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Effectiveness of Czech NGOs and Public Pressure on the Protection of Rainforests in Developing Countries

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Abstract

The civil pressure and NGOs initiatives against deforestation represent a powerful movement capable to influence both the public and the government towards rainforest protection. Therefore, the purpose of this research was to study the activities of NGOs in the Czech Republic concerning globalisation induced deforestation. Mainly related to high world demand for commodities such as palm oil originating from Indonesia or soya beans and beef meat originating from Brazil.

An in-depth face to face interviews were conducted with representatives of local NGOs. The interviews were recorded, transcribed and analysed using the content analysis technique. Even though the respondents claim the consumers related campaigns on the palm oil production affecting the Indonesian rain forests were relatively successful in the Czech Republic, the consumer campaigns in support of Brazilian rain forests, specifically related to the livestock farming and meat consumption, has not been resonating so loudly. The consumers in the Czech Republic are generally aware about negative issues related to the palm oil production, including deforestation, loss of biodiversity, pollution or land degradation. Although the problems related to the Brazilian forests are not that much known, as the problem is mainly indirect, through imports of animal feed to the European Union or by consumption of beef meat. Most Czech cattle and livestock depend on the feed containing soybean coming from the areas connected with deforestation.

Therefore, the attention now needs to be directed towards the politicians and producers. Change in policies of the key players, such as the European Union, represents an opportunity to influence adverse production practices, for instance via the Renewable Energy Directive. As the EU market power represents a key lever on the importing countries which need to comply with the rules if they want to sell their products. There is also a strong need for thorough adherence of the palm oil certified by the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil. The campaign for protection of Brazilian rain forests shall be intensified among the consumers as it is crucial to alter the patterns of meat consumption, to promote a more plant-based diet and to reduce overconsumption and food waste.

Keywords: Beef, consumers, deforestation, environmental campaign, environmental protection, NGOs, palm oil, producers, public pressure, soybean