

Brazilian Vice-President Hamilton Mourão;  
Representatives of the Conselho Nacional da  
Amazônia Legal



**26/11/2020**

Dear Vice-President Mourão,  
Dear representatives of the Brazilian National Council for the Legal Amazon,

We write to you as members of the European Parliament, in a spirit of friendship with Brazil and its people. We have been made aware through media reports of the plan prepared by the National Council on the Legal Amazon to issue rules that would, by 2022, give the government control over non-governmental organizations (NGOs) operating in the Amazon, with the possibility to restrict the activities of those that are found to violate national interests.

We find this proposal, as well as other attempts to constrain or control civil society, very worrying. The authorisation process for NGOs is already well regulated under Brazilian law. For many decades, a variety of NGOs in Brazil have been implementing programmes and actions to fight environmental crimes, to protect the Amazon rainforest and the livelihood of its peoples while promoting sustainable development in the region. And they often do so heeding the call of the Brazilian government, in close partnership with Federal and State level government institutions and even the Brazilian Army. NGOs are not there to replace the government, but to complement its actions – and, critically, to help make public policy more transparent and effective by exercising free criticism. The plan currently being developed risks being an attack on the independence of NGOs, and undue restrictions on civil society space.

At a time where the Amazon is burning at record speed, limiting the operations of environmental and social groups and organisations can have devastating consequences. The number of fires detected in Brazil's Amazon rainforest is 25% higher in the first ten months of 2020 compared to the same period in the previous years. Deforestation too is increasing: in 2020 deforestation alerts were up 34% compared to the previous year. A [recent analysis](#) also showed that changes in land use linked to the deforestation of the Amazon in 2019 lead to a 9.6% increase in Brazil's annual carbon emissions. The same is expected to happen this year as the deforestation rates have not slowed down.

The European Parliament recognises civil society's role in the EU's good governance and considers civil society organisations as crucial development partners. In this context, we would like to express our full support to the non-governmental organisations acting to protect the Amazon. Maintaining their independence and full range of activities is crucial for

our shared environmental and climate. We therefore urge you to rethink the role of civil society, understanding that, like the free press, it is vital for healthy democracies. We would be delighted to work together in partnership to achieve environmental and climate protection goals.

Yours sincerely,

1. **Anna Cavazzini**, Member of the European Parliament, Vice Chair of the Delegation for Relations with the Federative Republic of Brazil
2. **François Alfonsi**, Member of the European Parliament
3. **Margrete Auken**, Member of the European Parliament
4. **Brando Benifei**, Member of the European Parliament
5. **Benoît Biteau**, Member of the European Parliament
6. **Manuel Bompard**, Member of the European Parliament
7. **Milan Brglez**, Member of the European Parliament
8. **Saskia Bricmont**, Member of the European Parliament
9. **Delara Burkhardt**, Member of the European Parliament
10. **Reinhard Bütikofer**, Member of the European Parliament
11. **Damien Careme**, Member of the European Parliament
12. **Leila Chaibi**, Member of the European Parliament
13. **David Cormand**, Member of the European Parliament
14. **Ignazio Corrao**, Member of the European Parliament
15. **Ciarán Cuffe**, Member of the European Parliament
16. **Clare Daly**, Member of the European Parliament
17. **Gwendoline Delbos-Corfield**, Member of the European Parliament
18. **Karima Delli**, Member of the European Parliament
19. **Pascal Durand**, Member of the European Parliament

20. **Eleonora Evi**, Member of the European Parliament
21. **Romeo Franz**, Member of the European Parliament
22. **Alexandra Geese**, Member of the European Parliament
23. **Dino Giarrusso**, Member of the European Parliament
24. **Raphaël Glucksmann**, Member of the European Parliament
25. **Claude Gruffat**, Member of the European Parliament
26. **Francisco Guerreiro**, Member of the European Parliament
27. **José Gusmão**, Member of the European Parliament
28. **Henrike Hahn**, Member of the European Parliament
29. **Martin Häusling**, Member of the European Parliament
30. **Martin Hojsik**, Member of the European Parliament
31. **Yannick Jadot**, Member of the European Parliament
32. **Karin Karlsbro**, Member of the European Parliament
33. **Dietmar Köster**, Member of the European Parliament
34. **Aurore Lalucq**, Member of the European Parliament
35. **Pierre Larrourou**, Member of the European Parliament
36. **Erik Marquardt**, Member of the European Parliament
37. **Marisa Matias**, Member of the European Parliament
38. **Sara Matthieu**, Member of the European Parliament
39. **Emmanuel Maurel**, Member of the European Parliament
40. **Tilly Metz**, Member of the European Parliament
41. **Silvia Modig**, Member of the European Parliament
42. **Hannah Neumann**, Member of the European Parliament

43. **Ville Niinistö**, Member of the European Parliament
44. **Grace O'Sullivan**, Member of the European Parliament
45. **Kira Peter-Hansen**, Member of the European Parliament
46. **Terry Reintke**, Member of the European Parliament
47. **Diana Riba i Giner**, Member of the European Parliament
48. **Frédérique Ries**, Member of the European Parliament
49. **Manuela Ripa**, Member of the European Parliament
50. **Michèle Rivasi**, Member of the European Parliament
51. **Caroline Roose**, Member of the European Parliament
52. **Mounir Satouri**, Member of the European Parliament
53. **Helmut Scholz**, Member of the European Parliament
54. **Joachim Schuster**, Member of the European Parliament
55. **Günther Sidl**, Member of the European Parliament
56. **Michal Šimečka**, Member of the European Parliament
57. **Massimiliano Smeriglio**, Member of the European Parliament
58. **Jordi Solé**, Member of the European Parliament
59. **Ivan Štefanec**, Member of the European Parliament
60. **Nicolae Ștefănuță**, Member of the European Parliament
61. **Marie Toussaint**, Member of the European Parliament
62. **Miguel Urbán Crespo**, Member of the European Parliament
63. **Ernest Urtasun**, Member of the European Parliament
64. **Monika Vana**, Member of the European Parliament
65. **Nikolaj Villumsen**, Member of the European Parliament
66. **Sarah Wiener**, Member of the European Parliament

67. **Michal Wiezik**, Member of the European Parliament

68. **Salima Yenbou**, Member of the European Parliament