

Help us stop a huge ski resort project from destroying the magnificent Svydovets massif in the Carpathian mountains in Ukraine !

The « Svydovets » massif forms part of the Carpathian mountains in Transcarpathia, in the west of Ukraine. With its magnificent spruce and beech forests rich in fauna and flora and its natural lakes it is one of the most beautiful mountain zones in the country. At its heart lies the source of the river Tisza, one of the region's most important rivers.

It is here that murky investors plan to establish an immense ski resort with over 60 hotels, 120 restaurants, 33 ski-lifts, 230 km of ski-runs, shopping malls, medical and fitness centres, banks, multi-storey parking areas and even an aerodrome. The resort would have a capacity of 28.000 tourists, with around 5000 persons employed.

This project violates several international conventions signed by Ukraine. It would have a devastating impact on the ecosystem, on the forests and biodiversity and on the water regime, requiring vast quantities for the resort and for artificial snow and producing 5000 tons of sewage every day.

This absurd project is actively opposed by the Free Svydovets Group which is probably the largest and most effective ecological movement in Ukraine's history. It unites fifteen environmental organisations, hundreds of committed activists and thousands of supporters. It has also unleashed a wave of protest from many thousand European citizens, from dozens of European, American and international NGOs and from leading members of the European Parliament. And yet the project has still not been abandoned.

One of the investors behind the project is a corrupt oligarch, Igor Kolomoisky, who is the main backer of the recently elected president, Vladimir Zelensky. It will therefore not be easy to stop it. We need your help!

For further information, including a detailed 70 page report « The Svydovets case – How oligarchs are planning to destroy one of Ukraine's most pristine natural landscapes » :

freesvydovets.org

Contact : free.svydovets@gmail.com

**Write to President Volodymyr Zelensky and call on him to put a stop to the project :
11 Bankova St., 01220 Kiev, Ukraine. requests@apu.gov.ua with copy to Free Svydovets.**

Massive illegal logging in the Carpathians

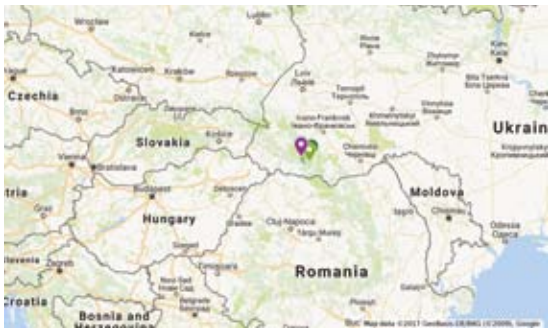
The planned ski resort at Svydovets would further worsen the huge problem of illegal logging in the Carpathian mountains. Many organisations, including WWF and the Free Svydovets Group have been denouncing this deforestation for years.

Western Ukraine contains some of the largest remaining tracts of ancient forest on the European continent, home to some of the last populations of brown bear, Eurasian wolf, lynx and European bison.



Ukraine is today the largest single supplier of illegally harvested wood to the European Union, exceeding all of the tropical countries of Latin America, Africa and SE Asia combined. The WWF estimates that 1.4 million cubic metres of timber are being illegally felled in the Ukrainian Carpathians each year.

The EU is by far the largest destination for Ukrainian wood exports, representing 70 % of the total. EU purchases have been rising rapidly, breaking €1 billion in 2017. At least 40 % of this wood was harvested or traded illegally, with the aid of corruption.



The overwhelming majority of illegal logging in Ukraine is being carried out by State Forestry Enterprises (SFEs). Hundreds of SFEs engage in the systematic, deliberate breaching of a wide range of regulations during harvesting. None is more destructive than illegal 'sanitary felling' justified to prevent the spread of disease. Corrupt forest enterprises abuse this loophole on a massive scale to cut healthy trees whose harvesting would not otherwise have been allowed.

The EU buyers of Ukrainian wood include many of the world's largest multinational wood processing companies. Many of these companies are mentioned in ongoing criminal investigations relating to illegal logging, illegal wood exports and corruption. Products of these companies are to be found throughout the EU in the largest DIY, furniture and supermarket chains.

Brave activists in Ukraine are battling timber corruption at significant personal risk. In July 2018 the British NGO Earthsight published a damning 60-page report, « Complicit in Corruption: How billion-dollar firms and EU governments are failing Ukraine's forests » : www.earthsight.org.uk



Meet Iris Del Sol in New York

One of those who started this struggle has been invited to the United Nations Youth Climate Summit in New York. Iris Del Sol is a 23 year old activist and environmental law student who lives close to the Svydovets massif. Contact her at ds_visa@yahoo.fr +380.96 85 72 673

She will be accompanied by Nicholas Bell, International Coordinator and forest campaigner at the European Civic Forum. Contact : nicholas.bell@gmx.net +33.622 43 68 85