

**Question for written answer E-000311/2012
to the Commission
Rule 117
Michail Tremopoulos (Verts/ALE)**

Subject: Brazilian legislation permits increases in Amazon deforestation

The Brazilian Senate has just passed a bill that allows more destruction of the Amazon Rainforest. According to the BBC¹, this new legislation would allow more deforestation because it would reduce the amount of rainforest that farmers are required to preserve.

According to the WWF², amnesties will be extended to illegal deforestation conducted prior to 2008. Areas formerly held to be too steep or vital to the protection of watersheds and watercourses are among those now open to destruction. While there is research that indicates that deforestation of the Amazon Rainforest is declining, this new bill would undo all the progress that has been made in recent years.

Although clearing for cattle pasture continues to be the largest cause of forest conversion, mechanised soy agriculture in the frontier states of Pará and Mato Grosso is also becoming increasingly important. Expansion in the region has been promoted both by financial incentives and Brazil's 'Programme for the Acceleration of Growth' (PAC). Under the PAC, large areas of the Amazon are opened up to development, improving the viability of soy, oil palm, logging and beef production in once remote areas. The reasons for land-clearing in the Amazon are compelling: cheap land and booming demand for commodities driven by a surging China and a growing interest in biofuels. These factors have helped Brazil become an agricultural superpower in less than a generation. Amazon landowners have seen their land values double every four to five years in areas that just a decade ago were pristine rainforests³.

What is the Commission willing to do in order to show the Brazilian authorities the importance that should be placed on the protection of the Amazon Rainforest, as a global responsibility? How could the Commission bring pressure to bear in order to convince Brazilian legislators that this bill should not be passed?

¹ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-16065069>

² <http://wwf.panda.org/?uNewsID=202721>

³ <http://news.mongabay.com/2008/0801-amazon.html>