



fern

MAKING THE EU WORK
FOR PEOPLE & FORESTS

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OMNIBUS LAW

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ANNUAL REPORT 2020

January - December



Photo: Luca Tondet. A member of the forest watch organisation, Jember, Indonesia. The photo was part of the Fern (NGO) exhibition, 'Our Forests, Our Lives', held at the European Commission's headquarters in February 2020.

Fern's theory of change

Forests are essential to life on earth: they maintain biodiversity and protect land and water. More than 1.6 billion people rely on them for their livelihoods, and they're critical in the fight against climate change.

What's more, as the weather becomes deadlier and hurricanes, droughts and floods intensify, forests can offer some protection. Yet the threats against forests are multiplying.

Around the world forests are being plundered for timber and cleared to make way for mines, infrastructure and agriculture.

We identify the threats facing the world's forests, and work with affected peoples, social and environmental organisations and policy makers to devise and deliver solutions.

Our purpose, as a Europe-based NGO, is to address the root causes of this forest destruction from a European perspective. As the number one global trade and aid power, the EU has an immense influence on the world's forests and the people who depend on them.

Our close work with partners in the global South and Europe shapes and drives our campaigns and is vital to bring about lasting change on the ground.

Fern makes decisions by consensus and all our campaigns are built in close collaboration with social and environmental organisations and movements across the world.

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Cover photo: M. Iqbal / Greenpeace. Indonesian labourers and students protest against the country's Omnibus Law, Tangerang, Banten, October 2020. Using the cover of COVID-19, governments around the world have rolled back hard-won environmental protections and civil liberties. A glaring example is Indonesia's Omnibus Legal Package, ostensibly designed to promote investment and job creation, but which proposed dismantling environmental safeguards, and erodes the land tenure and participatory rights of Indigenous and forest peoples.



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WELCOME JULIA CHRISTIAN

Last year marked Fern's 25th anniversary. It was also the year that COVID overshadowed all else, triggering the biggest global upheaval since the Second World War. The pandemic - and the well-documented links between the relentless destruction of the natural world and the spread of zoonotic diseases - only heightened the urgency of Fern's mission to protect forests, and the rights of forest peoples.

At Fern we felt lucky to have jobs when so many were losing theirs, but the pandemic still transformed our working lives.



Geographical barriers to meetings disappeared, meaning endless hours locked to online calls. We missed the energising effect of being together, and the sparks of inspiration and joy that come from it. Many of us had to deal with vastly increased childcare and other family responsibilities. And for those campaigners whose time is

usually spent working with partners in countries outside the EU, this was no longer possible.

Many of those partners, however, played – and continue to play - a heroic role in fighting the pandemic, by filling the void too often left by their states.

In Cameroon, Liberia, Ghana, the Republic of Congo, and the Central African Republic, our partners used their deep ties with remote forest and rural communities to offer them support, including by delivering facemasks and providing COVID awareness training.

Many partners played – and continue to play - a heroic role in fighting the pandemic, by filling the void too often left by their states.

In doing so, they echoed the extraordinary work of our Liberian partners in their response to the 2014 Ebola outbreak, and showed what drives them: the communities they work with. This is a strong reminder that our joint work is about people as much as forests.

Forests go mainstream

Against this turbulent backdrop, political interest in forests rose sharply, and there was an unprecedented number of EU policies and regulations demanding our attention. One clear example is the ongoing controversy over EU's biggest-ever trade deal, with Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay (the Mercosur bloc) - agreed in principle in June 2019 despite the fact that environmental and social crimes continue to tear apart the Amazon and other precious South American biomes. In response, Fern, and our Brazilian and EU partners, shone a spotlight on the ways in which the Mercosur deal would intensify problems.

Political interest in forests rose sharply, and there was an unprecedented number of EU policies and regulations demanding our attention.

The resulting increased interest has meant European and South American heads of state have discussed the topic, and for the first time a groundswell of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) have said they couldn't accept the deal in its current form.



It marks a sea-change in political priorities that a deal of this magnitude be held in its tracks because of concerns around the deforestation and human rights abuses. But we need to make sure that the conversation is not just about Mercosur, but about trade policy in general.

All EU trade deals - including the one it's currently negotiating with Indonesia - must have enforceable environmental and human rights protections at their core, and draw on the views of civil society and affected communities, otherwise the EU's lofty ambitions about protecting the world's forests will be empty.

Ending EU and UK complicity

Last year also saw decisive developments in our [long campaign](#) to get the EU to stop driving the destruction of the world's forests through its imports of agricultural goods, in particular beef, soy, palm oil, cocoa and rubber.

In [October](#), the European Parliament yielded to growing pressure from [citizens](#) across the continent, and voted to introduce laws preventing the import of commodities and products linked to deforestation and human rights violations.

It was an official acknowledgement that robust laws, rather than voluntary attempts by companies, are needed to remove illegal deforestation from the EU's supply chains. The European Commission will present such a regulatory proposal this year, which Fern hopes will include human rights and non-forest ecosystems alongside protections for forests.

The UK, post-Brexit, is following suit: they are set to propose a law in 2021 requiring companies to ensure that the commodities they place on the UK market aren't linked to illegal deforestation.

Smokescreen

Evidence continues to mount of how the EU's ill-fated bioenergy policy inflicts harm on forests, biodiversity and the climate.

By allowing Member States to subsidise burning woody biomass for energy, the EU's Renewable Energy Directive (RED) has dramatically boosted its use across the EU. The resultant increase in logging is so high that if it continues, in the medium-term EU forests are likely to [emit more carbon](#) than they absorb. Other forests around the world are also in danger.

As forests have been lost, the bioenergy industry has boomed. And naturally the vested interests behind it (including nations who have built it into their economies) are fiercely resisting any change.

But, thanks to the work of Fern, our partners, and concerned scientists, momentum is building and in 2020 the EU announced that the RED will be revised ahead of schedule.

Capturing carbon

The only scientifically proven way of removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere is to restore biologically diverse forests and nurture trees on agricultural land: forest restoration.

In 2020 this fact was publicly recognised by President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen and Vice-President for the European Green Deal Frans Timmermans. In February, just before the pandemic struck, we presented Timmermans with a share in a local [forest restoration project](#). Since then, he has spoken frequently about the [important role](#) that forest restoration can play in tackling the climate crisis.



In 2021, the EU's real ambition will become clear, when it negotiates its restoration target, and outlines how to implement it.

The Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) Regulation – a piece of legislation whose importance belies its often highly technical terminology, and niche position in climate discussions – is also being revised ahead of schedule, potentially to enshrine higher ambition for forest restoration.

Important advances

Our African partners spent much of the year responding to COVID, not only by supporting remote communities, but by informing and consulting with them on policy developments affecting forests.

In both the [Democratic Republic of the Congo](#), and the [Republic of the Congo](#), important advances on the domestic legislative front were greeted enthusiastically. But it was tempered by concern over the process of revising their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to the Paris Climate Agreement.

Our partners came together to insist that there be a stronger focus on community rights and forest protection in the NDCs. Fern supported this call with cutting edge analysis on gaps within the current NDCs. Our partners are now actively participating in the revision process.

In February, the European Commission launched a 'Fitness Check' on the European Union Timber Regulation (EUTR) and Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Regulation: its key tools for fighting the illegal timber trade.

The purpose was to review how the regulations are working. Fern and our partners contributed to the consultation, stressing that the Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPAs) between the EU and timber producing countries have been an important tool to improve forest governance on the ground, but that challenges should be tackled and linkages made to broader development, biodiversity and climate goals.

A cautionary tale

Ultimately the EU will be judged not by its rhetoric, but its delivery: whether its trade deals are truly sustainable, whether Europe's forests are thriving, and whether it has put an end to the illegal deforestation and human rights abuses scarring its agricultural supply chains.

Good intentions and vast sums of public money alone, don't guarantee effective action, as the billions of euros that Member States and the UK squander every year promoting burning forest biomass shows.

In 2020, the European Commission said that it would put [the European Green Deal](#) at the heart of its €670 billion COVID recovery plan. As the EU begins to navigate its way out of the pandemic, they must see bioenergy as a cautionary tale about what can go wrong.

If we fail to heed such concerns, our vulnerability to both future pandemics and the cataclysm of climate breakdown will only increase.

Over the last 25 years, Fern has done all within its power to ensure that the EU acts to protect the world's forests and the rights of the communities who rely on them, rather than contribute to their destruction. Forests are at last viewed as a political priority by the EU. But we do not have another quarter century to take the action needed to protect them.

Julia Christian

"Over the last 25 years, Fern has done all within its power to ensure that the EU acts to protect the world's forests and the rights of the communities who rely on them, rather than contribute to their destruction. Forests are at last viewed as a political priority by the EU. But we do not have another quarter century to take the action needed to protect them."



2020

NUMBER CRUNCHING



11

WEBINARS FERN

organised
(or co-organised)

25 YEARS
OF FERN

working to put forests and peoples' rights at the heart of EU policies



20

REPORTS AND BRIEFINGS



32

BLOGS



48k

YOUTUBE VIEWS FOR OUR VIDEO,

the EU-Mercosur trade deal:
What does it mean for Brazil?

26k IMPRESSIONS
OF OUR TWITTER THREAD



on a controversial move by EU
Commissioners for the Biodiversity
Strategy to state that young trees
absorb more carbon than older ones.



223k

VISITORS TO FERN.ORG

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A FERN PARTNER

SIIM KURESOO, THE ESTONIAN FUND FOR NATURE



Siim Kuresoo is Vice-Chairman of the Executive Committee for the Estonian Fund for Nature (ELF) responsible for forest and climate programmes. He lives with his wife and three young sons in Tartu, Estonia's second largest city.

For the first decade, we got a lot of support from WWF in Sweden and Finland, and we ran huge projects mapping Estonia's wetlands, forests and grasslands.

The '90s were really revolutionary times in this part of the world, when there was an understanding that we have so much power to get things done, to really establish these huge protected natural areas before industry interests tried to seize them. In that time, there were three big areas whose protection we initiated or co-initiated (Soomaa and Karula national parks, and Alam-Pedja nature reserve) totalling 864 square kilometres.

Today ELF has marine, wetland, climate and volunteer engagement programmes. We have about 30 people working for us, as well as volunteers and part-time staff. Our mission is to protect Estonia's natural habitats, endangered species and natural landscapes for future generations. Forests cover half of Estonia, and are a very important element of Estonian cultural identity and thinking.

I started working for ELF in 2004, and in 2016 I switched from managing the ELF conservation volunteer program to working on forest climate issues. ELF's climate and forest programs are advocacy oriented and my most important task is to ensure that we have the resources and environment for dedicated and smart people to act.

"I see Fern as 'warriors with smiles': from my own experience I know how difficult it is to meaningfully stand up for the environment and how much conflict there can be, but Fern never loses its smile in the face of this."

There are many people like this in ELF. In forest issues we advocate mainly for better national policies, but also try to persuade forest owners and managers to undertake nature friendly management of forests. The everyday tasks vary so much that it is difficult to paint a picture of a typical day. What I do know, is that I always value a day in nature and wish that I had more of them.

Both of my parents are biologists and I studied biology at the University of Tartu and environmental protection at the Estonian University of Life Sciences.

I picked up an interest in nature at a very young age. My father took me to see different birds in the forests as soon as I could walk. I still carry the excitement with me from those early experiences, which are the foundation of my personal feelings towards nature.

ELF has been actively engaged in national forest policies for a long time, but a few years ago we realised that international policies - and specifically the EU's Renewable Energy Directive (RED), which subsidises biomass burning for energy - were also helping drive the devastation of our wildlife and habitats.

Estonia is the EU's second biggest exporter of wood pellets, which are used to fire power stations across the continent. The pressure this has put on our forests can be seen in the fact that in the last decade our government has issued logging permits for 82,000 hectares of forest which were designated protected habitats under Natura 2000. This is equivalent to 115,000 football fields.

To shine light on this for an international audience, in 2020 we published a [report](#) with our partners the [Latvian Ornithological Society](#), which revealed how intensely managed forests and clearcutting dominate the Estonian and Latvian forestry industries, and that this is having terrible consequences on the climate and forest wildlife. It got a lot of attention and media coverage.

We worked closely with Fern on it, drawing on their knowledge of EU policy. We've worked together before on smaller projects, including in 2017 when Estonia assumed the EU Presidency. I find Fern excellent in terms of professionalism and knowledge.

I see Fern as 'warriors with smiles': from my own experience I know how difficult it is to meaningfully stand up for the environment and how much conflict there can be, but Fern never loses its smile in the face of this.

The only way change can happen is when people really want it, work hard but also do not forget to learn and grow. And we only learn and grow if we expose ourselves to other people, other ideas and knowledge, and full diversity of the world. Working with Fern has helped me grow me a lot."

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A FERN INTERN

CAMILLA FALSETTI



“My internship with Fern was exactly what I was looking for and the reason I moved to Brussels [from Italy], because it was related to politics, human rights and the EU bubble.”

I started at Fern in January 2020. Shortly afterwards the pandemic struck and we all had to work from home.

On the human level, I missed a lot, like meeting with the team, but I felt really supported. Professionally though, I think I learned as much as I would have working in the office.

To communicate Fern’s positions I had to understand them, then find a way to express them. I learned how the small details communicate a lot. For example, campaigners would come up with a product – such as a briefing, a Forest Watch article or a blog - and I had to find the best images to use, check we had the right to use them, lay the page out on the web, come up with tweets and Facebook posts, create email lists, make sure we’re targeting the right people using MailChimp, and get everything signed off.

I also worked on Fern’s Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) and google ads, to improve traffic to our website, which was new for me, and developed other hard skills, which I probably wouldn’t have gotten if we’d been in the office, like how to organise a webinar.

“Now this great experience is over but it gave me many beautiful memories with the whole team and precious knowledge in the human rights and environment field that will help me build my career, hopefully as a journalist.”

The most challenging thing was being part of a flat organisation. It’s much easier to have a boss tell you what you have to do, than take responsibility, give an opinion, and also to be challenged, which was different to my previous experience doing an internship at the Brussels Express newspaper.

Before that I did a Masters’ degree in Communications at the Vrije Universiteit Brussels, and also worked as a journalist at in Milan. As a journalist I’ve written about land grabbing, deforestation and Indigenous communities in Colombia and Argentina, where I have family roots. Fern helped me deepen my understanding of the impact that EU policies and trade deals have there and elsewhere. I had intended to go to Colombia to work alongside Indigenous communities, but the pandemic stopped that, and instead I had the luck to stay at Fern for an extra eight months.

Now this great experience is over but it gave me many beautiful memories with the whole team and precious knowledge in the human rights and environment field that will help me build my career, hopefully as a journalist.

FERN AND FORESTS: THE YEAR IN REVIEW

JANUARY 7. To mark Fern's 25th anniversary, Scot Quaranda of Dogwood Alliance, our US partner, chronicled Fern's history and achievements in a [long read essay](#).

In January, Germany took over facilitating the Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP), founded in 2002 to tackle the grave threats facing the world's second biggest rainforest. Marie-Ange Kalenga [responded](#): "Fern and its partners from the region hope that German facilitation will spur innovative actions and pathways on... livelihoods, climate, deforestation and land and energy use in the forest landscapes of Central Africa", noting that the best way to achieve this was by giving [civil society organisations \(CSOs\)](#) a seat at the table.

January

JANUARY 15. The European Parliament (EP) took a positive step towards implementing a Due Diligence Regulation to end imported deforestation, with its [resolution on the European Green Deal](#). The EP text called on the Commission to present, "without delay, a proposal for a European legal framework based on due diligence to ensure sustainable and deforestation-free supply chains for products placed on the EU market". Significantly, all four major political groups, including the centre-right European People's Party, agreed on the need for the regulation.

JANUARY 21. The European Parliament's Committee on International Trade voted to approve a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between the EU and Vietnam. "Those interested in trade, human rights and forests both inside and outside Vietnam will be watching closely to see if commitments around greater accountability mechanisms and transparency translate into reality," [wrote](#) Lindsay Duffield in response.



February

FEBRUARY 3. Dismay greeted Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro's [appointment](#) of the evangelical missionary Ricardo Lopes Dias to head the 'Uncontacted Indians' department of FUNAI, the Brazilian government body that establishes and carries out policies relating to Indigenous Peoples. Fern's partner, APIB, the Coalition of the Indigenous Peoples of Brazil, was joined by other Indigenous organisations and human rights groups in "[vehemently rejecting](#)" Dias' appointment.



FEBRUARY 4 – 5. The European Commission hosted photographer Luka Tomac's [exhibition](#) European Forests, European lives, which was supported by Fern. Tomac's picture essay spanning Germany, Sweden, Estonia and Latvia, put human faces to the reality of Europe's forests, reminding policy makers that there is a vast gulf between tree plantations and real, healthy forests. "The more communities I visited, the more it struck me that Europeans are forest people," he said. "But [Europe's] forests are under threat. They are being illegally cut for ski resorts, levelled to make way for coal mines, decimated for bioenergy and the pests that are increasing because of climate change."

FEBRUARY 7 – 21. During its 2020 Environment and Climate Week, the European Commission emphasised [building synergies between Nationally Determined Contributions \(NDCs\) and VPAs](#) in partner countries and ensuring adequate support for forest governance measures in climate action.

FEBRUARY 21. EU Leaders at the special Council on the next long-term EU budget [failed to agree an EU budget for 2021 - 27](#). Fern [noted](#) that a focus on EU external actions was sorely missing from summit discussions, as were the financial resources needed to protect biodiversity, including forests, and to tackle the climate emergency, adding that the European Green Deal should also support countries in the global South to address the climate and biodiversity crises.

MARCH 4. Laudes Martial Mbon travelled to the depths of the Congo rainforest to investigate the impact of logging and conservation projects on local people in the Sangha region of the Republic of Congo. His [vivid report](#) was one of a series of pieces of reportage on forests and forest communities by local journalists which Fern supported.

March

MARCH 6. In an [interview](#) for International Women's Day, Fern board member [Korto Reeves Williams](#) talked about how her motivation to tackle gender inequality and protect the environment, was drawn from her own life experiences, as well as Liberia's history. "Calling myself a feminist feels like the natural thing: it gives me clarity of purpose and gives me the power to change the direction of the story," she said, adding, "Integrating women's rights into protection of the forest is non-negotiable and must be at the centre of the work we do on sustainable development."

MARCH 9. On Ursula von der Leyen's 100th day in office as European Commission President, Hannah Mowat took stock of how her presidency was delivering on its pledges to protect forests, and the shape of the future. [Writing](#) in Euractiv, she described a mixed picture: from positive signs, such as the Commission's commitment to laws ensuring supply chains are deforestation-free, and worrying ones, including putting the role of natural ecosystems and carbon removal technologies on a level footing.

MARCH 17. Using COVID-19 as a cover excuse, Indonesia abandoned a painstakingly hard-won system to check the legality of its timber exports. This threatened its achievement of becoming the first country in the world to be awarded a Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) license. Indonesia's Trade Minister [claimed](#) the decision was taken to boost timber exports in the midst of the economic slowdown. Perrine Fournier [commented](#) that this marked "a serious setback in the EU's fight against illegal logging."

April

APRIL 8. As huge swathes of the world came to terms with life under lockdown, Fern's staff compiled a [recommended](#) list of viewing, reading and listening material to help its staff (and others) through confinement.

April saw deforestation rates in the Amazon rise by [64 per cent](#) as environmental protectors stayed away from the region, due to it becoming a [flashpoint](#) for the spread of coronavirus. Their absence created the opening for loggers and miners to [invade](#) Indigenous lands. "The virus is reaching Indigenous territories across Brazil with frightening speed", APIB said in a statement.

May

MAY 6. Fern and 15 other NGOs working on climate, environment, human rights and sustainable development issues released a [statement](#) on the EU's response to the COVID-19 crisis. It welcomed EU leadership in supporting partner countries' efforts in fighting the pandemic, while cautioning that in the short term, the EU needed to prioritise the needs of local communities, vulnerable groups and those on the frontlines of the pandemic in partner countries. It also stated that the EU must ensure that transparency, inclusiveness, and equity guide all efforts.



MAY 12. After Trade Commissioner Phil Hogan revealed that he was unaware of the link between biodiversity loss and pandemics, a group of scientists [wrote](#) to him detailing some of the vast body of evidence linking deforestation, destruction of natural habitats and biodiversity loss with zoonoses such as COVID-19.

MAY 19. The [European Commission](#) approved a EUR 550 million Danish state aid scheme to support electricity production from biomass combustion through to 2029, in line with its current [Guidelines](#) on State Aid for Environmental Protection and Energy (EEAG). Given that these state aid guidelines will be revised in 2021, Fern argued that such leniency was ["difficult to justify"](#).

MAY 20. The EU's much-anticipated [Biodiversity Strategy](#) was launched - a potential landmark moment for European forests. As well as headline targets to protect land and sea areas, the Strategy foresaw binding restoration targets and measures in 2021, strict protection of old-growth forests, and guidelines for management practices that respect biodiversity objectives.

Kelsey Perlman [commented](#): "The proposed measures would allow nature to flourish while enabling EU land to absorb more carbon dioxide. We will watch closely to ensure this ambition becomes law."

MAY 20. The European Commission published its [Farm to Fork strategy for Sustainable Food](#), which set out to "address the challenges of sustainable food systems in a comprehensive way, recognising the inextricable links between healthy people, healthy societies and a healthy planet." Writing in *The Ecologist* Nicole Polsterer [said](#) that while it was another signal that the EU was committed to eradicating the deforestation and rights abuses that "scar its agricultural imports... [but] the proof will now be in the execution".

MAY 28. The Swedish Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D) MEP Jytte Guteland [presented](#) her [draft report](#) on the EU Climate Law. It proposed that the EU cuts greenhouse gas emissions by 65 per cent by 2030, reaches net-zero emissions by 2050 and removes more greenhouse gases than it emits immediately thereafter. Fern [noted](#) its positive features, while expressing [concerns](#) that the Law would allow industries to over-rely on carbon removals from land or technology (known as [negative emissions](#)) to achieve their targets. "As it stands, industry groups may see Guteland's proposal as an invitation to continue business as usual as long as they have plans to capture and store carbon at scale by 2049. That would be decades too late," [warned](#) Kelsey Perlman.

MAY 28. It was revealed that collectively, Member States plan a major increase of wood harvesting in EU forests, which would lead to a reduction upwards of 20 per cent in their capacity to remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. The revelation occurred during a two-day meeting of the EU Expert Group whose role it is to examine Member States' National Forestry Accounting Plans, as part of the EU [Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry \(LULUCF\) Regulation](#). The main aim of the meeting was to scrutinise countries' so-called 'forest reference levels' - the amount of carbon dioxide that will be absorbed or emitted by forests in the coming five years. "Member States are not planning to make their forests climate solutions: quite the opposite," said Hannah Mowat, Fern's representative in the EU Expert Group.

JUNE 3. Opposition to the EU-Mercosur trade deal mounted, when a Dutch parliamentary [resolution](#) called on their government to reject the agreement. The two main reasons being that it would lead to unfair competition for Dutch farmers, and the ongoing destruction of the Amazon.

June

JUNE 15. Fern, along with ClientEarth, Veblen Institute, La Fondation Nicolas Hulot pour la Nature et l'Homme and International Federation for Human Rights submitted a formal complaint against the European Commission over its failure in negotiating the EU-Mercosur trade deal. "The European Commission has ignored its legal obligation to ensure the trade agreement with the 'Mercosur' group of South American countries will not lead to social, economic, environmental degradation and human rights violations," it [stated](#). (In July the Ombudsman opened an inquiry into the allegations.)

JUNE 24. The EU and Indonesia concluded the 10th round of their Cooperative Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) free trade deal negotiations online. Both seemed determined to conclude an [ambitious](#) agreement, despite COVID-19 and the [dispute](#) around



the EU's decision to phase out use of palm oil for biodiesel production unless the oil is certified not to have contributed to deforestation. The next day, 37 Indonesian NGO representatives met online with Fern to discuss ways to ensure that the significant threats the deal could pose to Indigenous Peoples and forests are mitigated.

JUNE 26. Fern and the [Responsible Business Conduct \(RBC\)](#) Working Group of the European Parliament, a cross-party group of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), co-organised a [webinar](#) to discuss practical solutions for regulating company behaviour and forest risk commodities' supply chains. More than 180 participants listened as experts explored technical and political challenges and potential solutions.

In the Central African Republic, there was active civil society and local community engagement in the REDD+ strategy consultations and the revision of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). With one voice our partners insisted that there should be a stronger focus on community rights and forest protection in the NDCs.

For the first time in 30 years the annual [Forest Movement Europe](#) meeting had to be cancelled. It had been due to take place in a forest in France and to be combined with a celebration of 25 years of Fern and 30 years of the Forest Movement. Webinars were held on-line but nothing could replace the importance of coming together to strategise.

FERN AND FORESTS: THE YEAR IN REVIEW

JULY 10. A documentary on the dangers threatening a natural paradise for gorillas in the Republic of Congo broadcast by the European public service Arte, was taken to task by [Forest Peoples Programme's](#) Lassana Kone and Fern's Marie-Ange Kalenga. "Arte's report could have been a chance to highlight the complex challenges of preserving the environment in a country that aims to exploit its natural resources in order to advance economically and reduce poverty," they [wrote](#). Instead, the programme bought into the argument that, "communities are primarily responsible for destroying forests... conservation NGOs are putting large swathes of land under glass domes, and turning them into open-air zoos to the detriment of hundreds of thousands of people whose lives appear ultimately to count for less than the wildlife."

July

JULY 15. Kelsey Perlman hosted a webinar organised by Fern and our partner [Canopée](#) exploring the role of European forests in helping Member States to achieve the EU pledge to be carbon neutral by 2050. EU representatives, experts, industry and civil society members addressed the many variables in using forests to adapt to and fight climate change. See: [What Climate Strategy for European Forests? Re-thinking their contribution to climate neutrality](#).

JULY 17. A [study](#) by researchers from Brazil, Germany, Sweden and the USA in the journal [Science](#) explicitly linked illegal deforestation for soy and cattle farming on individual rural properties in Brazil, to exports of those goods to EU countries. In response, Perrine Fournier [observed](#): "This fresh evidence, coupled with the deepening environmental and social crises in Brazil, should compel the EU to go back to the drawing board, and propose new provisions in the Mercosur deal which ends its complicity in the country's present tragedy, rather than wading ever deeper into it."

JULY 21. After nearly five days of haggling, EU heads of government agreed a [€1.8 trillion COVID-19 recovery plan](#). Julia Christian called it a missed opportunity from an environmental perspective. "On the plus side," she [wrote](#), "the budget package includes a commitment that climate action will be 'mainstreamed' with a target that 30% of spending on EU policies and programmes should contribute to achieving climate objectives... However, the 30% objective is not backed up with robust enforcement of monitoring mechanisms."

AUGUST 19. German Chancellor Angela Merkel assured youth climate activists that she would not ratify the free trade deal with the Mercosur bloc of nations in its current state. Merkel's spokesperson told Politico, she was watching the ongoing deforestation in the Amazon with great concern. Germany's welcome volte-face on the deal, underlined the growing divisions over it, both among Member States and with the EU Commission.

August

AUGUST 20. Kelsey Perlman expressed concern after the European Commission published a draft regulation setting points to account for forest emissions. She told ENDS that the Commission's draft forest reference levels could lead to an increase in the rate of logging in several thickly forested EU countries without governments being penalised. "We have 10 years left to take the necessary action to avoid climate catastrophe. Protecting and restoring forests are a key part of this. Yet the countries' baselines, outlining the state of their forests over the next five years, show the opposite trend," she said.

AUGUST 20. Cameroonian journalist Madeleine Nguenga [reported](#) for Deutsche Welle on how rural women in Cameroon were helping their communities cope with COVID-19, and the role of CSOs (including Fern's partners) in this. The piece was one of a Fern-supported series, as part of our ongoing efforts to support local journalists writing about forests and communities.

AUGUST 24. As fires once again raged in the Amazon, Fern and 19 other NGOs issued a statement demanding that the French government and companies take action. "France cannot afford to be an accomplice in the destruction of the largest tropical forest in the world," it [stated](#).

AUGUST 25. Responding to the UK government's proposals for a due diligence regulation stopping the import of goods linked to illegal deforestation into the country, Alexandra Benjamin [said](#) the consultation was welcome, but its scope should be widened. "The best way to reduce the UK's deforestation footprint is to legislate that all products placed on the UK markets are free from deforestation, and human rights violations... For any due diligence approach to be effective both the UK and EU will need strong enforcement mechanisms, and the real value of the final proposals will be in the detail, not the rhetoric."

SEPTEMBER 1. Vietnam's NGO network expressed concern when the government issued the long-awaited Timber Legality Assurance System Decree, implementing legality assurance aspects of the FLEGT Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA). The Decree focuses on administrative details and regulations for timber operators, but social and environmental protections, and civil society's role in defending them, were not on the agenda.

September

SEPTEMBER 28. More than 100 participants participated in Fern's [webinar on the EU and UK consultations on regulatory proposals to halt deforestation](#). Alexandra Benjamin, Nicole Polsterer and Indra Van Gisbergen were joined by civil society members from producer countries, international NGOs and donors. Most participants welcomed the proposals, but there was consensus that the regulatory proposals must go beyond focusing on legality and certification; prohibit all companies, no matter what size, from placing forest risk commodities on the EU and UK markets; and include human rights due diligence.

SEPTEMBER 29. Fern and Ecologic hosted [Biodiversity and Carbon Neutrality – the role of EU law](#), a webinar outlining the present options and expected trends for how we can encourage a larger carbon sink, in line with what is needed to achieve Europe's climate goals.

From September through 10 December 2020, the European Commission held a consultation asking the public what action the Commission should take to help stop deforestation. The message that, through its consumption and import of forest-risk products, the EU is responsible for more than 10 per cent of global forest destruction from the Amazon to the Congo Basin to Indonesia, clearly hit a nerve with citizens in Europe and beyond. Supported by a range of NGOs, the initiative [#Together4Forests](#) got a massive response: nearly 1.2 million people participated, and asked the EU to adopt new, strong legislation to address forest destruction in supply chains and to keep forest-risk products off the EU market.



OCTOBER 1. Nicole Polsterer introduced an impressive array of speakers at a webinar organised by Fern, Trase and the Federal University of Minas Gerais. [Tackling deforestation through EU Due Diligence – lessons and proposals from Brazil](#). The webinar discussed how to trace Brazilian agricultural exports to the EU and how a deforestation and land rights observatory could help EU companies perform due diligence to remove deforestation and human rights violations from their supply chains.

October

OCTOBER 5. The UK government closed its first round of consultations on a [proposed law](#) to ensure that products entering the country aren't linked to deforestation. Writing for the Thomson Reuters Foundation site, Obed Owusu-Addai of Fern's partner EcoCare Ghana and Alexandra Benjamin [highlighted](#) the holes in the government's proposal, including its lack of reference to the human rights abuses that often accompany clearing land for agricultural production, and how it relied on environmental laws in producer countries to determine whether products should be allowed to enter the UK.

OCTOBER 7. The European Parliament resolved not to [ratify](#) the EU-Mercosur trade deal in its current form. This signalled the growing concern that the deal will exacerbate the illegal deforestation and human rights abuses associated with agricultural production in Brazil and other Mercosur countries, and that campaigning by Fern and our partners in the EU and Brazil, was gaining traction.

OCTOBER 7. Fern attended the first series of internal Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI) meetings focusing on defining a strategy to support local CSOs engagement in the monitoring and implementation of the letter of intent between CAFI and the Congolese government. Fern's inputs were integrated in a mapping of Congolese CSOs commissioned by CAFI which will be published in 2021.

OCTOBER 8. The European Parliament approved Jytte Guteland's report on the EU Climate law and endorsed a 60 per cent emission reductions target, rejecting amendments combining emission reductions and carbon dioxide removals into the same target. Kelsey Perlman [welcomed](#) the move: "The Parliament is standing up for higher ambition as they know the EU can reduce emissions without resorting to tricks like forest offsetting."

OCTOBER 14. Karin Karlsbro MEP - in collaboration with Fern, the Centre for International Development and Training, University of Wolverhampton ([CIDT](#)), the Environmental Investigation Agency ([EIA](#)) and the World Resources Institute ([WRI](#)) - hosted a [webinar](#) on the importance of sustaining momentum for FLEGT as part of a green recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

OCTOBER 22. The European Parliament sent a powerful signal to the European Commission that regulations to stop imported deforestation coming into the EU through products such palm oil, beef and soy, should ensure companies conduct mandatory due diligence on human rights and deforestation. By adopting MEP Delara Burckhardt's report, '[An EU legal framework to halt and reverse EU-driven global deforestation](#)', in plenary, MEP's showed that they were responding to the concerns of civil society, Indigenous groups in forested countries and EU citizens, among others. Indra Van Gisbergen told Reuters that the vote was a "watershed for the EU to end its role in destroying the world's forests" and the Commission should follow its lead.

OCTOBER 29. Figures published by the European Commission under the EU's LULUCF Regulation, showed that European forests are likely to hold 18 per cent less carbon than in the early 2000s. "These numbers are terrifying," [said](#) Kelsey Perlman. "To support increasing climate targets, we should prevent our forests from haemorrhaging carbon. While the current LULUCF regulation has revealed the scale of the problem, it is failing to reverse it"

November

NOVEMBER 13. Fern published a [detailed submission](#) to the European Commission's Trade Policy Review, highlighting the need for the EU to eradicate deforestation from its trade flows.

NOVEMBER 18. Local journalist Marien Nzikou-Massala [reported](#) on how Fern's Congolese partners the Congolese Human Rights Observatory (OCDH) and Rencontre pour la paix et les droits de l'homme (Gathering for Peace and Human Rights (RPDH) (among other CSOs) supported remote rural communities during the pandemic, coupling monitoring illegal logging, with distributing face masks and raising awareness of COVID-19.

NOVEMBER 19. Fern was a co-host of the [EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030: What's in it for Indigenous Peoples and local communities?](#) webinar. The event, which preceded EU Biodiversity Strategy discussions, saw Indigenous Peoples, members of local communities, MEPs, NGOs and others, discuss how to uphold land and human rights against a backdrop of the biodiversity and climate crises.

NOVEMBER 26: Fern's Brazilian partner Imazon published a [study](#) revealing that Indigenous People's territories in Brazil would be at greatest risk from forest clearance as a result of growing agricultural activity under the EU-Mercosur free trade agreement.

NOVEMBER 30. The UN's Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) collaborated with the African Union, the Congo Basin Forest Partnership and Fern to host the webinar, [Livelihoods, Biodiversity and Climate Resilience in Africa: Unleashing the potential of Community-based forest and wildlife management for building back better](#). The lively, insightful discussion explored how to strengthen community-based forest and wildlife regimes in Africa.



DECEMBER 1. The Voice Network, in partnership with Fern, released the [2020 Cocoa Barometer report](#). After 20 years of failed interventions across the cocoa sector, and with farming communities still battling the effects of poverty, child labour and deforestation, the report outlined the steps that governments, industry, farmers and CSOs should take to end the destruction blighting cocoa supply chains.

The publication was marked by a webinar on the same day, which included keynote speeches from Heidi Hautala (Vice-President of the European Parliament) and Helena König (Deputy Director General DG Trade at the European Commission) and a panel discussion with participants including Martha Opoku-Mensah and Ismail Pomasi (Ghana Civil-Society Cocoa Platform).

December

DECEMBER 1 - 4. Marie-Ange Kalenga was one of the forest governance experts who took part in #ClimateChanceTalks, organised by the Climate Chance Observatory, which tackled the question: Has COVID accelerated or hampered climate strategies?

DECEMBER 2. The Estonian Fund for Nature and the Latvian Ornithological Society released a [report](#), supported by Fern, revealing the impact that intensive logging is having in the two Member States. Over the past decade, 14 per cent of the Estonia's ancient forests have been degraded to the point that they [can no longer be considered old-growth](#); Latvia's key habitats were initially mapped but then removed from the State Forest Service database, leaving the decision to log or protect at local levels. The rising demand for forest bioenergy mirrors that of overall logging levels, the research shows; even more concerning is that many logging permits were

DECEMBER 12. The European Council opted for having a "net" target in the EU Climate Law. Fern and other NGOs argued against this: maintaining that bundling efforts to increase carbon removals from forests and ecosystems, with efforts to reduce emissions under the same target blurs legal certainty, and is another form of the widely failed offsetting. While the Council followed the Commission's proposal, they are at odds with the

WHY FERN IS EMBRACING ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

RICHARD WAINWRIGHT
COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

“**B**ecause Fern has a flat structure, people assume organisational development isn't a key part of our work, but arguably it is more important. That is why it was so important that five years ago the Ford Foundation made us part of their BUILD programme to help organisations improve their overall effectiveness.

Unlike a lot of organisations they work with, we don't want to grow bigger, we wanted to be stronger but the same size. I think this is one of the things that interested them.

Our big push towards organisational development came when our co-founder Saskia Ozinga left. When you lose your founder, there's a danger things will fall apart, because they lead in imperceptible ways that aren't well documented. Embracing organisational development was a means to build structures to continue Fern's way of working.

All staff members are encouraged (but not forced!) to join a development team, and they exist for as long as they're useful.

For example, we had a team looking at Brexit's impact, and one looking at changes around the EU elections, but both ran their course... Others have lasted longer, such as those looking at how we work on gender and become a more diverse organisation and how to ensure strong partnerships.

It has also changed the way we campaign. When I joined 13+ years ago, there was one campaign per person and Fern was an umbrella under which they sat. There was

never felt to be a need for an organisational strategy, but now we have a three-year strategy under which each of the campaigns sit.

Of course, not all work has been done internally. One of the first decisions of the gender team was to bring in an external consultant to audit our internal and external policies. Incorporating gender considerations into templates and policies has been a helpful push to keep thinking about the different ways that women and men may be affected by our actions. The next step is to conduct a similar analysis taking into account wider issues of diversity.

We have always put people at the centre of our policy recommendations, but now they are also at the heart of our communications and our internal policies. This increased internal awareness helps improve our external awareness to so that when we're having a nuanced discussion at the EU level about a trade agreement or climate policy, we never forget the effect it will have on humans living in or relying on the forest.

The Knowledge Management team has also changed the organisation dramatically. After 25 years you have a lot of paperwork and history and you need to be able to curate it well so new people can find the key material easily. The team has ensured that is possible. But it has also brought in new technology to cut the hundreds of internal emails we used to send and to make it simpler to find answers to frequently asked questions. Good processes may seem dull, but they can save an organisation weeks of time, effort and frustration.”

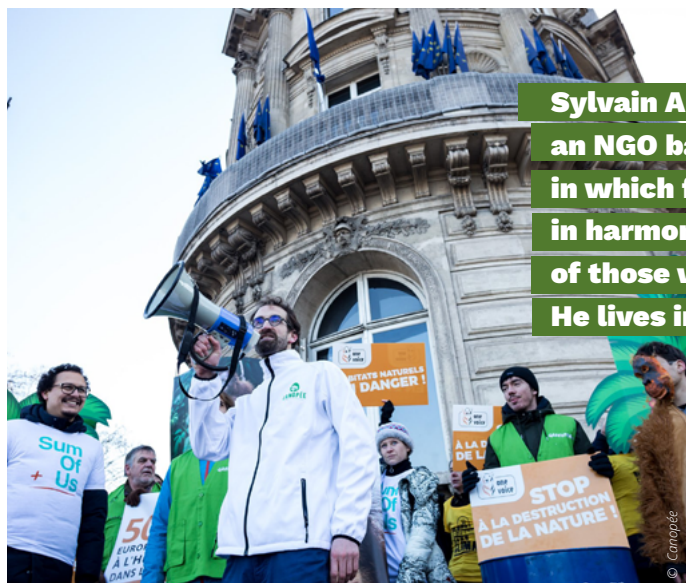
“The benefits of our Organisational Development work have been huge. Our fundraising and reserves has improved dramatically since we had a specific team looking at the best way to communicate our needs.”



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A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A FERN PARTNER

SYLVAIN ANGERAND, CANOPÉE



Sylvain Angerand is Campaigns Coordinator at Canopée, an NGO based in France. Canopée's vision is a world in which forests are acknowledged as living entities in harmony with human societies, and that the rights of those who protect them are recognised. He lives in Angers with his family.

We also sometimes take part in direct, non-violent actions aimed at provoking the debate when no other options are possible, which is the citizen mobilisation element of our work. In addition, we also do a lot of a lot of behind-the-scenes advocacy work with parliament and government.

I started Canopée in 2018 after almost 15 years working with Friends of the Earth France, where I first worked as a campaigner and then Campaigns' Coordinator. My background is as a forest engineer. I grew up in Paris suburb and since I was a child, trees and forests have always been a shelter and a gateway for me to be connected with Nature.

There was a scarcity of NGOs working solely on French forests and a critical need to build a citizen-based organisation to better protect them. Our work isn't limited to protecting French forests though.

"This was a founding victory for Canopée: France has excluded the use of palm oil for the manufacture of biofuels. It is the first European country to do this."

Among other things, we campaign to stop the soy and palm oil imports that France (and the EU) imports in vast quantities to the grave detriment of forests in Indonesia and elsewhere.

Canopée was founded because there was a need for an organisation which could combine technical expertise on the issues facing French forests, along with advocacy and media mobilisation.

These essential three elements to our work manifest themselves in different ways.

In terms of expertise, for instance, a [report](#) we released in February 2020 (in collaboration with Fern) challenged whether France's long-term forest strategy would help fight the climate crisis, and provided an alternative vision, with our research showing what could be achieved through less intensive forest management practices. It created a lot of debate in France.

The value of working with Fern is that it gives us a link to the EU. In France, especially at the Ministry of Agriculture level, there's no dialogue or public debate on French forests. Having partners like Fern who do a great job in Brussels, and who share information with us in advance, like leaks for example, helps us to unblock things at a national level in France.

But conversely, there are times when campaigning on a particular policy issue in France can help push things in the right direction at the EU level.

This is the case with the work on tropical forests, where we managed to achieve ambitious goals, for example on palm oil.

This was a founding victory for Canopée: France has excluded the use of palm oil for the manufacture of biofuels. It is the first European country to do this.

France is also pretty progressive on imported deforestation, at least in official declarations, if not enough yet on concrete actions. Canopée is pushing the government to get things moving at the European level too.

There is no such thing as a typical working day for me, and even more so in 2020 with Covid-19 throwing so many everything up in the air. However, normally I would begin by making calls to decision-makers before 9am, when it's the best time to get hold of them. From then, the days often involve lots of meetings and calls, dealing with journalists' requests, and sometimes meeting with volunteers and activists in the evening.

Fortunately not every day is like this! But sometimes it's a big day. I could have the certainty of a job that provides me with more income, but what really makes the difference for me is the chance to change the game in a period when most of my co-citizens feel disempowered."

ALL OF THE WORK OUTLINED IN THIS REPORT COULD ONLY TAKE PLACE THANKS TO THE GENEROSITY OF THE FOLLOWING DONORS:

- Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), United Kingdom
- Ford Foundation, United States of America
- David & Lucille Packard Foundation, United States of America
- Delegation of the European Commission in Laos
- Delegation of the European Commission in Vietnam
- European Commission (EASME LIFE+)
- Waterloo Foundation, United Kingdom
- European Climate Foundation, Belgium
- Arcus Foundation, USA
- Tropenbos International, The Netherlands
- Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Germany
- Rainforest Foundation, Norway
- JMG Foundation, Liechtenstein

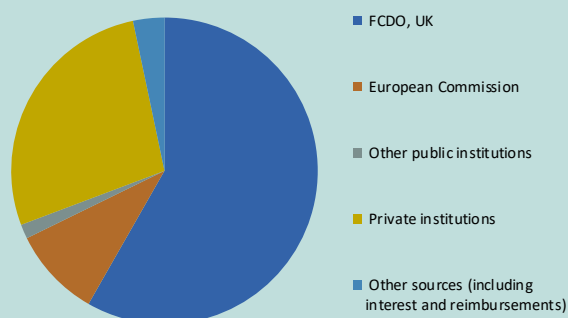
FINANCIAL RESULTS

Financial data for the year 1 January to 31 December 2020

INCOME	2020	2019
FCDO, UK	1,542,382	1,333,427
EUROPEAN COMMISSION	251,645	288,820
OTHER PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS	39,991	60,000
PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS	726,365	796,682
OTHER SOURCES (including interest and reimbursements)	87,426	33,186
TOTAL INCOME	2,647,808	2,512,115



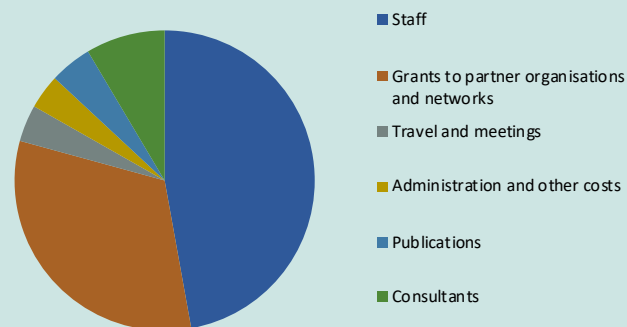
2020: SOURCES OF INCOME



EXPENDITURE BY TYPE OF EXPENDITURE	2020	2019
STAFF	1,195,784	1,148,717
GRANTS TO PARTNER ORGANISATIONS AND NETWORKS	813,785	729,253
TRAVEL AND MEETINGS	100,500	202,597
ADMINISTRATION AND OTHER COSTS	94,091	106,801
PUBLICATIONS	115,029	84,089
CONSULTANTS	216,397	222,179
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	2,535,585	2,493,636



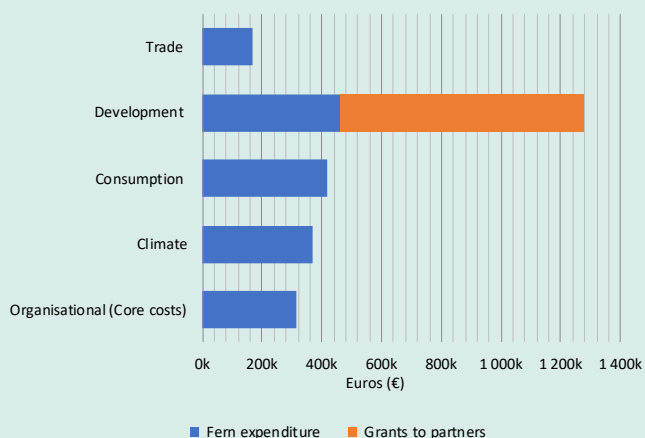
2020: EXPENDITURE BY CATEGORY



EXPENDITURE BY CAMPAIGN	2020	2019
ORGANISATIONAL (Core costs)	311 910	318 755
CLIMATE	366 381	476 771
CONSUMPTION	416 839	374 236
DEVELOPMENT	1 274 807	1 189 585
TRADE	165 649	134 290
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	2 535 585	2 493 636



2020: EXPENDITURE BY CAMPAIGN



MEDIA COVERAGE IN 2020

Fern appeared in (or helped facilitate) **157 separate pieces of media coverage in 2020**, including: **The Guardian** (UK), **Le Monde** (France), **The Independent** (UK), **Valor** (Brazil), **La Libre** (Belgium), **Reporterre** (France), **Daily Telegraph** (UK), **Le Soir** (Belgium), **Frankfurter Allgemeine** (Germany), **De Telegraaf** (Netherlands), **Il Salvagente** (Italy), **NRC Handelsbad** (Netherlands), **Corriere** (Italy), **Euractiv**, **ENDS Europe**, **Politico**, **The Ecologist**, **Reuters**, **All Africa**, **InfoCongo**, **Climate Home News**, **Mongabay**, **Yale Environment 360**, **Voice of America** (Afrique Francophone), **Agence France Presse** (AFP), **Bloomberg** and **Forbes**.

In 2020, we continued to support journalists in forested countries to report about deforestation and the communities affected by it. This included reportage by the Republic of Congo's **Laudes Martial Mbon**, who investigated how conservation projects have sparked rapid development in the Congo's Sangha region, and the effect on local communities and the environment who have borne the brunt of it. His Long Read was published by **La Tribune Afrique** and **Fern**.

We also commissioned **Madeleine Ngeunga**, a Pulitzer Fellow and investigative journalist from Cameroon, to report on how civil society in that country was heroically filling the void left by the state in the COVID crisis. Her report was featured by **Mongabay** and **Deutsche Welle**. Fern also worked with a number of other journalists in Congo Basin countries, who documented the negative impacts COVID was having on local communities, and how civil society was supporting them. Their reports provided a vital conduit for relaying stories from rural, forest communities to the EU policymakers.



Fern continued to work with local journalists in tropical forested countries in 2020. This picture of Indigenous women from the Djaka community in the Sangha region of the Congo Basin was taken by Laudes Martial Mbon, who reported for us the impact that development in the region is having on forests and people there.



KEY REPORTS BRIEFINGS & STATEMENTS

BOLSONARO'S BRAZIL: A PARIAS STATE?

After 18 months in power in which President Jair Bolsonaro launched an assault on Brazil's environmental protections and stripped away the rights of its Indigenous Peoples, this briefing called on the EU to end its complicity in the unfolding catastrophe.

EU FORESTS OF HOPE

EU Member States are debating how to transform their economies to fight climate change. This report revealed the options to protect and restore forests that already exist: the positive stories of communities showing how we can work for forests and how the forests can work for us.

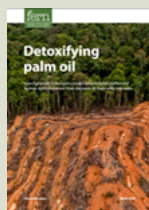


FOREST GOVERNANCE AND CLIMATE ACTION IN THE REPUBLIC OF CONGO: CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES

This report, produced in collaboration with Climate Analytics and Rencontre pour la Paix et les Droits de l'Homme (RPDH), demonstrated that only good governance will allow Congo's forests to play a crucial role in the fight against global warming and to comply with Congo's commitments to the Paris Agreement via its NDCs.

DETOXIFYING PALM OIL

Saskia Ozinga and Hugh Speechly examined how EU policy could remove deforestation and human rights violations from the palm oil trade with Indonesia.



FOREST MANAGEMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE: A NEW APPROACH TO THE FRENCH MITIGATION STRATEGY

This report challenged whether France's long-term forest strategy will truly fight climate change. Produced in partnership with Fern, Canopée and Friends of the Earth France, it revealed the flaws in the French plan to produce heat and electricity from burning wood, and offered an alternative vision.



KEY ELEMENTS FOR AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE EU AND COCOA-PRODUCING COUNTRIES, TO ENSURE SUSTAINABILITY IN THE COCOA SECTOR

Thirteen European, Ghanaian and Ivorian organisations produced this discussion paper outlining our vision for a new partnership agreement between the European Union and the governments of Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire to tackle deforestation, poverty and social issues in the cocoa sector.

HOW THE EU BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY CAN PROTECT AND RESTORE FORESTS AND RIGHTS

This briefing outlined the opportunities and potential pitfalls of the forest initiatives outlined in the EU Biodiversity Strategy.

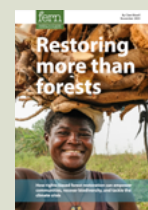
MEASURING THE IMPACT OF THE EU-MERCOSUR TRADE DEAL ON LAND USE, FORESTS, AND THE PEOPLE WHO DEPEND ON THEM.

This briefing summarised the key findings of new research about the likely land use impact of the EU-Mercosur trade deal, published by Brazilian NGO Imazon.



RESTORING MORE THAN FORESTS

This report by Clare Bissell explored current restoration practice and made recommendations for policy mechanisms to support rights-based approaches. Using Ghana as a case study, it finds that the lack of an agreed definition for restoration means that companies and organisations often fail to ensure good outcomes for climate change mitigation, ecosystems and human rights.



ENFORCING DUE DILIGENCE LEGISLATION 'PLUS'

Policy analysis by Saskia Ozinga and Duncan Brack on how to end EU imports of Forest Risk Commodities. This report looks at the type of regulation the Commission should adopt to halt and reverse global deforestation and how it could be enforced.



BIODIVERSITY FIRST: HOW EUROPEAN FORESTS CAN HELP TACKLE THE CLIMATE CRISIS

This briefing shows why the biodiversity and climate debates need to come together like never before, and how that is possible. It demonstrates that the cheapest, most effective, and most readily available way to remove carbon dioxide is to protect and restore European forests and other natural ecosystems.



FERN STANDS WITH THE BLACK LIVES MATTER MOVEMENT IN THE STRUGGLE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

While Fern focuses on forest peoples and doesn't explicitly work on anti-racism, we are aware that our vision cannot be achieved without ending the systemic injustices faced by black and Indigenous communities around the world.

EVALUATING THE VPA PROCESS IN THE REPUBLIC OF CONGO

This study, conducted by independent consultant An Bollen, reports on the progress made in forest governance thanks to the Voluntary Partnership Agreement signed with the EU, and according to Congolese Civil Society Organizations.



HOW TO ENSURE FLEGT IS A SUCCESS: MAKE SURE WE STAY THE COURSE

Fern and LoggingOff's update on the EU FLEGT VPAs shows the support the process is still receiving from civil society, governments and the private sector. It is written by Civil Society leaders across Africa, Asia and Latin America and shows their enthusiasm for the process despite the multiple challenges.

RAISING THE AMBITION ON GLOBAL ASPECTS OF THE EU FARM TO FORK STRATEGY

This brief unpacks issues around the Farm to Fork Strategy and highlights how its external dimension could be expanded to drive an effective and a much-needed global just transition towards inclusive and sustainable agri-food systems.

VIDEOS

THREE REASONS LAND TENURE IS VITAL FOR FORESTS, PEOPLE AND THE PLANET

When Indigenous and forest communities have their right to land enshrined in law there are lower rates of deforestation. The Boca Pariamanu community in Peru is a clear example of the positive knock-on effects.



EU-MERCOSUR TRADE DEAL: WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR BRAZIL?

Midia NINJA and Fern joined forces to deliver a video explaining the potential human rights and environmental impacts of Brazilian external relations, focusing specifically on the EU-Mercosur trade agreement. The video has had 48k+ views to date.



AN ACTIVIST'S GUIDE TO THE EU

The EU has a huge influence over the fate of the world's forests. Its trade deals, aid strategies, energy and climate policies, and imports of timber, soy, beef, palm oil and other agricultural commodities all have an impact. This video shows how the EU works.





MAKING THE EU WORK
FOR PEOPLE & FORESTS

Fern is a non-governmental organisation created in 1995 with the aim of ensuring European policies and actions support forests and people. Our work centres on forests and forest peoples' rights and the issues that affect them such as aid, consumption, trade, investment and climate change. All of our work is done in close collaboration with social and environmental organisations and movements across the world.

www.fern.org

