



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

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| 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 |

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| 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.](#)