

Meeting between Thai participants and EU focal point during FLEGT Week in Brussels

Date: 18 March 2015

Time: 18:00-19:30 hrs

Venue: Albert Borschette Centre

Participants:

- Luca Perez, EU Focal point
- Alex Hinrichs, EFI
- Sebastian Schrader, EFI
- Sapol Boonsermsuk, Director of International Cooperation, Royal Forest Dept (RFD)
- Prasert lamdeengamlert, President, Sawmill Association
- Warangkana Rattanarat, RECOFCT
- Bruno Cammaert, FAO
- Somrudee Nicro, Consultant to EU FLEGT Facility, EFI

Summary:

1. The EU Ministerial Conclusions on Thailand is still on and thus high-level political engagement between two sides is on hold. This is not only true to the VPA but also FTA and others.
2. At technical level, more regular communication between the two sides is expected.
3. European NGOs can work in Thailand despite the EU Ministerial Conclusions.
4. Mr Perez asked if the negotiation structure as agreed during JEM 1 remained the same.
5. EFI will send feedback on the draft legality definition (LD) Mr Sapol informally submitted to Mr Perez to the Thai side soon. The DG will formally submit the draft LD to Mr Perez. (Note: Mr Sapol forwarded the formal letter from the DG dated 23 March 2015 to Mr Perez by email on 24 March 2015.)
6. The fact that Thailand is a processing country makes it important to ensure that timber imported to Thailand come from legal origins and that the draft LD captures import issues.
7. Mr Prasert and Ms Warangkana confirmed private sector's and civil society's interest in the FLEGT VPA and that the two SHs will continue to get involved in the process.
8. The private sector foresees phased product scope. At the beginning, it is expected to cover only raw materials.
9. Concern was raised how other Ministries are involved in the process. While consultations within private sector and civil society are rolling, it is less so within the governmental sector. The next FAO-RFD Letter of Agreement (LoA) can address the matter. FAO expects RFD to co-finance the next LoAs, however.

10. Key SHs are working with TEFSO on designing the LD consultations in Thailand. Mr Perez would like to receive information about consultations, eg schedules, etc, while realizing that this info is only indicative and can be altered at a later time.
11. TEFSO should document all meetings especially all Ad-hoc Working Group meetings. If possible, the documentations should be made publicly available so that SHs are aware of them and also what issues can or cannot be accommodated.
12. EU and EFI would like to receive discussion notes from Ad-hoc Working Group meetings, except issues considered to be internal to the Thai side.
13. Mr Perez will consult EU Delegation and inform the Thai side about the next exchange, eg VDO conference between two focal points (Thai DG and Mr Perez), or between two chief negotiators (Permanent Secretary on the Thai side), etc.
14. The Thai side suggested that if the Head of Delegation can meet the Permanent Secretary and the DG, it will help move the process forward in Thailand.
15. Next EFI mission to Thailand will be in mid-May and will include both Alex Hinrichs and Sebastian Schrader. The Thai side can suggest what technical assistance EFI should provide.