

Ecological Importance of the Forests of the Carpathians

Threats and need for action

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**Carpathians:
Biodiversity hot spot for the
whole of Europe.**



Pathless forest wilderness: almost extinct in EU

Boia Mica valley in Fagaras Mountains, Romania. 1000 ha primary forest, not protected

Boia Mica valley in Fagaras Natura 2000 site, Romania:

- 1000 ha primary forest**
- No path**
- No protection (study rejected by Forest Guard)**
- Intensive logging („legal-illegal“) omnipresent in Romania**

A photograph of a forest floor covered in fallen tree trunks and branches. The ground is carpeted with fallen leaves in shades of brown, orange, and yellow. In the background, tall trees stand with their branches bare or sparsely leafed, suggesting a transition through seasons. The overall atmosphere is one of natural decay and ecological complexity.

Stužica primary forest, Poloniny national park, Slovakia:

- Large transboundary forest wilderness (SK, PL, UA)
- UNESCO World Heritage site.
- But: Conflicts about logging in national parks (cores) and UNESCO site (buffers) in Slovakia.

Uholka Shyrokyi-Lu, Ukraine:

- Biggest primary forest of European beech on earth (>10.000 ha)**
- UNESCO World Heritage**
- But: Reports about massive problems with illegal logging, corruption and criminal networks (outside UNESCO sites)**

Primary forest in central Europe:

- Ukraine: 100.000 ha
- Poland: 11.000 ha
- Slovakia: 11.000 ha
- Austria: fragments < 1300 ha (no inventory)
- Germany: small relicts < 200 ha
- Belgium: 0



And... Romania:

- 220.000 ha „virgin forest“, PinMatra study 2005); 100.000 ha logged already
- > 500.000 ha potential natural forest, PRIMOFARO study (2019)



PRIMOFARO inventory (2019): Visual analyses, field visits. Results:

- **525.000 ha of potential old growth / primary forests (8% of Romania's forest cover)**
- **330.000 ha located within Natura 2000 sites (approx. 5% of Romania's forest cover).**
- Analyses of satellite images of Romania's Natura 2000 sites shows that logging is almost omnipresent...

Validation: Declassified satellite images from 1960ties (CORONA).

**Example: Radoteasa valley in Domogled NP
(=UNESCO buffer). No signs of logging.**



Source: CORONA

Overlay with 137 CORONA film stripes: digital map of Romania in 1960ties.

