



To the attention of Mr Virginijus Sinkevičius  
Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries  
European Commission

Brussels, 24 June 2020

**Subject: The Vistula Spit canal situation**

Dear Commissioner Sinkevičius,

Nature protection and ecosystems restoration have never been so critical as today. Unsustainable use of land, overexploitation of natural resources and habitats degradation are just few of the reasons behind the biodiversity and climate crisis, which are one of the biggest threats we are going to face in the next decade. This is why the Biodiversity Strategy needs to address a generational challenge to halt and reverse the decline of nature and ecosystems while assisting Europe's economic and social recovery from the pandemic.

In light of this, we, Members of the European Parliament, want to raise a voice of strong concern over the Vistula Spit canal, in Poland, where an environmental destruction is occurring amid the general silence of the European Institutions.

The Vistula Spit canal is a heavily wooded strip of land 55 km long but less than 2 km wide that separates the Vistula Lagoon with the Baltic see. At the beginning of this year, with the consent of the current Polish government, a mega-project on digging a waterway across the Vistula Spit canal has begun. However, neither an environment permit nor an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) as required under EU law have been pursued yet.

The Vistula Spit canal project does not represent only a breach of Polish law and the EIA Directive (2011/92/EU), but also raise a number of serious environmental concerns given that the area is protected under the EU Natura2000 Program, which should ensure the long-term survival of Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats. Consequently, nature-damaging activities are supposed to be restricted on these sites, and not encouraged. In addition, the project represents serious worries for the local people about encroaching on natural habitats, destroying landscapes and beaches as well as endangering the local fishing and tourist industries.

In January 2020, after a parliamentary question submitted by MEP Ms BRICMONT, the European Commission answered that it is aware of the Vistula Spit situation and may pursue the procedure and ultimately refer the case to the Court of Justice of the EU. Considering the



negative developments since then, did the Commission take further steps to take necessary measures, including infringement procedures?

A strong answer and swift, decisive actions are required today more than ever to protect nature and reverse the degradation of ecosystems with benefits for people, the climate and the planet.

In view of the situation outlined above and due to the urgency for the Vistula Spit biodiversity, we, MEP Ms Saskia BRICMONT and MEP Mrs Roza THUN, would like to have an exchange of views on this matter with you, Commissioner, as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

MEP Ms Saskia BRICMONT

MEP Mrs Roza THUN