

EU hauls Poland to top court over ancient forest logging

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A worker cuts down a spruce tree in the Bialowieza forest

The EU on Thursday took Poland to the bloc's top court over logging in the ancient Bialowieza forest, a UNESCO World Heritage site covering some of Europe's last primeval woodland.

The European Commission, the EU's executive arm, "refers Poland to the Court of Justice of the EU and requests interim measures to stop

logging operations in one of Europe's last remaining primeval forests," the statement said.

Bialowieza, straddling Poland's eastern border with Belarus, includes one of the largest surviving parts of the [ancient forest](#) that covered the European plain 10,000 years ago.

It also boasts unique plant and animal life, including the continent's largest mammal, the European bison.

The Polish government has said it authorised the logging, which began in May last year, to contain damage caused by a spruce bark beetle infestation and to fight the risk of [forest fires](#).

But scientists, ecologists and the European Union have protested and activists allege the logging is a cover for commercial cutting of protected old-growth forests.

Europe's executive branch gave Polish authorities one month rather than the usual two to address its concerns about the forest, citing the "urgency of the situation".

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