

PRESS RELEASE

## Embargo until March 22nd, 7:00 pm CET

# The Oak Dunin has won the European Tree of the Year 2021! The results announcement In Brussels again after 3 years break...

**(Brussels 21<sup>st</sup> of March) The prestigious title of the European Tree of the Year is heading for Poland! With a historical record of 179.317 votes, the Guardian of the Białowieża Primeval Forest, oak called Dunin, left the other rivals, except one far behind. The close follower of Oak Dunin was another example of the specie, the Spanish Oak of Conxo's Banquet Forest with 168.234 votes, so the silver medal goes to Spain. The triumvirate of oaks closes on the third place the Portuguese candidate, The Big Cork Oak with 70.563 received votes.**

**A total of 769,212 votes** were cast during the contest this year. It is again much more than the last year and we have to thank all the national organizers of the contest for their amazing campaigns attracting such an enormous attention! Unfortunately, due to the Russian invasion to Ukraine we have decided to exclude the candidate of Russian federation from the contest and not to count the votes sent to their tree. It was very hard decision as we were happy to have our Russian organizers of their Tree of the year on board, but we have decided to follow the international effort to isolate Russia even from sport and cultural events.

The final order of all tree participants as well as the video of the announcement can be found at [www.treeoftheyear.org](http://www.treeoftheyear.org).

*"We are happy to announce that our Award Ceremony can again take place in Brussels and we can meet all together, the organizers of national contests, the nominating communities as well as our tree-friends and supporters. The event will be streamed on our social media, but nothing can replace the personal meetings. We promise we will work hard to make our cities greener again and keep our landscapes healthy and resilient to climate changes. With help of local communities it is feasible!"* comments Josef Jary from the Environmental Partnership Association, the contest organiser.

The Guardian of the Białowieża Primeval Forest, 400 years old Common oak called Dunin is growing at the edge of the Białowieża Primeval Forest, one of the most known lowland forests, not only in Poland but also in Europe. It has been particularly respected and admired by local people as well as tourists visiting this area of Poland, called the European Region of Wisent. It is an inspiration for many artists. It amazes in every season – during full vegetation but also when it is showing its leafless, mysteriously curved branches. The tree become a symbol of resistance for Polish people to aggression of all types – the threat of building a concrete wall throughout the Białowieża Primeval Forest attract already a great attention and in combination with approaching war conflict in Ukraine, the whole message of "protection role of the tree" got another context. The tree really become a symbol!

The ETY contest was organised by the Environmental Partnership Association in collaboration with the European Landowners' Organisation and under the auspices of MEP Ludek Niedermayer and MEP Michal Wiezik.

„The essence of this contest is not only to highlight the importance of the role of trees in our ecosystem, but to find a tree with a story. This year, the winner could not be more on the mark - The Guardian of the Białowieża Primeval Forest, one of the best-preserved forest ecosystems and the last lowland deciduous and mixed old-growth forest in Europe. I also support the decision to follow the international effort to isolate Russia and exclude them from this competition.” concluded **MEP Michal Wiezik**, one of the ETY patrons.

Before the grand finale, the Partnership Foundation organized the Planting4Future working conference, which addressed the European Commission's plan to plant 3 billion additional trees by 2030.

Representatives of the European Commission, European Parliament, Ministries, the corporate sector and NGOs from across Europe, shared their experiences and made recommendations: How to motivate the main tree planting stakeholders to do more and how involve the whole society as much as possible in this ambitious plan. The conference was kindly supported by Škoda Auto. The recording of the conference can be found on the website [treeoftheyear.org](https://treeoftheyear.org)

## European Tree of the Year 2020: results

Standing	Name	Country	Votes
1	Oak Dunin	Poland	179,317
2	Oak of Conxo's Banquet Forest	Spain	168,284
3	The Big Cork Oak	Portugal	70,563
4	Chestnut of the hundred horses	Italy	46,275
5	Umbrella from High Tatras	Slovakia	37,872
6	Kippford Leaning Tree	United Kingdom	30,761
7	The Singing Lime	Czech Republic	28,649
8	The Multisecular Sweet Chestnut of Audran Square	France	28,119
9	Aġe Grand Oak	Latvia	27,098
10	The weeping sophoras of the Csokonai Theatre in Debrecen	Hungary	26,347
11	The Giant Sequoia from Slatina	Republic of Croatia	26,225
12	The Giant Sequoia of the Collège Notre Dame de Bonlieu	Belgium	25,724
13	The King's Pine	Estonia	25,346
14	Grandpa Kolyo's tree	Bulgaria	24,431
15	I am Tilia	Netherlands	24,201
Out of ranking	Turgenev Oak	Russia	Not counted
<b>Total</b>			<b>769,212</b>

### Media Contacts:

Josef Jary, Contest coordinator [josef.jary@nap.cz](mailto:josef.jary@nap.cz) — (+32) 493 84 35 01

Press Kit: <https://www.treeoftheyear.org/Media>

The **Environmental Partnership Association (EPA)** is a leading environmental organization established for almost 30 years in Central and Eastern Europe. With a team of 80 employees, the EPA operates in 6 countries via its 6-member foundations in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia. The EPA boasts 30-years of experience in project coordination and carrying out activities oriented to changing people's mind-sets in order to protect and improve the environment.

[www.environmentalpartnership.org](http://www.environmentalpartnership.org)

The **European Landowners' Organization (ELO)**, created in 1972, is a unique federation of national associations from the 28 EU Member States and beyond, which represents the interests of landowners, land managers and rural entrepreneurs at the European political level. Independent and non-profit making, the ELO is the only organization able to stand for all rural entrepreneurs. The ELO promotes a prosperous countryside through private property dynamism. Its Secretariat is based in Brussels

[www.europeanlandowners.org](http://www.europeanlandowners.org)

The **European Tree of the Year** is a contest that highlights the significance of trees in the natural and cultural heritage of Europe and the importance of the ecosystem services trees provide. The contest is not looking for the most beautiful tree, but for a tree with a story, a tree rooted in the lives and work of the people and the community that surrounds it.

[www.treeoftheyear.org](http://www.treeoftheyear.org)

#### NATIONAL CONTEST ORGANISERS

