

06 May 2019

Open letter to the Prime Ministers of the European Union: Informal EU Summit in Sibiu on 9th May 2019

Dear Prime Minister,

The presentation of the final report of IPBES today in Paris emphasised once again how serious the accelerating biodiversity crisis is. The report leaves no doubt that biodiversity loss and global warming are closely interlinked. Deforestation and our current systems of agriculture, including livestock production, account for about a quarter of greenhouse gas emissions, but are also significantly responsible for biodiversity decline.

Scientists agree that one of the most urgently needed actions is to slow down further loss of biodiversity and global warming including strict protection of old-growth and primary forests everywhere on this planet.

We usually think about tropical rainforests when the issue of forest destruction comes to mind. However, IPBES findings make clear that deterioration of intact natural forests must be halted across the whole globe. This certainly includes Europe, which is the continent with the highest degree of land conversion from natural to industrial landscapes. Expert studies reveal that only about one percent of the EU's forests are in a natural status.

The most important stronghold for primary and old-growth forests within the European Union is Romania. About two thirds of all primary and old growth forest of the EU (excluding Scandinavia) are found here.

The EU Summit on 9th May 2019 will take place in close vicinity to this irreplaceable European natural treasure. While travelling to Sibiu you will probably be able to spot these biodiversity rich forests and potentially even see some primary stands on the slopes of the Carpathian Mountains.

We are writing to you today, to express our utmost concern about the fate of this important European natural heritage: legal and illegal logging is increasingly liquidating old-growth and primary forest ecosystems. This is happening before the eyes of the Romanian government and the European Union. Experts estimate that almost 50percent of previously assessed primary forests have been logged since Romania joined the European Union. This happened despite the fact most of these former untouched forests were located within Natura 2000 sites. This means that European legislation for nature protection is obviously not being properly implemented in Romania.

Dear Prime Minister, we call on you to use the opportunity while meeting in Romania for the informal EU Summit to speak up about the tragic loss of Europe's largest tracks of high biodiversity value forests in Romania as an issue of European concern. IPBES shows that we are running out of time to prevent severe ecological damage and a crisis stricken world for our children and for future generations. Forest protection is a critical step in securing a safe future—and we must also do this here in Europe.

On request, we would welcome the opportunity to provide you with more information on this urgent matter.

Yours sincerely,



Executive Director
EuroNatur Foundation



President
Agent Green