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**greenbelt**

# 10<sup>th</sup> Pan-European Green Belt Conference

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World Heritage Site

**Wartburg, Eisenach**  
Germany



# 1st session: Update from the four regions of the European Green Belt

## Green Belt Fennoscandia

**Aimo Saano**, Metsähallitus, Parks and Wildlife Finland

**Pavel Petrov**, Regional Coordinator, Karelian Research Centre of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Russia



Figure 1: Representatives of the Green Belt Fennoscandia, © J.Buldmann/BUND

- Since the 9th Pan-European Green Belt Conference in Koli 2016 the focus for the Green Belt of Fennoscandia (GBF) was laid on capacity building and engagement of regional and local authorities.
- The GBF has a visible role in tackling the challenges of climate change. The GBF raises awareness about the threats of climate change to ecosystems and their services. For example the Finnish Environmental Administration lists the role of the GBF in its plan for adaptation to climate change, in improving ecological connectivity as a north-south connection.
- EU-Russia Cross Border Cooperation Programmes have an important role in enhancing ecological, economic, social, cultural and environmental cooperation between Finland, Russia and Norway. The nature conservation component of the programmes should though be larger than today.
- The trilateral cooperation is based on the Memorandum of Understanding, signed in 2010. The Memorandum should be renewed for another 10 years period. This would help to further improve the cooperation in the fields of nature conservation, preservation of biodiversity as well as cultural and historical heritage.

## Baltic Green Belt

**Jörg Schmiedel**, Regional Coordinator, BUND Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Germany

**Ekaterina Uspenskaya**, Friends of the Baltic, Russia

**Janis Matulis**, Latvian Green Movement

- Since 2016 there were many developments, especially connected with the process of setting up projects that involve external partners in the work on the Green Belt.
- At the Baltic Green Belt special problems regarding nature conservation appear due to the specific characteristics of coastal habitats. It is not possible to acquire property here and conservation measures depend on the good-will of the authorities. It costs a lot of effort to achieve sustainability in nature conservation work.
- Russian legislation is forcing NGOs to find new ways for cooperation. Some partner-NGOs were lost due to inaccurate allegations. The Network established around the European Green Belt is more important than ever, because it can support organisations in flexible ways.
- There are a high number of international and national projects and cooperations. For the future, however, the activities of social and green NGOs must be enhanced. The Baltic Sea is an industrial region, and active and creative NGOs are vital for the development of the Green Belt.



Figure 2: Representatives of the Baltic Green Belt, © J.Buldmann/BUND

## Central European Green Belt

**Dr. Liana Geidezis**, Regional Coordinator, BUND Department Green Belt, Germany

**Giuseppe Oriolo**, Rete Italiana EGB / Friends of the Italian Green Belt, Italy

**Stanislava Dešnik**, Nature Park Goričko, Slovenia



Figure 3: Representatives of the Central European Green Belt, © J.Buldmann/BUND

- Due to two new EU-Projects (Interreg "DaRe to Connect" and LIFE "Life for Mires") new GOs and NGOs are integrated in the stakeholder and partner network for the European Green Belt.
- New protected areas have been established at the European Green Belt: The Styrian Mur in Austria on the border with Slovenia on 19 June 2019 was added as the last constituent to the future five-country UNESCO Biosphere Park Mur-Drava-Danube, covering also areas in Slovenia, Hungary, Croatia and Serbia.
- Some of the many public relations activities were: Leopoldschlag in Austria was awarded as a model municipality. Several activities during the GB-Days took place. Several press trips caused a great response in the media. An animated movie with the German Green Belt mascot Belty was produced and will have its premiere at this conference.
- The Rete Italiana EGB was founded in 2016 to take care of all EGB activities in Friuli Venezia Giulia. Good cooperations with the regional coordinator and the national focal point are already established. Exhibitions, local events, and excursions to the ecological and cultural heritage of the border area took place to raise awareness of the EGB among the local population. Exercise material for schools is also planned. The role of the EGB is now officially recognized in the Landscape Protection Plan of Friuli Venezia Giulia as part of the Ecological Network and main international corridor.
- Main obstacles for NGOs to initiate and implement large trans-national projects:
  - (1) The financial and human resources required for the preparation often exceed the capacities of an NGO.
  - (2) Especially for Interreg projects, the costs must be pre-financed for one year or longer. For smaller NGOs this is nearly impossible.
  - (3) For LIFE projects the own financial contribution necessary can be up to 40%. This is very high for an NGO. In Bavaria for example, regional funds help to overcome these obstacles. This is usually not the case in other regions or countries and should be reconsidered.

## Balkan Green Belt

**Anne Katrin Heinrichs**, Regional Coordinator, EuroNatur, Germany

**Despina Kitanova**, Macedonian Ecological Society, North Macedonia

**Adhurim Kasapi**, Environmentally Responsible Action (ERA) group, Kosovo



Figure 4: Representatives of the Balkan Green Belt, © J.Buldmann/BUND

- Several projects on local and regional level were implemented.
- Measures in communication and awareness raising were taken: Events in almost all countries were carried out during the EGB days. In two photo competitions in 2016 and 2017 beautiful pictures could be collected, which may be used for future communication.
- One of the most important events in the framework of the European Green Belt Days was a hike with participants from Kosovo, Albania and Montenegro to the border triangle. Such a hike was unimaginable 20 years ago and means a lot today.
- The Balkan Regional Conference was held in Strumica (North-Macedonia) in June 2018 with 9 participating countries. It enabled an exchange about nature, nature conservation, culture and cultural heritage. By learning from each other, work can be improved and joint activities can be planned.
- The award for the Municipality of Peja (Kosovo) as a “Model Municipality at the EGB” has a great importance: From all over Kosovo, people visit Peja to experience unspoiled nature. The municipality took many steps towards environmental protection and sustainable development. For example, for many years the mayor of Peja has unwaveringly been refusing to approve the construction of five hydropower plants in the Rugova Canyon right in Bjeshkët e Nemuna National Park. Furthermore, cooperation between Peja and the city of Plav (Montenegro) was established.
- The very committed and enthusiastic partner-network of the Balkan Green Belt is a main factor for successful cooperation. In several countries the EGB is supported by GOs. A strategic framework could give the work direction and help to ensure future funding. Furthermore, it is important to expand the partner network to sectors outside nature conservation.