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*Committee on Development*

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**2010/00217(NLE)**

24.9.2010

## **DRAFT OPINION**

of the Committee on Development

for the Committee on International Trade

on the proposal for a Council decision on conclusion of a voluntary partnership agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Cameroon on forest law enforcement, governance and trade in timber and derived products to the European Union (FLEGT)  
(COM(2010)0406 – C7-0000/2010 – 2010/00217(NLE))

Rapporteur: Eva Joly

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## SHORT JUSTIFICATION

The aim of the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) between the EU and Cameroon is to strengthen forest governance, promote Cameroonian timber products, and improve the country's competitiveness in the international marketplace.

Notwithstanding the justifiable aspirations of the agreement, the Committee on Development would like to remind that it will be considered successful if the FLEGT's objectives and agreement commitments (strengthening community land tenure and access rights, ensuring the effective participation of civil society -with specific attention to indigenous peoples - in policy making on forest-governance related issues; increasing transparency and reducing corruption) are duly met.

In this regard, there are at least two issues that the DEVE Committee would like to highlight: on the one hand, it is important to ensure a meaningful forest governance reform process that takes into account the needs of forest-dependent communities and indigenous peoples and is based on the involvement of civil society in law-making and in participatory forest management with the aim of improving forest governance, enforcement mechanisms, and tackling corruption.

On the other, and linked to the aforementioned objectives, the agreements should define clear rules indicating the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders during the law reform process, the process to make the wood tracking system operational, the setting up of the institutional framework and the process to sensitise and strengthen the capacity of actors.

Lastly, the Committee on Development would like to highlight the fact that although the FLEGT and Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) schemes deal with forest uses, they are perceived as separate initiatives and handled by different ministers in the partner countries. Consequently, stresses that without insisting on good governance and recognition of rights of local communities and indigenous peoples, REDD schemes can bypass the consultation processes (and when relevant, the governance and law reforms) that are part of the FLEGT process. For that reason, REDD schemes must be built on the FLEGT consultation process and address the underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation.

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The Committee on Development calls on the Committee on International Trade, as the committee responsible, to propose that Parliament gives its consent..