

Executive Vice-President Frans Timmermans
Commissioner Virginijus Sinkevičius
Commissioner Phil Hogan

By e-mail

8 April 2020

Subject: Ending wildlife trade - for health and planet

Dear Executive Vice-President, Dear Commissioners,

Greenpeace appeals to you to provide EU leadership within the international community to put an end to wildlife trade, while at the same time promote and propose more ambitious measures that protect all ecosystems. Such measures are especially necessary and urgent to protect global public health, in addition to biodiversity.

As you are well aware, the [destruction of nature and biodiversity increases](#) the likelihood of disease outbreaks such as Covid-19, and trade in wildlife further increases the risk that these diseases are transmitted from animals to humans. Elisabeth Maruma Mrema, acting Executive Secretary of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, has already [called for a ban on “wet markets”](#) to avert pandemics in the future. These markets are already temporarily banned in China and Vietnam.

However, further and more transformative measures are needed. We urge the European Commission, under your leadership, to work with Member States to advocate for a ban on international trade in wildlife, in particular within the framework of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the EU's own upcoming Biodiversity Strategy. In addition, more ambition is needed from the Commission and Member States to protect natural habitats and ecosystems worldwide and within the EU to decrease the risk of disease outbreaks. Such new measures should include new legislation to tackle EU's consumption of commodities driving forest and ecosystem destruction, for example.

As you fully appreciate, the planet is currently in a crisis of extinction and measures to end the rampant trade in wildlife would help reverse biodiversity loss and help prevent pandemics caused by zoonotic diseases.

Our appeal to you is not a blanket call to globally ban all consumption of wild meat. Such a ban would threaten the food security of many Indigenous and other forest-dependent communities. Many of those communities are themselves negatively affected by the commercial wildlife trade and the degradation of the forest ecosystems upon which they rely. Locally adapted programmes are urgently needed to help protect forest ecosystems with local communities, while respecting their rights to food and food sovereignty.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,



Magda Stoczkiewicz
Deputy Director, Greenpeace European Unit