



Friends of the Earth Europe
Rue d'Edimbourg 26,
1050 Brussels,
Belgium

27th February 2019

Mr Karmenu Vella
European Commissioner
Cc Daniel Calleja Crespo
DG Environment
European Commission

Dear Commissioner Vella,

Subject: Digging through the Vistula Spit, Poland, and construction of a navigable channel crossing 3 Natura 2000 sites without the required environmental assessments

We are writing to you as a matter of urgency to intervene to stop the unlawful damage of three Natura 2000 sites in the Vistula Spit and Lagoon, Poland. (PLB280010 - Vistula Lagoon, PLB040003 - Lower Vistula Valley, PLH280007 - Vistula Lagoon and Vistula Spit)

The Pomeranian Voivodeship regional government gave the go ahead to start construction of a navigable channel through three Natura 2000 sites on 15th February. The works have already started with the felling of 25ha of forest last week with a heavy security presence and despite local government, communities and NGO opposition.

The Polish authorities and investors have not carried out appropriate assessments of the implications to the three Natura 2000 sites as required under EU law (Article (6.3) of Directive 92/43). Impacts are likely to be immense since the Lagoon is freshwater and will be exposed to sea water, completely changing the ecosystem. Dredging and the construction of a waiting harbour will also impact on the ecology of the whole area. The Polish authorities are therefore acting outside of EU law.

We therefore ask that you, as European Commissioner, intervene as a matter of urgency to stop unlawful activities in these Natura 2000 areas by the Polish government.

Yours sincerely

Jagoda Munic, Director, **Friends of the Earth Europe**

On behalf of:

BirdLife Europe

European Environment Bureau

Euronatur

Eurosite

Wetlands International – European Association

International Mire Conservation Group

Society for Ecological Restoration