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COUNCIL DECISION (EU) 2026/2549

of 9 November 2026

authorising participation in the negotiations for an international agreement to replace the International Tropical Timber Agreement

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Article 192(1) and Article 207(4), first subparagraph, in conjunction with Article 218(3) and (4), thereof,

Having regard to the recommendation from the European Commission,

Whereas:

(1) The Union is a party to the International Tropical Timber Agreement (the 'ITTA 2006') alongside its Member States.

(2) The ITTA 2006 was concluded by the Union by Council Decision 2011/731/EU [1] and entered into force on 7 December 2011 for a period of 10 years. The ITTA 2006 was initially extended for a period of five years and then for a further period of three years. The ITTA 2006 does not provide for any extension beyond 6 December 2029.

(3) The ITTA 2006 aims to promote the sustainable management and conservation of tropical forests and the expansion and diversification of international trade in tropical timber from sustainably managed and legally harvested forests. The ITTA 2006 therefore covers matters relating to policies falling under Article 192(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) as well as policies falling under Article 207(4), first subparagraph, TFEU.

(4) The negotiations for an international agreement to replace the International Tropical Timber Agreement (the 'new agreement') might take place within the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development or within an alternative governance model provided the objectives of the negotiations can be met in efficient and cost-effective manner.

(5) The scope of the new agreement should be identical or similar to the scope of the ITTA 2006. Additions to the scope should be well justified and should avoid duplication with other international instruments or processes.

(6) The Union should take part in the negotiations for the new agreement, in order to ensure that it is in line with Union policies, including sustainable management and conservation of tropical forests and trade facilitation of tropical timber. The new agreement should ensure a balanced representation of producer and consumer countries, support sustainable forest management, promote legal and sustainable trade in tropical timber, and establish an effective and equitable financial and governance framework.

(7) The matters covered by the negotiations can fall within the areas of Union competence as well as within the areas of Member States' competence.

(8) The Commission should therefore be authorised to negotiate, on behalf of the Union, the matters falling under the common commercial policy as well as matters falling under environmental policy, insofar as the Union has adopted common rules that might be affected by, or be altered by, the new agreement.

(9) In accordance with the principles of sincere cooperation and unity of external representation, and in view of the specific situation where both the Union and its Member States are parties to the ITTA 2006, the Commission and the Member States should cooperate closely during the negotiation process, including through regular coordination with the Member States' technical experts and representatives as well as the participation of those technical experts and representatives in meetings with a view to supporting the Union position.

[1] Council Decision 2011/731/EU of 8 November 2011 on the conclusion, on behalf of the European Union, of the 2006 International Tropical Timber Agreement (OJ L 294, 12.11.2011, p. 1, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2011/731/oj).

(10) The coordination with the Member States' technical experts and representatives is without prejudice to the role of the special committee as set out in Article 218(4) TFEU.

(11) As the negotiations develop, the negotiating directives should be updated, if required.

(12) This Decision is without prejudice to the division of competences between the Union and its Member States for the signing and conclusion of the new agreement, and to the nature of the new agreement, as the nature of the new agreement should be determined at that stage,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

Participation in the negotiations for an international agreement to replace the International Tropical Timber Agreement is hereby authorised as regards matters pertaining to the Union's competence.

Article 2

The Commission is hereby nominated as the Union negotiator.

Article 3

The negotiating directives set out in the addendum to this Decision are hereby addressed to the Commission.

Article 4

The negotiations shall be conducted in consultation with the Council Working Party on Commodities, which is hereby designated as the special committee provided for in Article 218(4) TFEU.

Article 5

This Decision is addressed to the Commission.

Done at Brussels, 9 November 2026.

For the Council

The President

S. HARRIS