU's quest for sustainable energy and transport, and we look forward to follow the debate and development on the matter.

Kind Regards

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