

+ + + Press release of ROBIN WOOD, April 9th 2025 + + +

**\* Arneo forest in Italy: Save from Porsche's expansion plans!**

**\* ROBIN WOOD and Custodi del Bosco d'Arneo hand over a petition to the EU Commission in Brussels and call for nature protection to be strengthened**

Environmental activists from ROBIN WOOD (Germany) and Custodi del Bosco d'Arneo (Italy) are celebrating the protection of the Arneo forest in Apulia in southern Italy today – in front of the EU Commission in Brussels, with banners and big cubes. At the same time, they are calling on the EU Commission not to reduce environmental and social standards in the EU, but to strengthen them and consistently enforce them, even in the face of the fierce customs dispute with the USA.

Porsches original plans involved clearance of the valuable holm oak forest in the middle of a protected 'Natura 2000' area in order to expand the car test track there. However, the company recently abandoned this plan - due in part to massive protests by environmentalists in Apulia and at Porsche's headquarters in Stuttgart. Today, environmentalists from ROBIN WOOD and the Custodi del Bosco d'Arneo hand over more than 50,000 protest signatures to the EU Commission. This marks the successful conclusion of their campaign "[Protect the oak trees - stop Porsche](#)".

"Political protest works," says Annika Fuchs, mobility expert at ROBIN WOOD. "Porsche has abandoned its plan to cut down the ancient Bosco d'Arneo holm oak forest. This is an important success for forests, the climate and civil society, which we achieved together with our Italian partners, the Custodi del Bosco d'Arneo. Today we are handing over our protest signatures to the EU Commission, to emphasize that the EU must consistently enforce nature conservation law, even if that opposes strong economic interests such as those of a car company."

Emanuele Larini, President of the Custodi del Bosco d'Arneo, added: "We are pleased with Porsche's decision to reconsider its destructive plan. At the same time, we call for the project agreement between the Puglia region and Porsche to be formally annulled so that we can celebrate properly. Our presence in Brussels today is a reminder that over 50,000 Italian and German citizens have called for the long-term protection of the forest. We are proud of the successful European partnership with ROBIN WOOD and everyone else who supported us. It proves how far the concerns about protecting Europe's natural heritage from the desires of private companies like Porsche and many others reach. These concerns are growing louder and our presence in Brussels today – just days after the EU Parliament voted to delay the implementation of new EU legislation on due diligence and sustainability reporting – is no coincidence."

On March 27, 2025, Antonio Gratis, CEO of the Nardò Technical Center (NTC), a subsidiary of Porsche Engineering, announced that the company was dropping the plans to expand the NTC test site in Apulia in southern Italy. As a result, around 200 hectares of natural space will be preserved. The company cited the economic situation in the automotive industry as an important reason for its decision.

The expansion of the racing test track had met with resistance from the outset because Porsche wanted to put its own profit interests above nature conservation and the interests of the general public. ROBIN WOOD called on the car company to change its course with

- protest actions in Stuttgart and Wolfsburg on the occasions of the annual general meetings of Porsche and its parent company VW,
- a symbolic renaming of Porscheplatz in Stuttgart,
- a protest tree planting, international demonstration and press conference in Apulia.

"Porsche has not committed to long-term forest protection in personal discussions with us – even after the expansion plans were halted," says Eberhard Linckh from ROBIN WOOD. "That's why we travelled to Brussels, where we met members of the EU Parliament and networked with international environmental organizations. Our goal remains to secure valuable natural areas such as the Bosco d'Arneo for the future in a binding and permanent manner!"

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