



**POLISH COPERNICUS SOCIETY OF NATURALISTS**  
**SPELEOLOGICAL SECTION**

ul. Gronostajowa 9,  
30-387 Kraków, Poland

Kraków, Poland, 2.10.2024

As a President of the Speleological Section of the Polish Copernicus Society of Naturalists, on behalf of its members, people that conduct explorations and scientific studies in caves and karst, I would like to express our support to the statement of the German Speleological Federation (GSF) against the geological research and potential mining planned in the area of sulphate karst occurrence in the southern part of Hartz within the Saxony-Anhalt federal state. Having also in Poland gypsum karst region, we are fully aware that the anthropogenic landscape and ground surface modifications, as well as hydrological and environmental changes in such region cause irreversible destruction, especially in the areas, which have been completely untouched by human industrial activity. Our support for the Resolution of the GSF concerning the protection of the karst landscape in the southern Hartz is even stronger that the gypsum karst in the Hartz is the only richly forested sulphate karst in the world and thus it is characterised by specific ecosystems: plant and animal communities, as well as unique karst landforms continuously developing in such natural conditions. Therefore, this area should be rather a candidate for the World Heritage List, than lost due to industrial devastation.

We cannot also understand and imagine that such industrial activity as mining (and referred to it geological surveys and logistic measures) are planned and can be carried out in the Natura 2000 areas, within the boundaries of nature reserve and landscape park. Such industrial activities seem to be totally across with the objectives and environmental strategy of the European Union countries. They are also totally inconsistent with recently formulated and published “Guidelines of Caves and Karst Protection” (Gillieson et al. 2022). In the consequence, we – as society accurately learning and understanding a gypsum karst – strongly protest against the plans of mining activity in the sulphate karst area of southern Hartz.

On behalf of members and officers of the Speleological Section,  
Polish Copernicus Society of Naturalists

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jan Urban'.

Jan Urban

President of the Speleological Section  
Polish Copernicus Society of Naturalists,  
Kraków, Poland