



European countries endorse UN-backed pact on tropical timber



18 December 2009 – Eleven European countries have ratified a United Nations-backed agreement designed to promote the sustainable management of forests producing tropical timber and a diverse and legal international trade in such products.

Representatives of Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Lithuania, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain took part in a ceremony at UN Headquarters in New York yesterday to indicate their country's support for the International Tropical Timber Agreement.

The agreement was adopted in January 2006 to serve as a successor to a previous pact but will only enter into force once a certain proportion of major exporting and importing countries have ratified it.

The pact aims to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and to improve the management of forests in tropical countries by addressing illegal logging and deforestation while supporting the rehabilitation of degraded forests.

Annebeth Rosenboom, Chief of the Treaty Section of the UN's Office of Legal Affairs (OLA), welcomed the signature by Germany and the ratifications and said they would help bring the key agreement closer to its entry into force, perhaps as early as next year.

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