

EU must block imports from Amazon forest reserve, say Green MEPs



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Green MEP Molly Scott Cato has joined with fellow Greens to call on the EU Commission to block all imports extracted from Amazonian reserves in Brazil.

The call follows recent proposals by the Brazilian President, Michel Temer, to open up at least 30% of the 46,000 square kilometer [Renca reserve](#) – an area the size of Denmark – to mining and large-scale agroindustry.

In a [letter](#) to Trade Commissioner, Cecilia Malmström and Commission President, Jean-Claude Juncker, the MEPs urge the Commission to use the [EU-Mercosur Agreement](#), a new trade deal currently being negotiated between Latin American countries and the EU, to prevent further destruction of the Amazon rainforest. With Brazilian imports into the EU being dominated by primary products – over a quarter of which are minerals – Greens fear the deal could do the opposite and encourage European extractive and agribusiness to exploit exports from areas like the Renca reserve.

[In a letter published in today's Guardian newspaper](#), Molly says:

"The proposal to open up the Renca reserve in the Amazon for exploitation by large mining companies would be catastrophic for the earth's climate, for biodiversity and for local indigenous communities. At the same time, the EU is negotiating a new trade agreement with Mercosur, the Latin America regional trade bloc, of which Brazil currently holds the presidency. This is a vital opportunity for the EU to use our trade muscle to make clear that the Amazon is not for sale and that minerals extracted from a protected reserve will never find their way onto European markets."

The Green MEPs also urge the Commission to remind Brazil of its commitment to the [UN Convention on Biological Diversity](#) and point to [WTO rules](#) which say that trading parties have a legitimate right to ban imports on products if it is "necessary to protect human, animal or plant life or health.

Molly Scott Cato has pledged Greens will vote against any deal that threatens protected areas in Brazil. She said:

"The European Parliament has a commitment to rainforest conservation and sustainable forest management in Brazil. MEPs will have a final vote on the Mercosur trade deal and Greens will vote against any agreement that increases trade in raw materials whilst threatening the most important rainforest on the planet."

Although a Brazilian court last week [blocked](#) the attempt by President Temer to open up the Renca reserve, it is likely to be only a temporary reprieve for the area. Previously higher court judges have overturned rulings made by

local courts.

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