



**INTERNATIONAL MIRE
CONSERVATION GROUP**

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**To the EU Commissioner of Environment
Mr. Stavros Dimas
stavros.dimas@ec.europa.eu**

Greifswald, 07 February 2007.

Re: Rospuda, Poland

Your Excellency,

The International Mire Conservation Group (IMCG, www.imcg.net) is a worldwide organisation of mire (peatland) specialists who have a particular interest in the conservation of peatland habitats. The IMCG willingly places its advice and expertise at the disposal of any government seeking to establish or maintain mire conservation programmes.

We want to express our strong concern about the Rospuda river valley, Poland, in the light of the intention to build a road across this unique wetland complex of European importance.

A fact-finding mission of an international group of IMCG members, led by the undersigned, visited Rospuda in 2006 and confirmed that the Rospuda river valley mire is an exquisite example of a groundwater fed percolation fen. In the temperate zones of Europe, North America, and Asia, such fens formerly were the dominant mire type. As most areas have been drained for agriculture, good mires of this type are currently extremely rare. The group confirmed that Rospuda - with its undisturbed hydrological conditions and its large diversity in often very rare species - belongs to the best mire complexes of this type west of the Ural Mountains and deserves the highest form of protection. Such protection should encompass the integrity of the total mire valley and its catchment area and the highly sophisticated, complex and very vulnerable hydrology that is typical for percolation mires.

The plans to build a road across Rospuda valley have aroused alarm among mire specialists worldwide. Both the precarious conservation position of percolation mires in Europe (and far beyond) and their hydrological vulnerability dictate utmost reluctance in damaging the last high-quality examples such as Rospuda.

We therefore strongly request you to take all possible steps to prevent the by-pass road of Augustów crossing the Rospuda mire being build and to effect constructing the road as far away as possible from the unique pristine mires lying in the southern part of Rospuda valley.

On behalf of IMCG,

Hans Joosten
Secretary.-General