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HIGHLIGHTS

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA IN TRADE CONTEXT

The commitment by the EU and Ukraine to develop trade relations in compliance with sustainable development principles was reflected in Chapter 13 "Trade and Sustainable Development" of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement.

A meeting of the EU-Ukraine subcommittee on trade and sustainable development was held in Brussels on May 29-30, 2017. Next day civil society forum on sustainable development was held. The agendas of both meetings included important for Ukraine issues: sustainable use of forests (in the context of Ukraine's export ban for unprocessed wood), implementation of key conventions of the International Labour Organization and multilateral environmental agreements. Civil society forum also addressed animal well-fare.

Ukraine got its home-work, which needs to be done by the next subcommittee meeting (second quarter of 2018). The tasks include, inter alia, many commitments on reforming forestry, involvement of EU technical support into such reforms, development of an effective and transparent forestry management system, setting clear timeframes for development of 100% coverage electronic forests inventory. The civil society of Ukraine, apart from providing recommendations, needs to create an advisory group on sustainable development (this time only ad-hoc delegation was set up).

UKRAINIAN PRIMEVAL FORESTS COME UNDER PROTECTION

On May 23, 2017, the Parliament adopted a law of Ukraine on "Amendments to some legal acts of Ukraine regarding protection of primeval forests in line with Framework Convention on Protection and Sustainable Development of Carpathians" (No.4480).

Primeval forests – untouched territories, which emerged and developed strictly under natural factors without any human intervention. Primeval forests have great environmental, scientific and cultural importance. They are habitats for immense amount of red book species, as well as contribute significantly to climate regulation. Tree cuttings is a key threat to primeval forests: they cannot be restored afterwards.

WWF experts state that, as of beginning of 2017, there were 85 thousand hectares of ancient forests identified in Ukraine, including 54 thousand hectares of primeval forests. Yet, just a portion of them is part of Primeval Beech Forests of Carpathians and the Ancient Beech Forests of Germany", thus under legal protection. The rest is part of commercial lands and do not enjoy such protection.

The adopted law will harmonize Ukraine's legislation with European laws and will allow to take all primeval forests under protection in Ukraine. In particular, the Forestry Code will not include a new definition of "primeval forests" and "quasi primeval forests", as well include those into the category of protected territories. In addition, the law prohibits any cuttings on primeval forests protected sites, as well as full, sanitary and gradual cuttings around primeval forests. Finally, destruction and damage to primeval forests may be administrative and criminal offence.

UKRAINE'S LONG ROAD TO EIA: A GLANCE INTO THE PAST

