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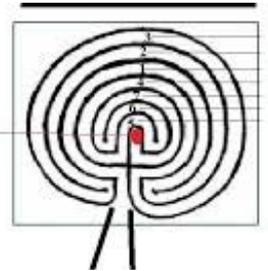
euRONATUR

EDSP eo co

WILD EUROPE

NOAH Friends of the Earth Denmark

ZERO associação sistema terrestre sustentável



ClientEarth

MONITORING OBYWATELSKI DRZEW

Federation Against Biomass power plants

FaIR Fundacja EkoRozwoju

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get  
Wild!



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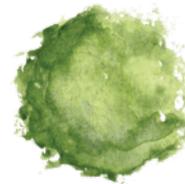
PUSH  
SVERIGE



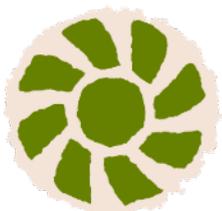
Jordens  
Vänner  
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Naturskyddsföreningen  
Västernorrlands län



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biofuelwatch



SZKATUŁKA



INSTYTUT  
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FORESTS OF  
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## **Open Letter to EU President Ursula von der Leyen**

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

April 21<sup>st</sup> 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 increase the uptake of carbon in the land sector, particularly in our forests. Harvesting and burning forest biomass produces additional CO<sub>2</sub> 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<sup>1</sup>. Perversely,

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<sup>1</sup> 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 report<sup>2</sup> 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<sup>3</sup>, 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 Tyszko-Chmielowiec, Project Leader, Poland

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<sup>2</sup> 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](https://forestdefenders.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/JRC-study-biomass-study-overview_final.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> "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 Błaszczyk, 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

**Wohlbens 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 Abelsson, 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