

# TREASURES UNDER THREAT

*Unsustainable resource use and poorly planned infrastructure cause the loss and fragmentation of forests, wetlands and wilderness. The treasures of the Green Heart of Europe are threatened by:*

WE ALREADY  
HAVE MANY OF THE  
TOOLS NEEDED TO SAVE  
THE GREEN  
HEART  
OF EUROPE

- 1 Illegal and unsustainable logging of virgin and other High Conservation Value Forests.
- 2 Construction of roads, ski areas and other infrastructure, some of it illegal and much of it poorly planned.
- 3 “Wild” construction of hundreds of large and small hydro- and wind-power stations, many with limited benefits in terms of clean energy but massive impacts for streams, rivers and wildlife.
- 4 Unsustainable agricultural practices.

*The question is not whether to develop, but how to develop – to ensure that we build on the unique qualities of our region for long-term sustainable development rather than squandering our natural capital for short-term gain.*

## HALF WAY THERE

- 1 Strong legislation, from the EU Water Framework Directive to the EU Timber Regulation.
- 2 Regional protection frameworks, including the Carpathian and Danube Protection Conventions.
- 3 Government commitments , including to protect virgin forests, save Danube sturgeons, and more.
- 4 International agreements, including the Lower Danube Green Corridor and Mura-Drava-Danube Biosphere Reserve.
- 5 Economic incentives included in EU regional development policies and the EU Danube Strategy, and growing importance of certification schemes like FSC as well as payments for ecosystem services (PES).
- 6 A strong network of partners stretching from the public to the private and non-profit sectors.


*We now need to bring these together and ensure that they are both fully implemented and actively used.*

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A WWF INITIATIVE ACROSS  
12 COUNTRIES IN CENTRAL AND  
EASTERN EUROPE

JOIN US TODAY TO  
SECURE EUROPE’S  
GREATEST TREASURES  
HELP US SAVE  
THE GREEN HEART OF EUROPE



**Why we are here**

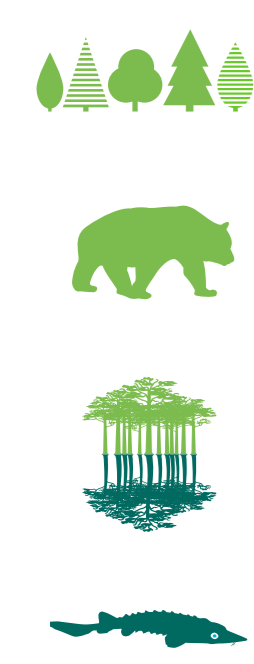
To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

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SAVING  
THE GREEN HEART  
OF EUROPE

# EUROPE’S GREATEST NATURAL TREASURES

From the Danube basin to the Carpathian Mountains, our region – the Green Heart of Europe – includes many of the continent’s greatest natural treasures.



**Forests**  
The largest remaining area of virgin and natural forests in Europe outside of northern Scandinavia and Russia, including the primeval beech forests of Ukraine and Slovakia.

**Wilderness**  
Europe’s most spectacular remaining wilderness areas outside of Russia, including the southern Carpathians and the Danube Delta.

**Large carnivores**  
Two-thirds of the European populations of large carnivores, including bears, lynx and wolves.

**Rivers and wetlands**  
Most of Europe’s last remaining intact rivers and wetlands, including the globally important Lower Danube Green Corridor and the Mura-Drava-Danube corridor, “Europe’s Amazon”.

**Danube sturgeon**  
The Beluga sturgeon – a 7-meter fish that survived the end of the dinosaurs but now teeters on the edge of extinction.

*We depend on these treasures. They provide us with essential goods and services, from timber and fish to clean water and climate regulation, and the essential “green infrastructure” that secures our livelihoods and well-being.*

# TO SECURE THE BIODIVERSITY HOTSPOTS IN THE GREEN HEART OF EUROPE

**Our agenda**  
Ensure legal protection for all virgin forests in the Carpathian Mountains, using the Carpathian Convention, EU and national legislation.

Promote close to nature forest management, including through FSC certification, for at least 3 million hectares of forest.

Secure key corridors for the movement of brown bears and other larger carnivores.

Ensure the effective protection of Europe’s greatest wilderness areas in the Southern Carpathians, Danube Delta and Maramures, and promote them as premier ecotourism destinations.

For sturgeons, address illegal trade and poaching, secure spawning areas and restore migration across the Iron Gates dams.

Support implementation of the Lower Danube Green Corridor, the Alpine-Carpathian Corridor, the Mura-Drava-Danube Transboundary Biosphere Reserve, the March-Thaya trilateral reserve and other Ramsar sites. Support and implement floodplain and wetland restoration projects across the Danube basin.

Develop guidelines for infrastructure and other development and promote incentives for sustainable resource management.



Our treasures include:



**1 Biodiversity hotspot March-Thaya wetlands**  
Tucked in the folds of the former Iron Curtain on the borders between Austria, Slovakia and the Czech Republic, the March-Thaya wetlands are among the richest in Central Europe.



**2 World’s first five-country protected area**  
The confluence of the Mura, Drava and Danube rivers – the “Amazon of Europe” – is set to become the world’s first 5-country protected area.



**3 Europe’s last wilderness**  
The Southwest Carpathians are Europe’s greatest remaining area of intact forest and wilderness outside of northern Scandinavia and Russia.



**4 Vibrant mosaic of nature and culture**  
The area of Maramures on the border of Romania and Ukraine presents a rich mosaic of meadows and forests and vibrant cultural traditions.



**5 The most international river in the world**  
The Lower Danube Green Corridor includes 1 million hectares of wetlands and the globally important Danube Delta, the world’s largest reed bed.