

Bruxelles, 05.05.2015

For the attention of : the Board of Directors of **OBI**, the Board of Management, Supervisory Board and the committees of **Hornbach Holding AG**,

We, as concerned citizens and environmental organizations, have watched with extreme concern and amazement the video by Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA), an environmental organisation with offices in Washington, D.C. and London, exposing the leadership of the largest timber products company in Romania, the Austrian-based Holzindustrie Schweighofer. In this video, the officials of the Austrian company, in a very explicit manner, willingly and knowingly **accepted illegally harvested wood** and incentivised additional cutting through a **bonus system**, offered by an undercover EIA investigators posed as foreign investors.

Holzindustrie Schweighofer is the dominant company on the timber market in Romania, with the declared goal to gain the monopoly in the near future, when the new facility in Reci will start functioning, ready to process another million m³ of softwoods, in addition to the 3 million m³/year already processed, in other existing facilities. The company's name is mentioned in several investigations: last year, during a control from the Environmental Ministry, 10 000 m³ of illegal wood were found in their facility in Radauti. Moreover, the company's name is involved in an illegal transaction for the land where this facility has been constructed.

The practices of this company are not only illegal - as undoubtedly proved by the undercover investigation of Environmental Investigation Agency - but also immoral. The CEO of Holzindustrie Schweighofer sent a letter to the Romanian Prime Minister demanding a recent forest law be amended, [threatening](#) consequences to trade relations between Austria and Romania, with punitive measures from the European Commission and with International Center of Settlements Disputes in Washington. The new Forest Law was issued recently by the Romanian Government and approved by the Romanian Parliament, aiming to protect the forests and to prevent a 30% monopoly position of the market. Holzindustrie Schweighofer puts this pressure on the Romanian authorities due to the crucial importance, for them, **to delay the ratification of the new Forest Law**, so that their new facility in the village of Reci/Covasna county can start processing the wood under the former law.

Several protests took place in Romania, against the massive deforestations encouraged by the business model of this company. An estimated 20 000 jobs have been lost so far, due to the impossibility for medium and small businesses to ensure their necessary supplies. [Letters of protests](#) were sent by several Romanian NGO's, regarding the devastating impact of the business model of this company, interested only in making profit no matter the cost to local communities, traditions, the environment and ignoring the concept of "sustainable development".

Being aware of all these facts, further collaboration with Holzindustrie Schweighofer makes your company an accomplice in destroying the local communities in Romania and their traditional way of living. Also for the continued job losses, and massive deforestation (a total of 48ha/day, according to the Romanian Government), including deforestation in National Parks([Retezat Park](#)). This massive deforestation led to road damages, to tragic flooding, in several affected areas, with significant losses , sometimes counted in lives.

You have to be aware that you are contributing, indirectly, to the destruction of the last virgin forests in Europe - **250 000ha out of the 322 000 ha pristine forest existing in Europe(78%)** are in Romania - home to more large mammals than all other European states combined, excluding Russia, according to the EIA and Greenpeace. The animals that roam its forests include brown bear, lynx and wolves.

We do hope that your company doesn't approve and support such practices and will end its collaboration with Holzindustrie Schweighofer, a company ignoring national and European legislation. **Regulation No 2152/2003** of the European Parliament and of the Council , regarding monitoring of forests and environmental interactions in the Community, and the **Communication from the Commission to the European parliament, The European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions,20.09.2013**, regarding the **EU Forest Strategy**, are all relevant for the crucial importance given by the European institutions to our common heritage: *"Sustainable forest management means using forests and forest land in a way, and at a rate, that maintains their biodiversity, productivity, regeneration capacity, vitality and their potential to fulfill, now and in the future, relevant ecological, economic and social functions, at local, national, and global levels, and that does not cause damage to other ecosystems"* .

We look forward to your response

Signatures:

Agora for Life – Belgium

Environmental & Social Change – UK

New Environmentalist – UK

Save Rosia Montana UK - UK

Romanii din Italia - Impotriva exploatarii gazelor de sist - Italy

Diaspora Romaneasca Unita – Italy

Romanii din Italia pentru Rosia Montana- Italy

Salvemos Rosia Montana Madrid – Spain

Initiativa Solidaritate pentru Romania – Sweden

Intreseförening för Rumäner i Sverige – Sweden

Rosia Montana Paris – France

Dacia Libera – France

Romanii din Paris – France

Diaspora Franta solidara cu Romania. (Romani Indignati) - France

Asociația Grupul de Intervenție Civică – Romania

Asociația Neuer Weg, Fagaras – Romania

Asociația T.E.S.L.A - Romania

Militia Spirituala - Romania

Asociația Bafi - Romania

Clubul Eco-Montan Bucovina, Radauti – Romania

Asociația “ Salvam Campia de Vest” – Romania

Asociația Șura – Romania

Efectul Fluture - Romania

Mining Watch Romania

R9TM - Romania

Canada Save Rosia – Canada

Raw (Romanian Activists Worldwide) - Canada and EU

Munchen Rettet Rosia Montana - Germany

Civicum Voluntaris , Constanta - Romania

Grpul de activisti din Viena - Austria

Rettet den Regenwald e.V., Hamburg – Germany

GLOBAL 2000 – Austria

Comité belge de Solidarité avec l'Equateur face à Chevron-Texaco - Belgium