

April 19, 2017

## European Landowners Organization (ELO), Environmental Partnership Association (EPA) and the European Tree of the Year (ETY) organizers call upon a sustainable management of trees and hedges in Poland

ELO, EPA and ETY call upon a sustainable management of trees and hedges in Poland in the light of the changes to Polish environmental law, especially concerning the management of the trees and hedges, the so-called “lex Szyszko<sup>1</sup>”.

Representing the European private land and forestry owners, European foundations and various nature protection organizations, we advocate for a sustainable management of nature, especially trees and hedges, being natural habitats for various birds, pollinators and other protected and common species.



*Oak Józef, European Tree of the Year 2017*

*Photo: Rafał Godek*

Celebrating the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Habitats Directive we believe that those precious resources have to be taken care of, providing habitats, cleansing the air we breathe to helping us fight the more frequent flooding we are experiencing, to combating climate change. Moreover, culturally significant trees are part of the Polish history, as in the case of *Dąb Józef* (Wiśniowa, Poland), the winner of European Tree of the Year 2017. *Dąb Józef*, played a huge part in saving one Jewish family from the oppression of the Nazi's in WWII. Many more trees right across Poland have their own 'story' and have other equally important roles to play in enriching our lives. Advocating since many years for the full respect of all the private owners' rights, we nevertheless do not support abusive cutting of trees or hedges, embracing instead the appropriate management.

In our view, amendments of the laws, as well as any new laws, have prior to entering into force, take into account the point of view of various stakeholders. This requires such tools as public consultations, a custom procedure in democratic countries, where interested parties have enough time to react facilitating a compromise and ensuring the best possible level of any laws shaping the quality of lives of all citizens.

---

<sup>1</sup> Amendment of the Polish environmental law, which came into force the 1st January 2017



Thus, also ensures a legal stability, which is one of the most important requirements for any entrepreneur, including the sector of urban planning. Only that will guarantee a proper integration of the sustainable development into commercial investments.

Facing such challenges as the adaptation to climate change in rural areas or critical air pollution in urban areas we have to act in a responsible way to pass to next generations our planet Earth in the best possible shape.

**Thierry de l'ESCAILLE**

Secretary general – CEO, European Landowners' Organization

**Michal VESELÝ**

Managing Director, Environmental Partnership Association, ETY organiser

**Rob MCBRIDE**

Tree Hunter, Campaigner, Film Maker, ETY promoter and ambassador

**Susana DOMINGUEZ LERENA**

President, Bosques sin Fronteras, ETY promoter and ambassador

**Georges FETERMAN**

President, A.R.B.R.E.S., author, ETY promoter et ambassador

**- Joint Press Release –**

**Media contacts:** Emmanuelle Mikosz, ELO [emmanuelle.mikosz@elo.org](mailto:emmanuelle.mikosz@elo.org)  
Dominika Zareba, EPA [zareba.dominika@gmail.com](mailto:zareba.dominika@gmail.com)

---

**ELO** is committed to promoting a sustainable and prosperous countryside and to increasing awareness relating to environmental and agricultural issues. Engaging various stakeholders, ELO develops policy recommendations and programmes of action. ELO organises interdisciplinary meetings gathering together key actors from the rural sector and policy makers at the local, regional, national and European level.

[www.elo.org](http://www.elo.org)

**EPA** is a leading Central European foundations network and member of the European Foundation Centre environmental group. EPA is focused to changing of people's mind-sets to protect and improve the environment. EPA has 25 years' experience in stakeholder involvement and public participation targeting different groups of citizens and build capacity in local communities. EPA is organiser of the pan-European ETY contest.

[www.environmentalpartnership.org](http://www.environmentalpartnership.org)

**ETY** purpose is to highlight the significance of old trees in the natural and cultural heritage that deserves our care and protection. ETY focuses on the tree's story and its connection to people. ETY celebrates and promotes trees that have become a part of the wider community.

[www.treeoftheyear.org](http://www.treeoftheyear.org)