



Protecting nature together across borders

National Parks are a shared heritage – A responsibility and vision for the future

Dear Members of the Chamber of Deputies of the Czech Republic,

The German umbrella organization **Nationale Naturlandschaften e. V.**, together with the **Association of German Nature Parks**, represents the National Natural Landscapes of Germany – a network of 16 national parks, 18 biosphere reserves, 104 nature parks, and 3 wilderness areas. Together, we protect and develop approximately one-third of Germany's territory in harmony with nature, society, and internationally recognized conservation principles. Many of Germany's most significant protected areas are located along national borders and benefit from close collaboration with protected area administrations in neighboring countries.

We are therefore deeply concerned about the proposed legal changes related to the designation of the Křivoklátsko National Park. From our perspective, these amendments would undermine core principles of national park protection and weaken the well-established structures of existing Czech national parks.

In light of the global biodiversity crisis – with more than one million species at risk of extinction according to IPBES – national parks play a vital role. They provide large-scale refuges where natural processes can unfold with minimal human interference. As IUCN Category II protected areas, they adhere to internationally recognized standards and are primarily intended to safeguard ecosystems and their natural dynamics.

At the same time, national parks are living landscapes that offer tangible value to people. They support environmental education, recreation, tourism, and sustainable regional development. In many regions, they are drivers of local economies – creating jobs, promoting nature-based tourism, and fostering long-term economic prospects. Their success depends on clear legal foundations, professional park management, and strong public trust.

Of particular importance is the internationally certified cross-border cooperation between the Šumava and Bavarian Forest National Parks, as well as the Bohemian and Saxon Switzerland National Parks. Rooted in European directives and comparable national legislation, this long-standing and well-coordinated technical collaboration has evolved over decades to ensure consistently high standards of quality in protected area management.

These partnerships are built on mutual trust, coordinated strategies, and a shared commitment to preserving natural processes across borders. Thanks to decades of collaboration and harmonized approaches, these parks have successfully developed shared conservation concepts and coordinated management within a seamless natural landscape. This has enabled the protection of vulnerable species and habitats across national borders – to the benefit of nature and people on both sides. Such success depends on stable legal frameworks and scientifically grounded governance.

We are concerned that a legal framework allowing political decision-makers greater influence and limiting the autonomy of park administrations could jeopardize this progress. Such a shift risks diminishing the role of expert-led management and eroding public confidence in national parks as reliable, future-oriented institutions – in the Czech Republic and beyond its borders.

For national parks to continue fulfilling their potential – as places of inspiration, biodiversity protection, economic opportunity, and international cooperation – they must be based on transparent, reliable, and professional governance.

We therefore respectfully urge you to:

- Maintain the independence and professionalism of national park administrations,
- Ensure continuity and clarity in park planning and development,
- And preserve the framework conditions that have made Czech national parks respected partners in European cooperation.

National parks are more than protected areas – they are long-term investments in the natural and social capital of our regions. Their integrity must not be compromised.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Peter Südbeck". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Peter" and last name "Südbeck" clearly distinguishable.

Peter Südbeck

**Chairman of the Board
Nationale Naturlandschaften e. V.**