

# Paths of Europe – conservation and development – on selected examples

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# European Green Belt Initiative



\*in accordance with UNSCR 1244 and opinion of ICJ.

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# History

During the "Pan-European Picnic" on 19<sup>th</sup> August 1989, a crucial hole was cut into the Iron Curtain between Hungary and Austria. 15 years later, in September 2004, the International Union for Conservation of Nature IUCN and the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation invited people to this historic site for an international conference in the cross-border Fertő-Hanság/Lake Neusiedl National Park. Over 70 participants from 17 countries gathered there.

The objective of the conference was to bring the idea of the "Green Belt Europe" closer to those bordering countries and to international experts.







In three main regions, regional coordinators initiate and accompany cross-border activities and projects together with local partners:

- The Green Belt Fennoscandia (Norway, Finland, Russia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania) is supervised by the Association of Zapovedniks and National Parks of Northwest Russia.
- The BUND-Project Office Green Belt has taken over coordination for the Green Belt Central Europe (Poland, Germany, Czech Republic, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Croatia, Italy).
- The Green Belt South Eastern Europe (Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, Albania, FYR Macedonia, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey) is supported by Euronatur.

# Green Belt Europe - nature

Kalevala National Park (Finland/Russia)



# Green Belt Europe - nature

The Morava-Thaya floodplains (Austria, Czech Republic, Slovakia)





# Drau and Mur rivers habitats (Austria, Slovenia, Hungary and Croatia)



# Bojana-Buna region (Montenegro and Albania)



# Lake Ohrid and lakes Prespa

(Greece, Albania and Macedonia)

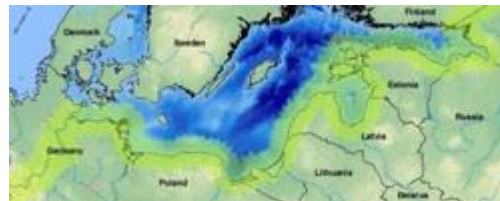


# Project "Baltic Green Belt"

Extensive military areas served as reserves for millions of migrating birds and many marine animals such as grey and ringed seals. Since the early 1990s, however, the coastline has experienced heavy pressure for development and exploitation. Safeguarding the valuable natural and historical assets of this attractive and heavily sought-after landscape poses a major challenge for the Green Belt.



baltic  
greenbelt



# The Green Belt - backbone of diversity

The Green Belt should not be seen as a continuous strip of protected area, but rather as a bridging element that links grassland and wetlands, dry grasslands and mature woodlands, thus forming a string of important habitats. Seen on a large scale, the Green Belt ecological network consists of core areas, sustainable use areas, and corridors that can be called landscape corridors, stepping stone corridors, linear corridors or buffer zones.



# "Pearls" along the Green Belt

The outstanding importance of the pan-European ecological network is clear. The Green Belt's 12,500 kilometers feature an accumulation of large nature reserves:

- **40 national parks** are situated directly along the Green Belt. Of these, 16 are trans-boundary national parks.

- **3.272 nature protected areas** can be found within a 25-kilometre buffer zone on either side of the Green Belt

# The European Green Belt: An EU-Level Green Infrastructure Project

## What is "Green Infrastructure"?

Europe is a relatively densely populated continent. Much of the land is intensively used, meaning that the European landscape has faced more habitat loss and fragmentation than in other regions in the world. The idea of "green infrastructure" (GI) is to reconnect existing nature areas and improve the overall ecological quality of the broader countryside and urban areas while continuing to deliver valuable services to society (fresh water, clean air, healthy soil etc.).

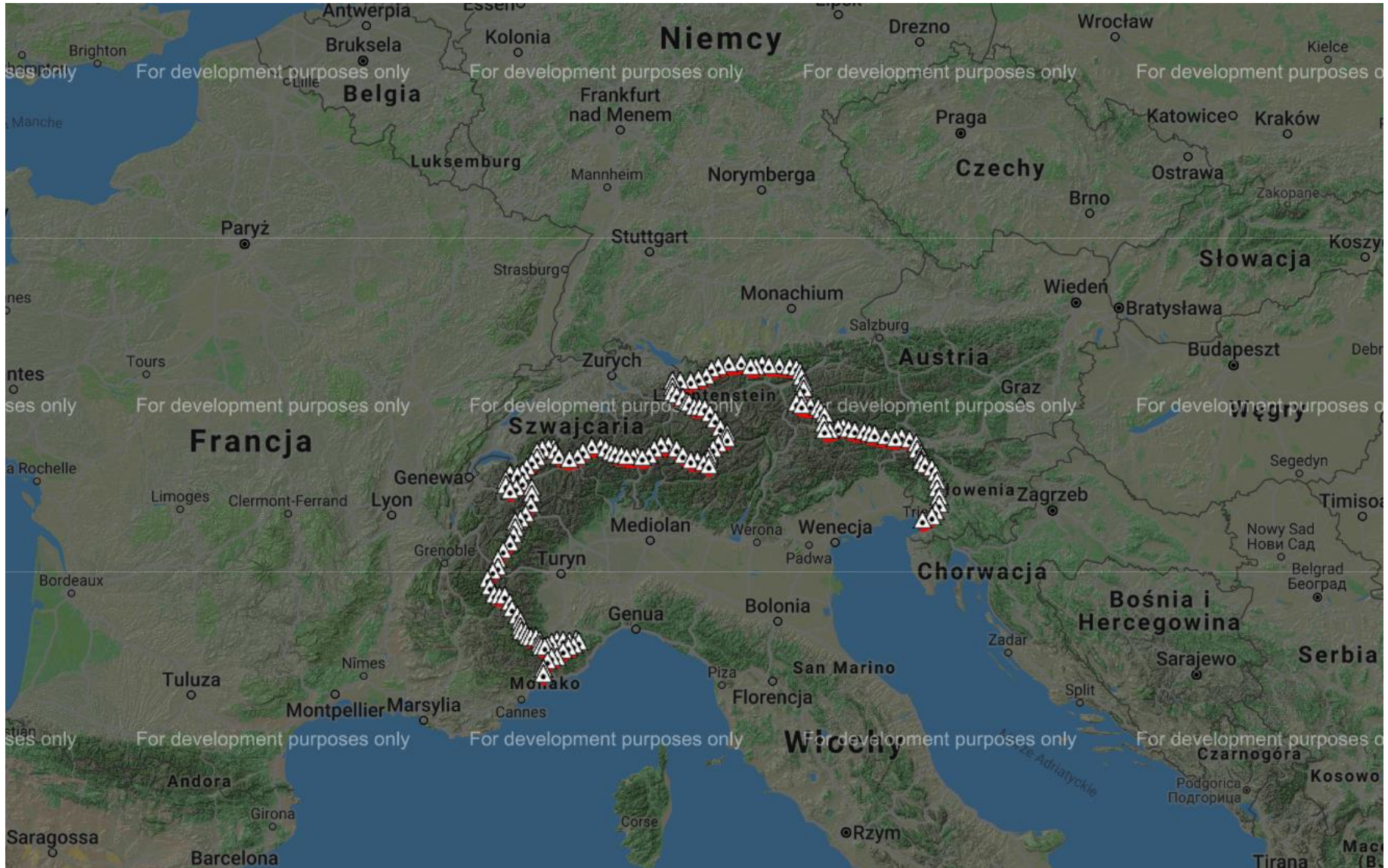


# Demilitarised Zone (North and South Korea)





# The Via Alpina



# The Via Alpina



**Along 5 international trails, through 8 countries there are 342 stages and over 5000 km between 0 to 3000 m. above sea level that are open for visitors to discover the natural and cultural heritage of the Alps on foot.**

# Hiking season



# The Via Alpina - conditions



# The huts/villages - accomodation



# Accomodation – camping/bivac



# Wild animals



# Transboundary conservation

Initiatives of establishing of transboundary units:

- at the national level (e.g. international agreement signed by the Heads of State)
- at the local level (cooperation of the staff or directors)



# Natural Park Alpi Marittime (Italy) and Mercantour National Park (France)



Źródło: <http://en.marittimemercantour.eu>

## Initiatives of establishing of transboundary units:

- at the national level (e.g. international agreement signed by the Heads of State)
- at the local level (cooperation of the staff or directors)
- activity of non-governmental organizations

# Establishment of transboundary protected areas

## - advantages:

- promotion of international cooperation;
- facilitate conservation in areas of large ecosystems
- facilitate the scientific research;
- economic benefits for the local and national economies;
- increase the efficiency of control or monitor fires, poaching, spread of pollution, pathogens and invasive species.

(Hamilton et al., 1996)

- # Management of transboundary protected areas
- difficulties:
    - communication;
    - legislative (different regulations);
    - cultural and linguistic;
    - differences in resources/infrastructure/equipment/staff
    - difficulty in making quick decisions;
    - ongoing armed conflicts, hostility, political tensions

# Tourism and conservation: solutions

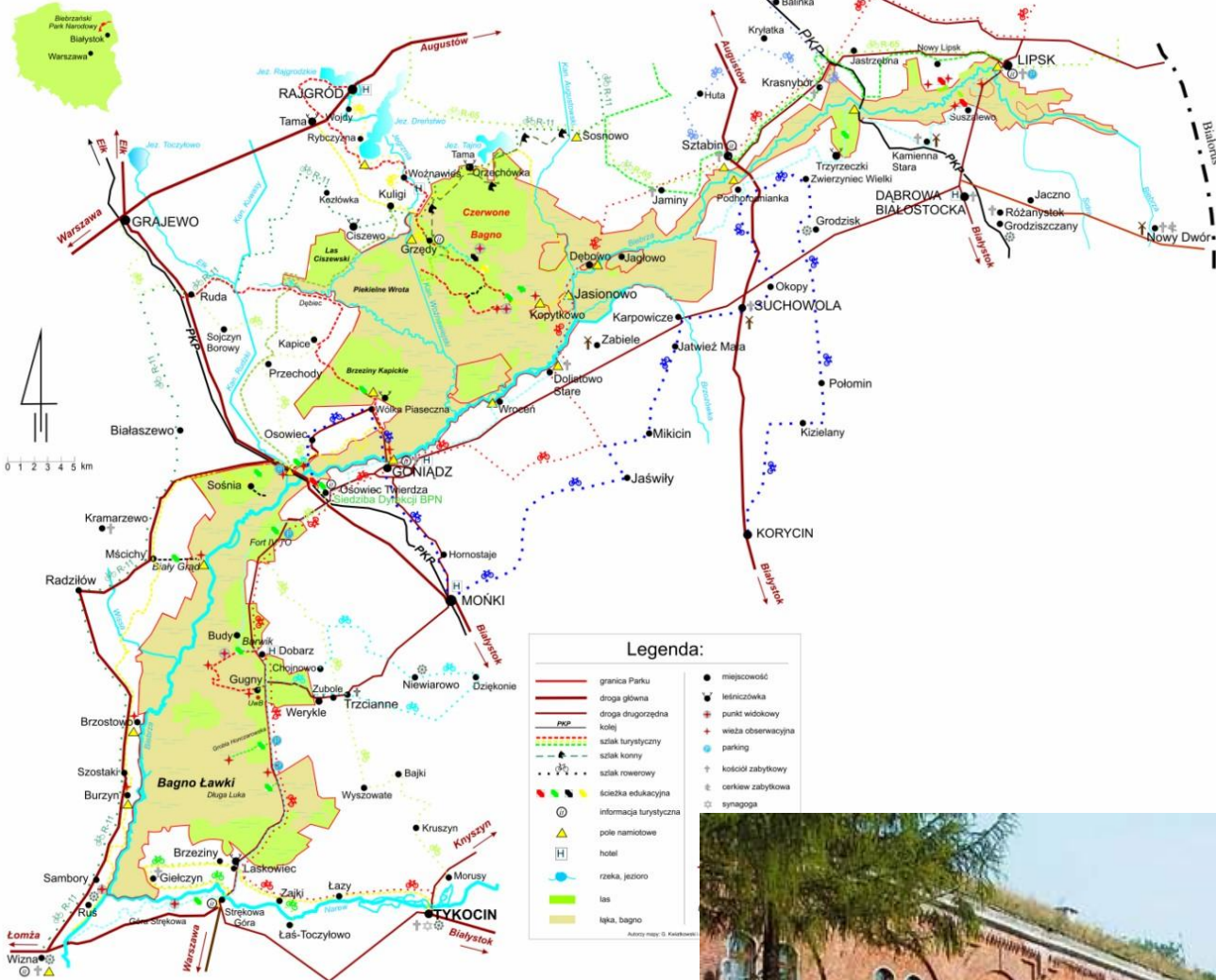
# Zoning

Designation of zones (within protected areas) in which tourists are not expected to be present, as well as zones allowed for tourist traffic (with subzones of varying intensity and specificity).

# Concentration - dispersion

- dispersion of tourist traffic, so that the presence of a few tourists does not pose a threat to natural resources
- concentration of tourist traffic in selected places of the so-called *honeypots*

# Biebrzański Park Narodowy







**Ryc. Hortobágy National Park (Hungary)**



— PÁSZTORVILÁG A HORTOBÁGYON —

HERDSMEN'S LIFE IN HORTOBÁGY ♦ HIRTENWELT IN HORTOBÁGY







**Hortobágyi Nemzeti Park**  
Malomháza

**Európai vadmacska** (*Felis silvestris*)

Talán van, akinek is tudja, hogy a vadmacskákat nem csupán élővilági házmesterek, hanem egyenlőtársak. Az európai vadmacska a házmesterek őse. A vadmacskákat először Egyiptomban háztartások, hogy megvédjék a terményeiketől és állataikat. Ma ma már mindenütt jelen van a vadmacska a természetben. A vadmacskák sokszor a természetben is megjelennek, de a vadmacskák sokszor a természetben is megjelennek, de a vadmacskák sokszor a természetben is megjelennek.

**European Wildcat** (*Felis silvestris*)

Some of us might not even know that wild cats are not mere wild domestic cats, but on the contrary, the European wildcat is the ancestor of domestic cats. Wildcats were first domesticated in Egypt to guard the crop storage from rodents. Similarly to other cat species, the wildcat is also more active at night. During daytime they spend most of their time resting in trees and rocky areas with good coverage. Wildcats do not have natural enemies. However, they are also not exceptions from the fast population decline that affects so many species. The population decline is caused by human disturbance, as these animals lose their natural habitat due to deforestation. The most important issue that affects the population is that due to the loss of habitat, the cats venture closer to human colonies and villages and interbreed with domestic cats, creating hybrids. Hybridization with domestic cats and the continuous breeding of the hybrids weaken the population with pure blood lines, endangering the subsistence of the species. But how can we differentiate between the wild cat and the domestic cat? Wild cats are usually bigger, their bodies have a darker coat than the domestic cat. Their tails are always bushy, not tapered, with black rings and a black tip. Their canines are more developed, which only a careful observer will notice. The wildcat was protected by law since 1974.

**Információ: Hortobágyi Nemzeti Park**  
Látogatóközpont és Kézművesház  
Telefon: +36 52 889 000 www.hnp.hu

Ryc. Hortobágy Wild Animal Park



Ryc. Hortobagy Wild Animal Park



# The concept of restricting accessibility

Introduction of administrative restrictions aimed at reducing tourist traffic, eg. tickets.