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THE FOREST

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FORÊTS VIVANTES

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FOR PEOPLE & FORESTS

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Leefmilieu

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Sweden

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Naturschutzbund Deutschland e.V.

Earth Thrive
www.earth-thrive.org

mob
the movement

euRONATUR

EDSP
eco

NOAH
Friends of the Earth Denmark

ZERO
associação sistema terrestre sustentável

WILD
EUROPE



ClientEarth

FaIR
Fundacja EkoRozwoju

MONITORING
OBYWATELSKI
DRZEW

Federation
Against
Biomass power plants

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Let's
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KLIMAT
AKTION



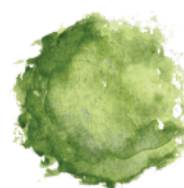
PUSH
SVERIGE



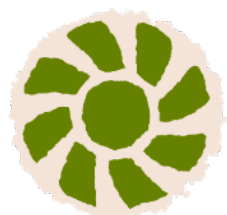
Jordens
Vänner
Friends of the Earth Sweden



Naturskyddsföreningen
Västernorrlands län



Naturwald
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biofuelwatch



INSTYTUT
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Klima
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FORESTS OF
THE WORLD.ORG

Open Letter to EU President Ursula von der Leyen

Leaders Summit on Climate - forests must be protected, not burned for energy

April 21st 2021

To: EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen

Copied to: Joe Biden, President of the United States of America

Mette Frederiksen, Prime Minister of Denmark

Charles Michel, President of the European Council

Emmanuel Macron, President of France

Angela Merkel, Chancellor of Germany

Mario Draghi, Prime Minister of Italy

Andrzej Duda, President of Poland

Pedro Sánchez, Prime Minister of Spain

Dear President von der Leyen,

We, the signatories of this letter from across the European Union, welcome US President Biden's Leaders Summit on Climate initiative (April 22 and 23), in which you will participate together with the President of the European Council and Prime Ministers and Presidents of several EU Member States.

The EU has made progress over the last years in designing and implementing measures to mitigate climate change and to achieve the Paris Agreement targets. With this summit, the EU has a unique opportunity to encourage other countries to also step up their actions against climate change. The Climate Summit can also be an important step to identify and agree on joint efforts.

However, while it is essential to shift from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources, the EU is on a perilous path with regard to the role of bioenergy and the future of forests. We are deeply concerned that the European Commission still includes the burning of forest biomass as 'renewable' energy in its Renewable Energy Directive (REDII).

As the European Commission's own Joint Research Centre (JRC) has warned, burning forest biomass is not carbon neutral because burning emits carbon instantaneously, while forests need decades, if not centuries to regrow to offset emissions. In order to reduce greenhouse gas emission levels in line with the Paris Agreement, it is essential that we drastically reduce emissions whilst simultaneously massively increasing the uptake of carbon in the land sector, particularly in our forests. Harvesting and burning forest biomass produces additional CO₂ instead of reducing it and damages the EU's much-degraded forests even further, undermining forest carbon stocks and damaging ecosystems in contravention of the goals of the EU's Biodiversity Strategy.

The impacts of the EU REDII are also visible overseas, as forests are logged and turned into pellets that are burned in European power plants. Adding to the injury, wood burning is a major source of air pollution that already kills hundreds of thousands of EU citizens every year.¹ Perversely,

¹ Carvalho, H. 2019. Air pollution-related deaths in Europe - time for action. Journal of Global Health 9(2):020308. At <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6858990/>

member states allocate billions of euro in subsidies every year to support the conversion of forests to fuel.

The January 2021 JRC report² concluded that only one out of the 24 scenarios of the use of forest biomass they evaluated poses a relatively low risk to biodiversity and the climate, and even then, this one scenario would mean emissions could be higher than fossil fuels for as long as the next twenty years. A number of other scientific reports come to the same conclusion: burning forest biomass increases emissions compared to fossil fuels, while intensive harvesting for wood pellets and chips leaves forests bare of the biodiversity the EU wishes to protect. **We therefore call on you to reform the EU's renewable energy policy by excluding forest biomass from counting towards the EU's renewables target,³ thus removing a main driver for forest destruction.** This simple measure would benefit forest ecosystems across the EU and in North America, as well as other biomass-supplying countries like Russia and Ukraine, and do more to align the EU's climate achievements on paper with what the atmosphere actually sees.

The cheapest and most effective climate solution is to let forests grow older and to reduce logging altogether. Natural forests that are allowed to age act like a carbon bank, while burning forest biomass for energy effectively turns forests into the "new coal."

We fully support the "Do No Harm" principle embedded in the European Green Deal. Burning forest biomass is inconsistent with this principle and does harm - to forest biodiversity, to human health and to the climate. It is time for policy cohesion between the EU's biodiversity and climate commitments and goals. We urge you to use the opportunity of this summit to end the use of forest biomass as a source of fuel in the EU and to encourage other leaders to do the same.

Sincerely,

ROBIN WOOD, Jana Ballenthien, Forest Campaigner, Germany

Protect the Forest, Lina Burnelius, Project Leader and International Coordinator, Sweden

Fern, Hannah Mowat, Campaigns Coordinator, Brussels

Partnership for Policy Integrity, Luke Chamberlain, EU Policy Director, Austria

NABU, Leif Miller, Managing Director, Germany

Fridays For Future Sweden, Anton Foley, Sweden

Sámiid Riikkasearvi, representing 44 indigenous communities, Åsa Larsson Blind, Chair, Sweden

Canopée Forêts Vivantes, Bruno Doucet, French forests Campaign Manager, France

Association Workshop for All Beings, Radosław Ślusarczyk, Poland

Comité Schone Lucht, Fenna Swart, Chairwoman, The Netherlands

Mobilisation for the Environment, Johan Vollenbroek, Chairman, The Netherlands

Leefmilieu, Maarten Visschers, Board Member, The Netherlands

Foundation for Sustainable Development (Fundacja EkoRozwoju), Piotr Tyszek-Chmielowiec, Project Leader, Poland

² Camia, A., et al. 2021. The use of woody biomass for energy production in the EU, EUR 30548 EN. A version that highlights some of the key results is here <https://forestdefenders.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/JRC-biomass-report-markup.pdf>. A civil society summary of the report is here https://forestdefenders.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/JRC-study-biomass-study-overview_final.pdf

³ "Secondary" woody biomass, which is sourced from residues of wood products manufacturing and post-consumer wood, can continue to be used for renewable energy, but it should be constrained to biomass that can not be recycled into material products. This is compatible with the recommendation in the Biodiversity Strategy.

Corporate Europe Observatory, Martin Pigeon, Researcher & Campaigner, Belgium & The Netherlands

EuroNatur Foundation, Gabriel Schwaderer, Executive Director, Germany

Earth Thrive, Zoe Lujic, Executive Director, UK/Serbia

ZERO - Association for the Sustainability of the Earth System, Francisco Ferreira, President of the Board, Portugal

Wild Europe, Toby Aykroyd, Coordinator, Belgium

Modrzew Association - Civic Monitoring of Trees (Stowarzyszenie MODrzew - Monitoring Obywatelski Drzew), Marzena Błaszczuk, Emilia Mielewczyk, Łukasz Sołtys, Board Members, Poland

NOAH-Friends of the Earth, Bente Hessellund Andersen, Mads Kjærgaard Lange, Tobias Jespersen, Campaign against bioenergy, Denmark

Federation Against Biomass Powerplants, Marloes Spaander, Co-founder, Netherlands

EDSP ECO, Jeroen Spaander, Board Member, Netherlands

SOS Forêt France, Régis Lindeperg, coordinator, France

Forum Ökologie & Papier, Evelyn Schönheit, Environmental Scientist, Germany

WOLF Forest Protection Movement, Juraj Lukáč, chief, Slovakia

Rådet for Grøn Omstilling/Green Transition Denmark, Annika Lund Gade, policy officer, Denmark

Klimabevægelsen / 350 Denmark, Thomas Meinert Larsen, policy advisor, Denmark

Arnhems Peil Foundation, Ronald Schout, Board Member, Netherlands

Towarzystwo na rzecz Ziemi, Piotr Rymarowicz, President, Poland

Bomenstichting Achterhoek, Marjan Houpt, Board Member, The Netherlands

Landelijk Netwerk Bossen- en Bomenbescherming, Joke Volkers, initiator, The Netherlands.

Stichting De Woudreus, Mieke Vodegel-Versteeg, Board Member, The Netherlands

Agent Green Association, Gabriel Păun, President, Romania

MăEduc.ro Association, Andreea Leonte, President, Romania

Polish Ecological Club Pomeranian Region, Jadwiga Kopeć, Coordinator, Poland

Global Action Plan Polska Foundation, Zdzisław S.Nitak, President, Poland

Stowarzyszenie Okolica, Małgorzata Grabowska-Snarska, President, Poland

Fundacja Dzika Polska, Dawid Kaźmierczak, Chairman of the Board, Poland

Save Estonia`s Forests, Liina Steinberg, Member of Board, Estonia

Baltic Environmental Forum, Žymantas Morkvėnas, Lithuania

Inicjatywa Dzikie Karpaty, Augustyn Mikos, Poland

European Wilderness Society, Max A. E. Rossberg, Chairman, Austria

Asociația Mai bine, Dr. Anca Elena Chirilă Gheorghică, Romania

Natural Forest Academy, Torsten Welle, Dr., Head of Science and Research, Germany

Asociația Platforma Reset, Daniela Mitrofan, President, Romania

Friends of Fertő lake, Zoltan Kun, Secretary of the Association, Hungary

Zero Waste Romania, Elena Rastei, Vice-president, Romania

Wohllebens Forest Academy, Tobias Wohlleben, CEO, Germany

Nature and Youth Sweden, Leo Rudberg, Chairperson, Sweden

Klimataktion, Pia Björstrand, Spokesperson, Sweden

Skiftet, Robin Zachari, Executive Director, Sweden

PUSH Sweden, Robin Holmberg, Chairperson, Sweden.

Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC) Västernorrland, Björn Abellsson, Chairman, Sweden

The Climate Parliament, Jonas Bane, Chairperson, Sweden

Nätverket Stoppa Preemraff, Kajsa Falk, Sweden
Amazon Watch Sweden, Alex Brekke, Secretary General, Sweden
Swedish Lichen Society, Martin Westberg, President, Sweden
Friends of the Earth Sweden, Mikael Sundström, Chairman, Sweden
Stowarzyszenie Ekologiczno-Kulturalne “Wspólna Ziemia”, Radosław Sawicki, Poland
Biofuelwatch, Almuth Ernsting, UK
Instytut Spraw Obywatelskich INSPRO, Piotr Skubisz, Poland
Fundacja Rozwój TAK - Odkrywki NIE, Kuba Gogolewski, Board Member, Poland
Earth Strike/Strajk dla Ziemi - Łódź, Poland
Foundation Szkatulka, Daria Schmidt, Warsaw, Poland
ClientEarth, Brian Rohan, Head of Climate and Forests, UK/International
Forest Aid, Martin Luiga, International Coordinator, Estonia
Knights of the Trees/Bomenridders Groningen, Jan Pieter Janse, The Netherlands
Forests of the World, Gry Bossen, Political Coordinator, Denmark