

To the members of the
City Council of Bonn
City Council of Koenigswinter
Council of the Rhein-Sieg-Kreis

Bonn, 20 November 2017

Dear Council Members,

As representatives of women's groups and other civil society organizations striving for a more sustainable planet, we have visited Bonn for the 23rd Conference of the Parties of the Climate Convention. For many years, Bonn has been hosting the UNFCCC Secretariat and its annual Subsidiary Body negotiations, and we are grateful that a beautiful city within such an impressive, biodiversity-rich landscape is host to this year's Conference of the Parties.

However, we are concerned that for most of the natural areas around Bonn there is no legally sound protection. The Bonn city administration formally fosters a physical planning policy that aims to protect and conserve the natural areas and open spaces around the city, but the administrative body governing the area surrounding Bonn, the Rhein-Sieg-Kreis, does not have a similar physical planning policy yet. Moreover, 70% of the „Naturpark Siebengebirge“, which is one of the oldest nature reserves in the country, has no formal legal status, so its protection depends entirely on political will.

We hereby ask you to clearly manifest your political will to conserve the Naturpark Siebengebirge. We are highly concerned that this unique nature reserve, which forms an important recreational area for city dwellers, is threatened by various construction plans, as well as a new motorway, the “Suedtangente”. The Federal Transportation Ministry has found that, in spite of planned tunnels, the Suedtangente motorway would be extremely damaging to the environment, but unfortunately, some politicians from Bonn and the Rhein-Sieg-Kreis administration continue to insist on this new motorway.

Naturpark Siebengebirge is also threatened by no less than six large construction plans for new housing areas or industrial zones that are currently being discussed by policy-makers in the municipality of Bonn and/or the Rhein-Sieg-Kreis administration. These plans lack socio-economic necessity as the population growth in the region is modest. Moreover, there is no planned or existing rail transportation in the planned construction areas that could transport the inhabitants in a sustainable way to the Bonn city area.

The above-mentioned unsustainable transport and urbanization plans are of great concern in view of global warming and the increasing loss of ecosystems that could help mitigate global warming. We ask you to develop the Bonn region into an example for city planning of the future, not of the past. New highways instead of sustainable public transport options belong to the past. Construction areas in a nature reserve belong to the past. The future should be characterized by sustainable city planning that protects the remaining nature areas in and around cities and promotes rail transport, ample infrastructure for bicycles, and innovative transport options like cable cars – we are commending the City of Bonn for putting such a cable car on its agenda in this respect.

The 100 million Euro that the new motorway would require in terms of investment would be much better used for the implementation of a broad range of far more sustainable transport options. We urge you, as council members of Bonn and its surrounding areas, to express a clear political commitment to

sustainable transport, sustainable city planning and the protection of the Naturpark Siebengebirge by explicitly rejecting new construction zones and the possible new motorway through this nature reserve.

We wish the City of Bonn and its surrounding region with their beautiful natural areas a sustainable, climate- and biodiversity-friendly future.

Signed:

Christine von Weizsäcker, Ecoropa

Hanna Gunnarsson, Women in Europe for a Common Future (WECF)

Silvia Ribeiro, ETC Group

Simone Lovera, Global Forest Coalition

Julia Christian, FERN

Sreedhar, Environics Trust, India

Willy D'Costa, India Social Action Forum (INSAF)

Souparna Lahiri, All India Forum of Forest Movements (AIFFM)

Andrej Laletin, Friends of the Siberian Forests, Russia

Silo XXIII, El Salvador

Ricardo Navarro, CESTA FOE El Salvador

Mia McDonald , Brighter Green, USA

Samuel Owusu-Takyi, Institute of Tropical Agriculture Kumasi KITA, Ghana

Confort Kabissa, Réseau des Femmes pour le Développement de la région des Savanes (REFED), Togo

Amanda Tas, Protect the Forest, Schweden

Yveline Nicolas, Association Adéquations, Frankreich