



Greenpeace European Unit

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Ursula von der Leyen
President of the European Commission
European Commission

Copies to:

Frans Timmermans, Executive Vice-President for the European Green Deal
Virginijus Sinkevičius, European Commissioner for the Environment, Oceans and Fisheries

By electronic mail

7 November 2022

Re: Your participation in the 15th meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP15) in Montreal

Dear President,

From 7 to 19 December 2022, a pivotal COP of the Convention on Biological Diversity will be held in Montreal, Canada to agree on a new global framework for the protection of biodiversity. EU leaders can and should play a critical role in the agreement of new, ambitious global targets for biodiversity and nature protection, ensuring that there are sufficient resources and a strong requiring implementation framework. The EU Commission leadership is especially necessary for a successful outcome.

Tackling the biodiversity crisis must be a European and global priority, which requires a cross-section of issues to be solved and agreed on, and very strong political commitment and focus – the type that typically comes from heads of state. That's why we urge you to personally engage in the negotiations and join the COP15 meeting. As President of the European Commission, we ask you to demonstrate EU leadership by attending COP15, urging EU heads of state to do the same, and actively lead on these critically important issues at COP15.

So far, [negotiations have floundered](#) due to a lack of sufficient political attention and will. There are several problems that the participation of heads of state would help overcome for the negotiations to deliver an [ambitious Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework](#): the negotiating

process to date has led to a very long and heavily bracketed text, and concluding a strong agreement will need bold decisions. Furthermore, global biodiversity loss still remains a relatively under-reported issue, despite being the most serious existential threat to survival on Earth. The necessity to take real actions is becoming increasingly urgent, especially as the CBD COP15 meeting has already been delayed for two years, and relocated from China to Canada, because of COVID.

In the meantime, the destruction of nature is intensifying in key ecosystems around the world. This is true not only in the Amazon, the Congo Basin Rainforests and in the global oceans, but also in Europe: from Europe's largest salt water lagoon, [Spain's Mar Menor](#), which is threatened by untreated sewage discharges and pollution from agriculture and factory farms, to the valuable [forests of the Carpathian Mountains](#) in Central Eastern Europe, which are being cut down on a large scale.

The dramatically advancing destruction of nature all over Europe shows that urgent and serious action must be taken by you now, both internationally and at home. The EU has failed on its previous commitments to halt the dramatic loss of biodiversity, and your leadership and commitment is needed to finalise the ambitious agreement on the new global deal for nature that [scientists say we need](#). Our world urgently needs more ambitious measures in order to deliver on international and [European targets](#) for biodiversity protection on a national level.

Life exists in a complex and interdependent web, and the increasingly fragile subtle systems on which our planetary health depends are fast approaching disastrous tipping points. For the sake of life itself, we urge you to join the global biodiversity meeting in Montreal and make sure that a strong agreement for nature is adopted at COP15.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of a stylized 'R' followed by a horizontal line.

Jorgo Riss
Executive Director, Greenpeace European Unit