

**Dear Director Hubeny, dear Pavel,**

Thank you for your regular information about the current discussion in the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic regarding the amendment to the Nature and Landscape Protection Act. At the Bavarian Forest National Park Authority, we are following the current developments with great concern. If this change in the law actually comes into force, it would be a great loss not only for the Šumava National Park but also for the Bavarian Forest National Park.

Both protected areas form the largest contiguous forest protected area in Central Europe. Covering over 920 km<sup>2</sup>, the protected forests are of exceptional ecological value and provide habitat for a wide range of rare species of animals, plants, fungi and insects. The administrations of both protected areas have been working closely together for many years, coordinating measures to protect and further improve this valuable natural area. In addition, we have a number of joint research and monitoring projects, also in cooperation with many research institutions, which are working on this natural space, which is unique in the whole of Central Europe. This enriching cooperation between the two national parks is unique in Europe and is considered a model example of cross-border nature conservation

Protecting processes, which include allowing natural disturbances by storms or bark beetles and leaving dead wood in the forest, is essential for promoting biodiversity. The Bavarian Forest National Park reached a major milestone in this respect last year and was certified as a Category II National Park by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). With 75 percent of its area free of human interference, nature can develop according to its own laws. Only if the long-term goal of the Šumava National Park is to achieve a 75 per cent nature zone will the biodiversity in the protected areas on both sides of the border be able to continue to develop in an optimal and successful way.

Moreover, this change in the law risks putting at risk the important awards and certificates that both national parks have received, such as the Transboundary Certificate or the European Diploma.

I would like to ask you to make every effort to speak out against the amendment to the Nature and Landscape Protection Act. From the Bavarian Forest National Park Authority, we can promise you our full support. Only if we permanently give nature more space can humans win.

With friendly regards,

**Ursula Schuster**

Director of the Bavarian Forest National Park Authority