



Joint Declaration of Intent on the European Green Belt

For over four decades Europe was separated by an inhuman barrier – the Iron Curtain – which resulted from the political division of Europe following World War II. Because of the restricted access to and seclusion of this border area, a unique diversity of fauna and flora became established.

Its interconnection with adjoining valuable nature conservation areas makes the European Green Belt a key European network of linked biotopes. What was once a dividing line became a unifying element of outstanding importance for Europe's natural heritage. It is also a living memorial to the former division of Europe.

The participants of this Joint Declaration of Intent are aware that the European Green Belt encompasses natural and cultural landscapes meriting protection and forms a core element of an ecological network connecting the natural spaces of Europe.

They recognise that the European Green Belt plays a key role in the conservation of biological diversity and is an outstanding component of European natural and cultural heritage.

They acknowledge a responsibility to preserve the European Green Belt for future generations as a living memorial to the former division of Europe.

They are aware that systems of interconnected biotopes play a significant role in the conservation of biodiversity, in particular in light of the environmental impacts of climate change.

The participants are dedicated to meeting the goals of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Convention), of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (Bonn Convention) and of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention) and to achieving the 2020 biodiversity targets and contributing to the conservation of ecosystems and ecosystem services and to improving them through the creation of green infrastructures.

They seek to develop sustainably the regions of the European Green Belt, also with the aim of giving positive momentum to the regional economies.

The participants acknowledge the "Motion on the European Green Belt" of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) (Barcelona, 2008) as well as the Agreement of 17 February 2010 between the Ministry of the Environment of the Republic of Finland, the Ministry of the Environment of the Kingdom of Norway and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation concerning cooperation along the Fennoscandian Green Belt as an example of the commitment to the conservation and development of the European Green Belt.

They recognise the importance of a Europe-wide efficiently coordinated process for the conservation, restoration and sustainable development of the European Green Belt.



The participants share a common understanding on the importance of the transboundary cooperation for the conservation, restoration and sustainable development of the European Green Belt and affirm their intention to work together as outlined in this Joint Declaration of Intent:

- 1) Preserving and restoring the European Green Belt as a functional biotope network lies in the interest of all participants. The European Green Belt is a significant part of Europe's green infrastructure and is composed of interconnected valuable natural and cultural landscapes. Flora and fauna populations and natural processes along the Green Belt should be conserved and at the same time the economic, social and cultural needs of the local people should be met.
- 2) The European Green Belt should also be preserved as a landscape memorial along the former Iron Curtain.
- 3) The European Green Belt Initiative is a suitable umbrella for all activities which promote the conservation, restoration and sustainable development of the European Green Belt; the Initiative should be underpinned by close transboundary cooperation involving public and private institutions.
- 4) All participants should appoint and/or confirm one country specific National Focal Point for the European Green Belt Initiative and should support the activities of the National Focal Points for the European Green Belt.
- 5) The participants should support the Coordination Group of the European Green Belt Initiative, composed of the selected National Focal Points, NGO partners, the Regional Coordinators and the IUCN, in the performance of its tasks.
- 6) The participants should use the European Green Belt as a basis for transboundary cooperation at regional and local level and should support regional and local administrations, protected area administrations, NGOs, scientific institutions, land users and other players and stakeholders in their commitment to the European Green Belt.
- 7) All necessary steps should be taken to ensure that existing and planned protected areas along the European Green Belt are suitably equipped and supported in terms of resources and patterns of legitimation by the competent authorities, and to facilitate transboundary cooperation.
- 8) This Joint Declaration of Intent is not intended to grant any rights or to entail obligations under international law for the participants.



- 9) The cooperation under this Joint Declaration of Intent starts upon its signature. The cooperation under this Joint Declaration of Intent may be terminated by notifying the Coordination Group in writing six month prior to the intended termination date. The original of this Joint Declaration of Intent should be kept with the National Focal Point of Germany.

Berlin, 15 May 2013

For the Ministry of Environment,
Forests and Water Administration
Republic of Albania

For the Federal Ministry of Agriculture,
Forestry, Environment and Water Management
Federal Republic of Austria

For the Ministry of Environment and
Water
Republic of Bulgaria

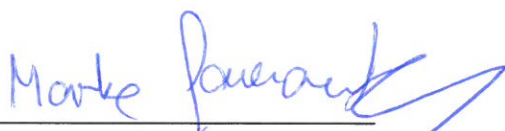
For the Ministry of Environmental and
Nature Protection
Republic of Croatia



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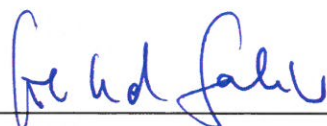
For the Ministry of Environment
Czech Republic



For the Ministry of Environment
Republic of Estonia



For the Ministry of Environment
Republic of Finland



For the Ministry of Environment,
Nature Conservation and Nuclear
Safety
Federal Republic of Germany

For the Ministry of Environment,
Energy and Climate Change
Hellenic Republic



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Erikae' ki. heron Pol' Gy

For the Ministry of Rural Development
Republic of Hungary

Caputo

For the Ministry of Environment,
Land and Sea
Republic of Italy

M. J.

For the Ministry for Environment
And Spatial Planning
Republic of Kosovo

Latvian Signature

For the Ministry for Environmental
Protection and Regional Development
Republic of Latvia

For the Ministry of Environment
Republic of Lithuania



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For the Ministry of Environment and
Physical Planning
of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

For the Ministry of Sustainable
Development and Tourism
Montenegro

For the Ministry of the Environment
Kingdom of Norway

For the Ministry of Environment
Republic of Poland


For the Ministry of Environment
Romania




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For the Ministry of Natural Resources
and Environment
Russian Federation

For the Ministry of Energy, Development
And Environmental Protection
Republic of Serbia



For the Ministry of Environment
Slovak Republic



For the Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment
Republic of Slovenia

For the Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs
Republic of Turkey