

EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND IN COPENHAGEN  
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22. June, 2017

To Prime Minister Beata Szydło

Dear Lady

Poland has the pride to hold the only remnant primeval forest in the European lowlands. The Białowieża Forest Complex is by far the most important area for the protection of the indigenous biodiversity in Central and Western Europe. Polish-Lithuanian kings, Polish presidents and from time to time foreign occupying powers have all agreed in the need and importance of the protection of this unique site. Because of the Białowieża primeval forest Poland has since 1921 been admired by the rest of Europe as a pioneer within nature protection. Additionally, the Białowieża Forest has been awarded by the finest diplomas from the Council of Europa and by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site. The Republic of Poland has further recognized the importance of the "Białowieża Forest" towards the European Union by designating an area of 62,997 ha as a Natura 2000 site.

The Danish Ornithological Society, BirdLife Denmark hereby wants to express our deepest concern about the actual development in the Polish part of the Białowieża Forest. BirdLife Denmark as well as the Danish Government has for more than 20 years been involved in efforts for improved protection of the Białowieża Forest in cooperation with local authorities as well as other local stakeholders. For the last year, we have received several reports from our members, frequently visiting Białowieża, and our local partners, that an unusual and comprehensive logging of Common Spruce is going on in the forest.

The value of the Białowieża Forest is closely connected to the natural processes in the forest with the whole life cycle of trees. Your forest is the best example of natural growth, reproduction, death and finally decays of wood in Europe. Moreover, these undisturbed processes are the basis of the invaluable biodiversity. By cutting and removing the timber from the forest in unusual quantities, you are disturbing the balance of the forest. This is especially inappropriate in the areas of the forest, which are internationally agreed upon as protected forest reserves or protection zones.



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We acknowledge that the spruces are attacked by bark beetles, which is a major problem for the cultivated stands of spruces in the state forests, but apparently not for trees in the primeval forest of the national park. The Common Spruce is one of the two most frequent species among the largest trees in the forest. Sanitarian cuttings cannot by no way eliminate the attacks of bark beetles all over a forest area of nearly 500 km<sup>2</sup>, unless you wipe all spruces in the whole area. The ongoing cutting of spruces seems to us to be a pure production of timber, which will disturb and partly destroy the balances of the forest.

We hereby request you to show the historical grandiosity and wealth of the Polish Nation and stop the unusual cutting of timber inside the whole Białowieża Forest.

Sincerely yours,



Sigrid Andersen

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