

Katowice, 9 June 2017

## **Open Letter by the Deans of the Life Sciences Faculties at the Universities of the Republic of Poland**

His Excellency  
Andrzej Duda, PhD,  
President of the Republic of Poland

Her Excellency  
Beata Szydło  
Prime Minister

His Excellency  
Professor Jan Szyszko, PhD,  
Minister of Environment

### **Your Excellency President, Your Excellency Prime Minister, Your Excellency Minister:**

We, the Deans of the Life Sciences Faculties at the Universities of the Republic of Poland, protest against the current and planned for the near future, far-reaching interferences in the valuable ecosystems of our country, in particular the Białowieża Forest and large Polish rivers. We therefore oppose the present policy of exploiting natural resources, carried out without consideration to the social and economic costs of the natural environment degradation. We believe that the current economic activities, including the legal ordinances of the Ministry of Environment, will contribute – through irreversible natural resource devastation – to the impoverishment of our society and an increased risk of natural disasters in our country.

Due to globally increased human impact on the natural environment, setting environmental protection against socio-economic values has become pointless. The belief that "we cannot afford to protect the environment" had turned out to be erroneous and was replaced by the conviction that we cannot afford not to protect it.

Therefore, we require the decision-makers to develop such strategies of managing the Polish natural resources that would replace the purely exploitative attitude and instead combine the protection of valuable natural assets with economic and leisure usage. These new strategies should take into account the socio-economic costs of the excessive exploitation of nature, including the consequence that degraded ecosystems can lose the capacity to deliver services for humans.

In particular, we would expect compliance with the state and international laws and regulations, pursuant to which the natural processes must be preserved in the ecosystems of the Białowieża Forest and large Polish river valleys.

We would also like to express our deepest concern over the current situation in the Białowieża Forest, where mass logging leads to the destruction of the most valuable forest complex in our country. Moreover, we would like to point out that these activities pose a real risk of placing the Białowieża Forest on the UNESCO List of World Heritage in Danger.

We call upon you to start a dialogue with scientists who oppose the ongoing interference in the natural environment, and to take into consideration the current scientific knowledge in making key decisions.

Let us not forget that we have a moral and legal obligation to preserve the natural environment for future generations in at least as good condition as we found it.

Yours sincerely,

Deans:

1. Prof. Beata Gabryś, PhD, Dean of the Faculty of Biological Sciences at the University of Zielona Góra
2. Prof. Eng. Barbara Gawdzik, PhD, Dean of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences at the Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce
3. Prof. Andrzej Icha, PhD, Dean of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences at the Pomeranian University in Słupsk
4. Prof. Igor Konieczny, PhD, Dean of the Intercollegiate Faculty of Biotechnology at the University of Gdańsk and Medical University of Gdańsk
5. Małgorzata Kruczek, PhD, Dean of the Faculty of Biology and Earth Sciences at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków
6. Prof. Andrzej Kruk, PhD, Dean of the Faculty of Biology and Environmental Protection at the University of Łódź
7. Prof. Agnieszka Mostowska, PhD, Dean of the Faculty of Biology at the University of Warsaw
8. Dorota Nowak, PhD, Dean of the Faculty of Biotechnology at the University of Wrocław
9. Prof. Zofia Piotrowska-Seget, PhD, Dean of the Faculty of Biology and Environmental Protection at the University of Silesia
10. Waldemar Surosz, PhD, University Professor, Dean of the Faculty of Oceanography and Geography at the University of Gdańsk
11. Prof. Ryszard Szyszka, PhD, Dean of the Faculty of Biotechnology and Environmental Sciences at the Catholic University of Lublin
12. Prof. Kazimierz Trębacz, PhD, Dean of the Faculty of Biology and Biotechnology at the Maria Curie Skłodowska-University of Lublin
13. Prof. Werner Ulrich, PhD, Dean of the Faculty of Biology and Environmental Protection at the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń

14. Maciej Wnuk, PhD, University Professor, Head of the Branch Campus of Biotechnology at the University of Rzeszów

Deputy Deans:

1. Prof. Maria Augustyniak, PhD, Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Biology and Environmental Protection at the University of Silesia
2. Prof. Katarzyna Baldy-Chudzik, PhD, Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Biological Sciences at the University of Zielona Góra
3. Maciej Bartos, PhD, Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Biology and Environmental Protection at the University of Łódź
4. Piotr Borsuk, PhD, Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Biology at the University of Warsaw
5. Prof. Maria Anna Ciemerych-Litwinienko, PhD, Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Biology at the University of Warsaw
6. Joanna Czarnecka, PhD, Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Biology and Biotechnology at the Maria Curie Skłodowska-University of Lublin
7. Małgorzata Garnczarska, PhD, University Professor, Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Biology at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań
8. Prof. Maciej Garstka, PhD, Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Biology at the University of Warsaw
9. Ryszard Gurbiel, PhD, Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Biochemistry, Biophysics, and Biotechnology at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków
10. Prof. Jolanta Jura, PhD, Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Biochemistry, Biophysics, and Biotechnology at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków
11. Ewa Kukuła, PhD, Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Biology and Agriculture at the University of Rzeszów
12. Małgorzata Kus-Liśkiewicz, PhD, Deputy Head of the Branch Campus of Biotechnology at the University of Rzeszów
13. Beata Messyasz, PhD, Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Biology at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań
14. Prof. Michał Obuchowski, PhD, Intercollegiate Faculty of Biotechnology at the University of Gdańsk and Medical University of Gdańsk
15. Prof. Małgorzata Puc, PhD, Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Biology at the University of Szczecin
16. Edyta Sierka, PhD, Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Biology and Environmental Protection at the University of Silesia
17. Prof. Maria Stankiewicz, PhD, Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Biology and Environmental Protection at the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń
15. Adriana Szmidt-Jaworska, PhD, Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Biology and Environmental Protection at the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń
18. Prof. Piotr Świątek, PhD, Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Biology and Environmental Protection at the University of Silesia
19. Ada Wróblewska, PhD, Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Biology and Chemistry at the University in Białystok