

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON
TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

L/3828

21 March 1973

Limited Distribution

Original: French

EEC - EMERGENCY ACTION ON CERTAIN
SPECIES OF TIMBER

The following communication, dated 9 March 1973, has been received from the Commission of the European Communities.

I am writing to request you to advise the CONTRACTING PARTIES that imports into the European Economic Community of certain species of timber will be subject to restriction for a specified period. This restriction affects only the territory of the Federal Republic of Germany.

The windstorm of 13 November 1972 which swept across northern Europe and affected more especially North Germany (Lower Saxony and Westphalia) blew down in Germany a quantity of trees equivalent to 17.6 million m³ of timber; this represents 68 per cent of annual production. The havoc so wrought in the forests carries with it three dangerous possibilities:

- the proliferation of parasitic insects, which develop and multiply very quickly in dead wood and subsequently constitute a threat to healthy timber, thus causing additional destruction that could not be controlled and the effects of which would be felt for several years;
- infestation of the timber by certain parasitic fungi;
- an increased danger of forest fires.

In the light of this situation, the Government of the Federal Republic has prepared an emergency programme comprising the following measures:

- a reduction in the 1973 felling programme by 20 per cent, in other words to the maximum extent possible;
- freight subsidies on felled timber;
- assistance in reforestation;
- the granting of various tax benefits to the enterprises concerned.

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In addition to these measures of a domestic nature, a restriction on imports of timber is considered to be necessary. This restriction will operate in the following manner:

(1) Measures proposed:

- a 2 million m³ ceiling on imports of coniferous sawnwood; imports made under contracts already in force will not be subject to this quota;
- a prohibition on imports of other similar species of felled timber (ordinary timber), except for imports under contracts already in force, which cover about one half of annual imports.

(2) Geographic area of application

- all third countries; the countries which appear to be mainly affected are Norway, Sweden, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Switzerland and Poland.

(3) Duration of measure

- 1973

The European Economic Community is prepared to enter into consultation with contracting parties having a substantial interest in exports to Germany who may wish to examine the measures concerned in conjunction with the Community.