

WRITTEN QUESTION P-6520/07
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to the Commission

Subject: Destruction of Sajólád wood

So far, a total of 180 hectares of the protected woodland in the Aggtelek National Park in Hungary has been felled; in practice, this amounts to 98% of the total stand of trees. Only 2 hectares of woodland remains, but trees are continuously being cut from there too.

Since 2004, the wood has belonged to the European Union's Natura 2000 network, being classified as a Special Area of Conservation, which is one of the largest and most valuable oak/ash/elm hardwood gallery-forest biotope types in the region. The wood was a place of refuge for many species of animal protected under Hungarian nature conservation law and European law until wood thieves with their axes and chainsaws cleared it. Within a short time, the destruction of the Sajólád woodland has caused irreversible damage, eliminating valuable and rare forest ecosystems and causing the disappearance of animal species of Community importance which are protected or specially protected.

The wood was owned and managed by the Hungarian State, but the Hungarian authorities responsible for protecting it pass the buck to one another; although the species of plant and animal and the areas are in principle protected by numerous EU and Hungarian legal provisions, to this day no one has taken responsibility for the actions leading to incalculable damage and the destruction of unique natural assets.

- What will the Commission do to enforce the EU's nature conservation law?

- Will the Commission take steps to prevent further destruction of nature, in order to protect our natural assets, which are also registered as such at EU level?