

Prince Albert II
International Olympic Committee
President, Sustainability and Legacy Commission
Château de Vidy
1007 Lausanne Switzerland

Basel, 1 November 2021

An Open Letter to the International Olympic Committee **Save the Carpathians – No Olympic Winter Games in Ukraine**

Your Excellency:

We, the undersigned organizations, are writing to you to express our grave concern about the environmental and corruption-related risks regarding the Olympic Winter Games that the Ukrainian President, Volodymyr Zelensky, announced he intended to organise during discussions with the IOC Chairman Thomas Bach during his recent visit to Ukraine.

In particular, we fear that massive construction projects currently planned in the Ukrainian Carpathians would irreversibly damage one of Europe's last truly outstanding wilderness areas, including some UNESCO-protected World Heritage sites.

The Ukrainian government is using talks about potential Winter Games to justify highly damaging mega projects linked to oligarchs' interests that carry significant risks of environmental destruction and of corruption. In no way do these projects represent sustainable development. And they most certainly do not befit the Olympic ideals.

- All of the areas in question are located below 1900 metres which makes them unsuitable for Winter Games in times of climate change.
- The planned mega resorts at Svydovets and Borzhava are not based on existing infrastructure and communities. Instead, they would be erected in the middle of largely untouched landscapes in a highly fragile mountain ecosystem.
- Dozens of endangered plant and animal species live in these areas of outstanding biodiversity, including a number of endemic species.

- Even today, sufficient water supplies are an issue of major concern in the region. Fair and balanced water management would be a great source of conflict with local communities given the resorts' massive water consumption.
- In anticipation of the construction of the resorts and the inevitable increase of land prices, local dignitaries and politically connected persons have already begun to illegally appropriate land in the planned resort areas.
- In the context of the ongoing plans for a huge resort in the Svydovets massif in the Yasinya region, Ukraine is failing to comply with the Aarhus convention and the Espoo convention. In March 2019, the Espoo convention secretariat opened a case file on the issue following a complaint by Hungary. To this day, Ukraine has failed to officially address the questions raised by Hungary over the cross-border environmental impact of the Svydovets project.
- The resort plans are linked to individuals with a highly questionable track record in terms of governance and compliance with proper procedures.

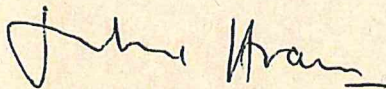
In its last annual report on the implementation of the EU Association Agreement with Ukraine adopted on 11 February 2021, the European Parliament clearly criticizes the *"unlawful Svydovets ski resort project"* and insists on the fact that *"encourages Ukraine to invest in ecologically and environmentally safe and sustainable tourist infrastructure, and calls on the Ukrainian authorities to prevent future projects from harming the environment by improving scrutiny, transparency and the implementation of environmental impact assessments and due diligence"*.

We remind the International Olympic Committee of its global responsibility for the environment, in particular in context with the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). We kindly ask the IOC to support the global fight against corruption according to the UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) and to work towards sustainability and the protection of the environment stipulated in the Olympic Charter.

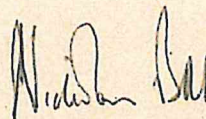
For the above reasons, we call on the Olympic Committee to stop giving the Ukrainian government any kind of support for these highly problematic projects in the Carpathians and to use its influence to dissuade it from causing irremediable damage to this unspoilt mountain region.

We kindly thank you for your consideration.

On behalf of the undersigned,



Dr. Lukas Straumann
Director, Bruno Manser Fonds



Nicholas Bell
International Coordinator, European Civic Forum

List of 55 organisations and names supporting the letter

1. **Biofuelwatch, UK/USA**



2. **Bruno Manser Fonds, Switzerland**
Dr. Lukas Straumann, Director



3. **BundesBürgerInitiative Waldschutz (BBIWS), Germany**
Claudia Blank, Susanne Ecker, Sabine von Winterfeld



4. **Canopée Forêts Vivantes, France**
Xavier Morin, President



5. **Cedos think tank, Ukraine**
Ivan Verbytskyi, Director



6. **Center for internationalcooperation and project implementation, Ukraine**
Vusyk Olena Head of the NGO



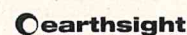
7. **Collectif SOS forêt France**
Régis Lindeperg, Coordinator



8. **Danube-Carpathian Programme, Ukraine**
Dr. Bohdan Prots, CEO/Director of the NGO



9. **Earth sight, UK**
Sam Lawson, Director



10. **Ecoclub, Ukraine**
Andriy Martynyuk, Executive director of the NGO



11. **Ecodiya, Ukraine**
Gozak Natalia, Executive director of the NGO



12. **ECOGVALT, Ukraine**
Maxym Verdesch, Head of the NGO



13. **Ecological club Eremurus, Ukraine**
Nataliia Valantynets, Head of the NGO



14. **EcoparkOsokorky, Ukraine**
Oleksandr Pylypenko, Head of the NGO



- Ecosense, Ukraine**
15. Tetiana Zhavzharova. Head of the NGO



- Ecosphere, Ukraine**
16. Kateryna Stankiewicz-Koval, Director



- Ekoltava, Ukraine**
17. Maryna Tsyhryk, Executive director of the NGO



- EuroNatur Stiftung, Germany**
18. Gabriel Schwaderer, CEO



- European Wilderness Society/ Європейське товариство дикої природи**
19.

- FORZA Sustainable development of the Carpathian region, Ukraine**
20. Lesya Loyko, Head of Agency



- European Civic Forum, France**
21. Nicholas Bell



- Fern, Belgium**
22. Hannah Mowat, Campaigns Coordinator



- Forum Ökologie & Papier, Germany**
23. Evelyn Schönheit



- Free Svydovets Group, Ukraine**
24.



- Friends of the Siberian Forests (FSF), Russia**
25. Andrey Laletin, Chair



- Hnutí DUHA, Friends of the Earth Czech Republic**
26. Anna Kárníková, Director



- Longo Mai**
27.



28. **Milieudefensie, Friends of the Earth Netherlands**
Danielle van Oijen, Programme coordinator
29. **Green Wave, Ecological Club, Ukraine**
Oleksandra Khalaim, Head of the NGO
30. **Green World, Environmental Humanitarian Association, Ukraine**
Olexandr Stepanenko, Director
31. **Kroky do maibutnoho, Ukraine**
Y.Dupeshko-Dzhus
32. **Kryla, Youth initiatives fondation, Ukraine**
Yurii Tkachuk
33. **Legal Analytics, Ukraine**
Mariana Vyniarska, Head of the NGO
34. **Our Home Manyava, Youth Environmental Organization, Ukraine**
Mykola Skydaniuk, the head of the organization
35. **Réseau pour les Alternatives Forestières (RAF)**
Mathieu Aynaud
36. **Partnership for Policy Integrity, USA**
Mary S. Booth, PhD, Director
37. **Plato, Ukraine**
Mykola Riabyka, Executive Director of the NGO
38. **Pro Natura Switzerland**
39. **Pro REGENWALD, Germany**
Hermann Edelmann
40. **Protect the Forest Sweden**
Elin Götmakrk, Spokesperson
41. **Quercus, Portugal**
Alexandra Azevedo, President
42. **Sotsialnyi Rukh, Ukraine**
Vitalii Dudin, Head of the NGO



43. **Svitlana Slesarenok, Ukraine**
Chornomorskyi Zhinochyi klub, Head of the NGO



44. **Svitovur Outdoor Agency, Ukraine**
Oleh Hetun



45. **Sweet Osvit, NGO for Environmental Education, Ukraine**
Miroshnichenko Kateryna



46. **Snow Alliance, Blue Dalian, China**



47. **Touristic Club Antar, Ukraine**
Taras Syrotyuk



48. **Transcarpathian tourist organization, Ukraine**
Shandor Fedir Fedorovych



49. **Turinform Zakarpattia, Tourist information center, Ukraine**
Oleksandr Koval



50. **U-Cycle, Kyiv Cyclists' Association, Ukraine**
Anastasiia Makarenko, Executive Director



51. **Unique Planet, Ukraine**
Pavlo Vyshebaba, Head of the NGO



52. **Ukrainian Climate Network**
OksanaMariuk, Head of the Board



53. **WOLF Forest Protection Movement, Slovakia**
Juraj Lukáč, Chief



54. **WWF Ukraine**
Bohdan Vykhov, Managing director



55. **WWF Schweiz**



cc:

- Volodymyr Zelensky, **President of Ukraine**, 11 Bankova Str., Kyiv 01220, Ukraine, email : letter@apu.gov.ua
- Thomas Bach, Chairman, **IOC**, Maison Olympique, 1007 Lausanne, thomas.bach@olympic.org
- Inger Andersen, **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)**, United Nations Avenue, Gigiri, P.O. Box 30552, 00100, Nairobi, Kenya, unenvironment-executiveoffice@un.org
- Isabelle Anatole-Gabriel, Chief of Unit, **Europe and North America Unit, UNESCO** World Heritage Centre, 7 Place de Fontenoy, 75352 Paris CEDEX 07, France, i.anatole-gabriel@unesco.org
- Alberto Arroyo Schnell, Head of **Policy and Programme, IUCN**, Rue Mauverney 28, 1196 Gland, Alberto.Arroyo@iucn.org
- Elena Santer, Secretary to the Implementation Committee, **Conventional on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention)**, elena.santer@un.org
- Bálint Dobi, Head of **Department of Environmental Conservation of the Hungarian Ministry of Agriculture**, H-1055 Budapest, Kossuth Lajos tér 1, balint.dobi@fm.gov.hu
- István Íjgyártó, Ambassador. **Embassy of Hungary in Kyiv**, 01901 Kijev, Rejtárszka u. 33, kiev@mae.ro