



Janez Potočnik
Commissioner for the
Environment
European Commission
B-1049 Brussels, Belgium

17th October 2014

Dear Environment Commissioner,

We are a group of concerned organisations and individuals who believe that the legislation on biodiversity offsetting being considered by the European Commission would harm nature and people, and would give power to those who destroy nature for private profit. We ask for all plans on offsetting to be dropped.

Offsetting provides a licence to trash

Global experience of biodiversity offsetting shows that it actually creates additional pressure on biodiversity. This is because it gives contentious development green credentials. For instance, in the UK, the government has been quite open that biodiversity offsetting will “speed up planning applications”. Biodiversity offsets have already facilitated approval of development proposals on ancient woodland, high value grasslands and areas that local communities enjoy.

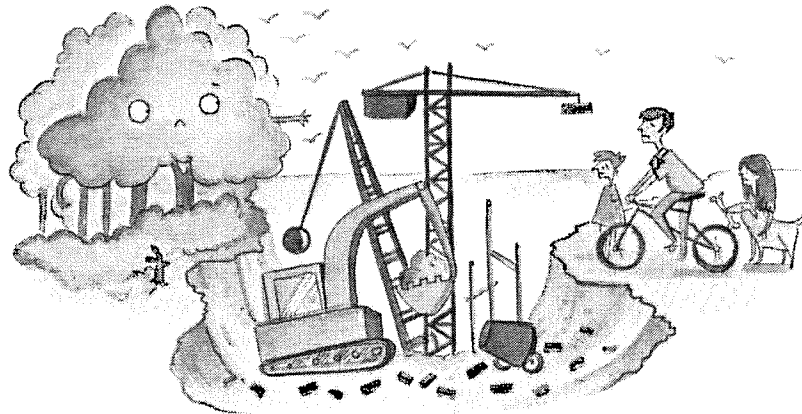
Commodifying nature

Biodiversity offsetting commodifies nature and sends out a dangerous message that nature is replaceable. Biodiversity and ecosystems are complex and unique. It is impossible to reduce biodiversity into a system of credits as envisaged by many offsetting systems.



Communities lose access to nature

Biodiversity offsetting masks the fact that when you destroy nature, it is lost forever, leading to loss of biodiversity and a loss of access to nature for communities, affecting people's health, well-being and enjoyment. People cherish nature not just for what it is, but for where it is. The social role that nature plays in the lives of people and communities cannot be offset.



Protecting nature, recognising responsibilities, no offsetting

If the EU and Member States are concerned by the ongoing loss of biodiversity, they must recognise that offsetting will make the problem worse. Tackling biodiversity loss requires that Member States implement laws that protect biodiversity, take a critical look at how land is used and elaborate local development plans in partnership, not in opposition to, local communities. Economies must be structured in the interests of citizens and not those of big business.

Nature is a common good that all share rights to and have responsibilities over. To be effective, any policy to protect biodiversity must take these considerations into account.



We urge the European Commission to drop plans for EU legislation on biodiversity offsetting. Such policies will only succeed in enabling those that can afford it to destroy nature for private profit. The EU should act in the public interest by protecting biodiversity, nature and public spaces through clear regulation and meaningful enforcement.

Yours sincerely,

Action Nature et Territoire (ACNAT) Languedoc-Roussillon
Aitec-IPAM

France
France

Amis de la Terre midi-Pyrénées	France
Animal Conservation and Welfare Foundation	Poland
ARA e.V.	Germany
Associació Plataforma Salvem Andratx	Spain
Attac Austria	Austria
Attac France	France
Biofuel Watch	UK
Both ENDS	Netherlands
Carbon Trade Watch	Spain
CEE Bankwatch Network	Italy
Centre d'Etude et de Sauvegarde de la Biodiversité	France
Climaxi	Belgium
Collectif Causse Méjean - Gaz de Schiste NON !	France
Conservation Justice	Belgium
Corporate Europe Observatory	Belgium
counter balance	Belgium
denkhausbremen.de	Germany
DKA Austria	Austria
ECA-Watch Austria	Austria
Ecologistas en Accion	Spain
EcoNexus	UK
Ecoropa	Germany
Environmental and Social Change (ESC)	UK
FERN	UK
Food & Water Europe	Belgium
Forest Peoples Programme	UK
forum Nachhaltig Wirtschaften / Altop Verlag	Germany
Friends of Siberian Forests	Russian Federation
Friends of the Earth Europe	Switzerland
Friends of the Earth Flanders	Belgium
Friends of the Earth International	Costa Rica
Friends of the Earth Spain	Spain
Friends of the Earth UK	UK
Gaia Foundation	UK
Gesellschaft zur Rettung der Delphine e.V.	Germany
GLOBAL 2000	Austria
Global Forest Coalition	Netherlands
Global Witness	UK
Initiative 50thousand Trees	Germany
Lavigne Biodiv network	France
La Via Campesina	France
Les Amis de la Terre	France
Les Amis de la Terre du Val de Bièvre	France
Make A Change	United States
Mining Watch Romania	Romania
Malta Organic Agriculture Movement	Malta
No FiBS (No fracking in Balcombe Society)	UK
Observatori del Deute en la Globalització	Spain
Plant	USA

Platform	UK
Pro Wildlife	Germany
Re:Common	Italy
Rettet den Regenwald e.V./Rainforest Rescue	Germany
Save our Woods	UK
Shark Research Institute	United States
Sobrevivencia/FoE-Paraguay	Paraguay
The Corner House	UK
The Land Magazine	UK
The Woodland League	Ireland
Third World Network	Malaysia
Timberwatch coalition	South Africa
Transnational Institute	Netherlands
Urgewald WDM	Germany
World Economy, Ecology & Development (WEED)	Germany

[For a list of individual signatories, click on this link here.](#)