

PETITION LETTER ON SUMAVA NATIONAL PARK

We the undersigned organizations are writing this open letter to express our great concern about proposals by the Environment Ministry of the Czech Republic to declassify substantial areas within the core of the Sumava National Park from their present strictly protected status which precludes intervention management activity.

We understand this will enable widespread logging, motivated by bark beetle infestation, as well as reducing the proportion of the Park allocated to the non intervention area and facilitating the prospect of building development in adjacent localities.

Widely known as the “Wild Heart of Europe” this area is iconic among scientists, and in the tourism sector, for the intact state of its ecology governed by natural processes, and for the unspoiled beauty of its landscape. It is seen as a symbol of the care which the Czech Republic extends towards its natural heritage.

Yet there is widespread concern that the actions currently planned will cause damage to this ecology that will take many decades to repair, as well as changing the character of the wider area forever. The opportunity to allow natural development after bark beetle attack would be lost, despite this having been demonstrated as viable, both in the Bavarian Forest and central parts of Sumava itself. Furthermore, years of spontaneous forest regeneration, so valuable in ecological terms, would be destroyed.

Above all, there is a clear signal that even the best known National Parks are not protected.

Benefits cited in support of these actions do not appear to be underwritten by scientific opinion, and the actions themselves we understand are widely opposed by conservation institutions in the Czech Republic and elsewhere.

We very much hope you will earn a justified reputation as guardian of the unique heritage of Sumava for future generations in the Czech Republic, and more widely, by withdrawing forthcoming plans and legislation.

In particular we suggest it is important to ensure that:

- 1) the size of the core – wilderness – zones of the Park are not further reduced against the 26% agreed in 2011
- 2) no logging occurs in core areas, and the zone boundaries are not otherwise altered to enable felling in current core areas
- 3) the current status of the Park, which by international standards equates to IUCN Category II, remains unchanged and its level of protection is thus not downgraded
- 4) the current plan for expansion of the core zone to at least 50% of the Park area by 2030 is not discontinued
- 5) any new legislation does not permit new developments, including ski lifts and hotels, within the Park

This action would truly exemplify the Czech Republic’s reputation as a model of progressive, science-based conservation, and provide international reassurance of the enduring quality of protection conferred by National Park status.

Yours respectfully

The undersigned organizations:

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Name	Organization	Role
Jim Leape	WWF International	Director General
Angelo Caserta	Birdlife Europe	Director
Jeremy Wates	European Environmental Bureau (EEB)	Secretary General
Magda Stoczkiewicz	Friends of the Earth Europe	Director
Matyas Prommer	CEEweb (Central & East European NGO network)	Secretary General
Frans Schepers	Rewilding Europe	Managing Director
Maarten Kappelle	WWF Netherlands	Chief Conservation Officer
Serge Orru	WWF France	Chief Executive
Rob Wolters	European Centre Nature Conservation (ECNC)	Executive Director
Teo Wams	Natuurmonumenten	Nature Director
Hugh Fullerton-Smith	European Nature Trust	Director
Vance Martin	IUCN Wilderness Specialist Group	Chairman
Jan Willem Sneep	Planta Europa Foundation	Chairman
Cyril Kormos	WILD (US)	Vice President, Policy
Magor Csibi	WWF Romania, DCP	Country Manager
Steve Carver	Wildland Research Institute	Director
Tony Whitbread	Sussex Wildlife Trust	Director
Corrado Maria Daclon	Pro Natura Italy	Secretary General
Andreas Beckmann	WWF Danube Carpathian Programme	Director
Zoltan Kun	PAN Parks Foundation	Executive Director
Hansjoerg Wyss	The Wyss Foundation	Founder
Casan Gabriel	Speleological Club of Romania	President
Guido Puhlmann	Europarc Deutschland (Germany)	President
Erich Mayrhofer	Kalkalpen National Park (Austria)	Director
Nela Ratchevitz	Central Balkan National Park (Bulgaria)	Director
Heinrich Haller	Swiss National Park	Director
Zoran Acimov	Retezat National Park (Romania)	Director
Nicola Cimini	Majella National Park (Italy)	Director
Levan Tabunidze	Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park (Georgia)	Director
Krasimir Andonov	Rila National Park (Bulgaria)	Director

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Juri-Ott Salm	Estonian Fund for Nature	Chief Executive
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Zamir Dedej	Institute of Nature Conservation (Albania)	President
Stephanie Hilborne	Chief Executive	Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts (UK)
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Mihai Gligan	Romanian Ranger Association	President
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Tony Long	WWF European Policy Office	Director
Sascha Muller-Kraenner	The Nature Conservancy in Europe	Executive Director

All the above are confirmed signatories to this petition letter