



Białowieża, June 21st, 2017

Honourable Ambassadors,

We are addressing you as the representatives of the local community of the Białowieża Forest region to bring your attention to the negative processes taking place there.

This last piece of primeval European lowland forest and UNESCO World Heritage Site is under the threat of destruction. The State Forests have been conducting heavy logging in its area. Moreover, they have banned public access to two out of three forest districts.

We would like to point out that a continuously growing part of the local community strongly disagrees with the existing situation. The mass logging and fully artificial regeneration of the forest has devastating consequences for the landscape. It also drastically decreases biodiversity and inhibits natural processes. It should be highlighted that the cuttings were to be conducted only for sanitary and safety reasons, and solely along roads and tourist routes. Regrettably, they turned into a regular commercial logging, also in over hundred years old forest stands.

In view of the above, we are deeply worried that the UNESCO World Heritage site will soon suffer irredeemable damage. We are also concerned by the fact that voices of respected scientists and the scope of their research have been constantly disregarded by the Polish Ministry of Environment. The ministry claims (against scientific knowledge) that the forest was planted by men and cannot survive without human intervention. In fact, such standpoint appears to be a justification of the escalating devastation of the last remnants of the natural forest under the State Forests' administration.

We strongly believe that natural ecosystems constitute an especially valuable part of not only Polish but European legacy. It is our responsibility to preserve wilderness for future generations. Therefore, we want to ask you for your support of the Białowieża Forest conservation and for joining our call to stop the destructive logging.

Yours faithfully,
on behalf of concerned local citizens:
Joanna Łapińska
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