



Make the project public...

Above all, the support of the people on site and the policy is urgently needed. First of all, it is necessary to make the project public. People have to get convinced of the idea Green Belt Europe. Not only for nature conservation but also as a symbol of the united Europe and the overcoming of the Iron Curtain.

To bring the project to a success it is needed to combine nature conservation with regional or sustainable development purposes like sustainable land use and gentle tourism. To implement conservation projects and designation of protected areas standardised trans-boundary habitat inventories and mappings are necessary fast as can.

Already in April 2004, just one week before the expansion of the EU, BUND carried out a press-journey along the Green Belt Europe in co-operation with NGOs in Austria, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, and Slovenia. During five days several nature conservation projects in the border regions of these countries were visited. At the German-Czech border are already existing some trans-boundary projects which are carried out by regional groups of BUND in co-operation with Czech partners. For example, a project to save the pearl mussel. Besides those smaller projects also the trans-boundary (Inter-)National Parks Bavarian Forest/Šumava, Thayatal/Podyjí and Neusiedler See /Fertő Hanság were visited.

This was a first step to make the project public to the people on site. It showed that the population and the regional politicians in the visited regions are very open minded and welcome the Green Belt Europe.

Future prospects

One of the outcomes of the international Green Belt Europe - conference in September 2004 was a programme of work. This document contains time-defined goals and targets to make the European Green Belt a reality. Some of the targets are to complete the database on protected/designated areas under national/international schemes running along the Green Belt, to make a review of funding opportunities available to the different levels of the Green Belt and to identify and research regional flagship species.

The project European Green Belt is a big challenge. It should fulfil the functions of an ecological corridor and thus, contribute to the conservation of biodiversity. However, it should also increase people's connection to their natural surrounding and increase the opportunities for socio-economic development that is beneficial to local communities and biodiversity as well. The Green Belt is a unique chance to overcome the old boundaries and barriers between East and West – a living symbol of growing together in Europe.