



Izaskun Bilbao Barandica

Vice-presidenta del grupo ALDE
Eurodiputada (EAJ-PNV)

**JEAN CLAUDE JUNCKER
PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

Brussels 17.10.2017

Dear President Juncker,

This past weekend has seen a real tragedy in Galicia. Two people have lost their lives, thousands of hectares of woodland and trees have burned down and tens of thousands of people have been directly affected by the consequences of more than 100 fires which broke out almost simultaneously, apparently as a result of arson.

As we wait for the emergency services to extinguish the fires and for the damage to be assessed, I would like to convey to you my conviction that the impact of these fires on the population and their living conditions and the potential effects of this tragedy on the stability of the region are sufficient grounds for the activation in this part of Spain of the European Solidarity Fund to palliate the effects of natural disasters, as regulated by Regulation 2012/2002, recently upgraded in the meeting of the Council on 26 June last.

Within the scope of authority of the Commission I would like to ask you to see that the necessary measures are taken to ensure strict compliance with the FLEGT and EUT regulations governing the sale of wood in the EU and preventing the entry into the market of wood of unlawful provenance. The oversupply of wood resulting from these fires may pose additional difficulties in ensuring efficient documentary control of the provenance of wood. It could also increase the complexity of the supply chain.

Finally, given that the problem of forest fires also affects the centre and north of Portugal and, to a lesser extent, the region of Asturias, and that it threatens to seriously harm the capability of the Atlantic coastline of the Iberian Peninsula to bind moisture and maintain a suitable rainfall pattern, I would like to ask you to incorporate active measures for the reforestation of the areas affected under EU programmes. One measure that could be taken immediately is to incorporate this task into the priorities of the European Solidarity Corps.

I remain

Yours sincerely,

Izaskun Bilbao Barandica

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