



COLIN PLANT ASSOCIATES (UK) CONSULTANT ENTOMOLOGISTS

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Prof. Dr Stoyan Beshkov
Head of Invertebrates
National Museum of Natural History
Tsar Osvoboditel Boulevard 1
1000 SOFIA
Bulgaria

7th October 2016

Dear Dr Beshkov,

Proposed Motorway through the Kresna Gorge in Bulgaria

As you are aware, I am personally familiar with the Kresna Gorge and I have studied aspects of the Lepidoptera fauna there on many occasions from my first visit in 2002 to my last in 2015. In my opinion, the construction of a motorway through the Kresna Gorge in south-west Bulgaria would, without any doubt whatsoever, be an ecological disaster of international significance and should be resisted by all legal means available.

The gorge is a “European Hotspot” for invertebrates and it supports one of the largest and most diverse Lepidopteran faunas (butterflies and moths) to be found anywhere in the entire of Europe. That assemblage of species includes endemic forms (species not known from anywhere else in the entire world). The ecological requirements of a great many species resident in the gorge are such that both the physical destruction of habitat caused by building the motorway and the subsequent break in habitat continuity in this mountainous region will inevitably cause their complete loss. I have also seen published evidence that other invertebrate groups, as well as vertebrates, are of equal importance here.

I am not acquainted with any of the economic arguments for the new north-south road connection in south-west Bulgaria and beyond into Greece; one must assume that they are valid. However, it is abundantly clear that there is a viable alternative route for the road which is being ignored. The extremely high negative impact on the ecology of the entire Balkan Peninsula that will ensue as a consequence of motorway construction in the Kresna Gorge is contrary to both the spirit and the letter of the Convention on Biological Diversity to which Bulgaria is a signatory. It would, at the very least, bring shame upon the otherwise progressive and enlightened Bulgarian Government and may even, in my opinion, potentially contravene European Law.

Colin Plant Associates have many decades of experience as the leading UK organisation using invertebrates as a tool to undertake Environmental Impacts Assessment of major construction projects such as roads, railways and new towns. We are pleased to offer our full support to this enormously important campaign and you may feel free to use this letter in any way that you consider useful, without any fee.

Yours sincerely,

Colin W. Plant
Managing Partner