

+ + + Joint press release by ROBIN WOOD (Germany), Custodi del Bosco D'Arneo (Italy),
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*** Porsche announces withdrawal of plans to develop NTC**
*** A Victory for Forests, the Climate and Civil Society**

The organizations ROBIN WOOD (Germany) and Custodi del Bosco D'Arneo (Italy) see Porsche's decision not to expand the test track in Apulia as an important success for forests, the climate and civil society.

On March 27, 2025, Antonio Gratis, CEO of Nardò Technical Center, a subsidiary of Porsche Engineering, announced the cancellation of plans to expand the NTC testing facility. This decision means that 200 hectares of forest, part of the 500-hectare Bosco D'Arneo, a valuable ecosystem included in a protected site within the Natura 2000 network, will not be destroyed.

The company cited the economic situation in the automotive industry as a key factor influencing their decision. While they informed organizations that had mobilized to defend the forest – including Custodi del Bosco D'Arneo and ROBIN WOOD – about the project's cancellation, and acknowledged its environmental impact, they did not openly commit to defend the forest in the long term, and did not share any formal document of their receding from it.

“We are happy with the result. Protecting this forest was our primary goal, and this is a significant and symbolic victory. Citizens have spoken out loudly in favor of preserving the territory. We live in a region that ranks third in Italy for land consumption and faces ongoing threats from decades of illegal construction and desertification. The devastation of millions of olive trees, along with its mismanagement, has only worsened the situation. Political leaders have failed to provide viable alternatives that balance economic interests with environmental protection. They still consider this project an important development opportunity, despite all the critical issues highlighted, but in two years, they have been unable to present real solutions. Now, they seek to shift the blame for their own shortcomings,” says Emanuele Larini, president of the Custodi del Bosco D'Arneo Committee.

Jana Ballenthien, forest campaigner at ROBIN WOOD, adds: “During our discussions with Porsche, the company made no commitment to the long-term protection of the forest, despite our insistence. That is why we will continue to urge the EU Commission to prevent protected areas under Natura 2000 from being subject to corporate interests. There is no guarantee that Porsche will not propose new expansion plans in the future. We will remain vigilant, strengthen our alliances, and continue to resist any destructive projects.”

Annika Fuchs, mobility campaigner at ROBIN WOOD, emphasizes the economic motivations behind the decision: “It is clear that the project was primarily terminated due to the crisis in the automotive industry. Porsche is currently facing a 30 percent drop in profits, and under such conditions, the company can no longer afford new projects. This highlights the urgent need for a socio-ecological transformation of the automotive sector – one that ensures environmental protection, combats climate change, and provides sustainable job prospects.”

On April 8th and 9th, a delegation from Custodi del Bosco D'Arneo, ROBIN WOOD and Wald statt Asphalt will travel to Brussels to present the results of their petition to the EU Commission. There, they will celebrate their success with a public action to demand long-term protection for the forest. Their message is clear: the EU Commission must take decisive action to safeguard these natural areas for the future.

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More information about the ROBIN WOOD-campaign: <https://www.robinwood.de/eichenschuetzen-porsche-stoppen>