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- Fundamentals of a Spatial Development and Planning Before and After the Reunification of Germany
- From Death Zone to Life Line – 20 Years of Green Belt
- Large-scale Protection Areas Along the Green Belt – the Example of Schaalsee Biosphere
- Tourism Development and Aspects of Spatial Planning in the Former German Border Area
- The European Green Belt as a Form of Environmental Governance

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Fundamentals of a Spatial Development and Planning Before and After the Reunification of Germany

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The European Green Belt as a Form of Environmental Governance

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[Guest Editorial]

Guest Editorial “20 years German and European Green Belt – the valuable lessons”

Dr. Bernhard Seliger, Hanns-Seidel-Foundation Korea¹⁾

Almost exactly twenty years ago, on December 9, 1989, one month after the fall of the Berlin Wall, environmentalists of East and West Germany for the first time were able to meet in a large meeting in Hof (Bavaria), discussing the protection of the inner-German border area. In a manifesto they demanded protection for this region which for 40 years had been a deadly border, but also a reservation for endangered species. Today, after twenty years, it is time to look back to the development of the “Green Belt,” as this area became known, to take stock of the success and challenges of the development of the Green Belt and to discuss the potential role model, the Green Belt presents particularly for Korea.

The inner-German border reaches over 1393 kilometers from the Baltic Sea in the North to the Bavarian-Saxon-Bohemian (i.e. Czech) border region in the South. Besides a few designated transit points (mainly for transit to West Berlin) it was practically inaccessible. East Germans trying to cross the border illegally had often to pay this “flight from the Republic” (as it was officially called in East Germany) with their death by mines or shots from the East German border police. Therefore, the border strip was known as “death strip.” However, the death strip and the adjacent areas in East and West also were a reserve for many endangered species. Roads ended usually some time in front of the border, agricultural use was heavily restricted in the Eastern part. While elsewhere industrialization and intensive agricultural use destroyed habi-

1) The views are those of the author, not necessarily of Hanns-Seidel-Foundation

tats of rare animals and plants, in the border area they could survive. Wetlands, secluded forests, dry grasslands were important for rare animals like the black stork (*ciconia nigra*) or the European otter (*lutra lutra*), along with many amphibia and reptiles. Migratory birds found here their resting areas.

The environmental situation was, however, not all in all rosy. The use of low-quality brown coal and the strong emphasis on heavy industry in socialist countries, in the absence of environmental protection, led to pollution by East Germany and Czechoslovakia. In West Germany, the 1980s saw the rise of the environmental movement with many local and national initiatives. The first environmental minister was appointed and important laws were implemented. In East Germany, on the contrary, officially there was no pollution and the sometimes catastrophic environmental conditions were simply ignored. After the peaceful revolution of 1989 and reunification in 1990 these problems were automatically solved by large-scale deindustrialization, in particular of dirty industries, and the investment in modern environmental technologies. The question what to do with the valuable border regions, however, remained.

Already since 1979 one of the largest German environmental associations, the Bund für Umwelt und Naturschutz Deutschland (BUND) began to explore the Western border area with regard to rare species. On December 9, 1989, several hundred environmentalists of East and West Germany came together and demanded the transformation of the “death strip” to a Green Belt, as a protection area for endangered species and at the same time as a living monument of German history. When after unification the problems of economic transformation became more and more visible, it was not always easy to realize such a vision. However, environmentalists, politicians and civil servants,

Figure 1. The Green Belt in Germany



Note. From Wikimedia Commons/ Lencer. Retrieved November 29, 2009, from http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/db/Karte_Deutschland_Gr%C3%BCnes_Band.png

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in particular the German Federal Office of Nature Conservation (Bundesamt für Naturschutz) worked together to protect the border area systematically. The border strip is 1393 kilometers long, but only 100-500 m wide. Of the 177 square kilometers of the green belt, more than half is important for endangered habitats and 16 percent according to the classification of the European Union belong to the highest priority area. Since the Green Belt cuts through Germany, all kinds of habitats with the exception of Alpine habitats can be found here. However, as important as the Green Belt itself are the adjacent areas, in particular in the West, which had not been sealed by military use, but which had been practically undeveloped, being of no use during the time of division.

Since in Germany, a federal state, environmental protection is regionally organized, the federal government, the state governments and the counties and cities had to work together, all in all nine states, 37 counties and two large cities (Lübeck and Eisenach). Important problems, among them the problem of property rights, had to be solved. Most of the land belonged to the German state, since East Germany in the 1950s former owners were expropriated – East Germany feared they were politically unreliable and in many cases just burned down houses and farms in the border area.²⁾ These areas after 1990 mainly remained federal property. Only in few cases former owners were restituted to their property. Smaller tracts of land were bought by environmental NGOs. After long discussions the Federal government decided to turn its property over to the regions, if they were used as environmental protection areas. Take, for example, Saxony. With 40 kilometers, it has the smallest share of the Green Belt, but it achieved to completely put this under environmental protection. As said before, besides the Green Belt itself, adjacent areas were important. Bavaria, at its border to Saxony and Thuringia, designed 27 nature protection areas and 31 landscape protection areas (with a lower protection intensity) along the border, which considerably increased the protected area. In one protection area alone, the Steinachtal in Upper Franconia, 132 ha of land were additionally protected. Also, 4000 farmers participated in “contractual environmental protection,” i.e., they produced extensively on 5000 ha and were rewarded with financial adjustment means.

Cooperation between states and counties was not restricted to nature protection, but included water protection, economic development, infrastructure projects and information systems. By that, the Green Belt also was important for exchanging views and finally unification of people across borders, after forty years of division. New activities, like a bicycle tourism road along

2) All in all, around 12,000 people were relocated from border areas, in two major actions, one called cynically *action vermin* by the secret police, started in 1952, another one in 1961 *action cornflower*. 3,000 people defected to escape from the circumstances of expulsion, among them 53 inhabitants of one village, Böseckendorf (Thuringia) in October 1991.

the former “Kolonnenweg” (the way for military automobiles directly on the East side of the inner-German border), emerged to use the border area for soft tourism. Ecological education (like in Mitwitz at the Bavarian-Thuringian border) and historical museums (like the German-German museum in a formerly divided village of Mödlareuth, known as “little Berlin” because of a wall crossing the village) are examples for the new use of the border area. This use was not uncontested, since conflicts between nature protection and economic development were numerous. For example, originally an important transportation project to link Bavaria and Thuringia was planned on a trajectory crossing thirteen times the Green Belt and by that, in fact, rendering it useless. After protests the plan was changed. However, until today, 15 percent of the former inner-German border were considerably changed, through new transportation ways, industrial use or intensive agricultural use. For the remaining areas, the focus on particularly valuable areas is necessary.

The success of the Green Belt was due to the widespread feeling that for nature the division of Germany was a blessing in disguise and that the preservation of species was indeed a national task. This view was not restricted to Germany. The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 was not a German event alone, but part of the dismantling of the iron curtain dividing East and West in Europe. Also in other parts of the 8500 kilometers of the former iron curtain soon environmental protection of the border areas became an important topic. The protection of these areas was not only motivated by environmental concerns alone, but also a means to bind together and reunify old cultural areas, like between Bavaria and Bohemia in Germany and the new Czech Republic, and to overcome mistrust of the Cold War. The German Green Belt became a role model for Europe. Large natural parks and natural reserves were established along the Bavarian-Bohemian border (Bayerischer Wald/ Sumava), the Austrian-Czech border (Thayatal-Podyil) the Austrian-Hungarian border (Neusiedler See-Sweewinkel/ Fertö Hanság) and along

Figure 2. The Regions of the European Green Belt



Note. Retrieved November 29, 2009, from <http://europagreenbelt.org/indoor.html>

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the marshes of the Danube, the rivers Thaya, Drau and Mur. These areas were important for large mammals like the European wolf (*canis lupus*), the Eurasian lynx (*lynx lynx*), the brown bear (*ursus arctos*), as well as migratory birds. Conferences and working groups were established and cooperation emerged between 22 countries in three large areas: the “Fennoscandian” Green Belt in the North (Norway, Finland, Russia), the Central European Green Belt (the Baltic States, Poland, Germany, Czech and Slovak republics, Austria, Hungary, Slovenia and Croatia) and the Balkan Green Belt (Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia, Rumania, Bulgaria, Albania and Turkey). Certainly, the intensity of protection in these areas is very diverse, as are the needs for protection. But the fact that the former iron curtain became a new field for peaceful cooperation and protection of the environment is a hopeful sign of the changes after 1989.

The special thematic focus of this issue is the Green Belt in Germany and Europe as an innovative form of environmental governance and spatial planning, offering a comprehensive view on the emergence, challenges and potentials of the Green Belt concept. The first contribution by Prof. Dr. Peter Jurczek, Technical University Chemnitz (Germany), introduces the readers to the development of spatial planning before and after German reunification and by this establishes the planning background of the Green Belt concept. The article by Uwe Riecken and Karin Ullrich of the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation, a major actor in the establishment of the Green Belt, discusses the emergence of the Green Belt as a challenge to establish an ecological corridor and contribute to biodiversity, while at the same time enhancing people’s connection to their natural heritage and increasing opportunities for regional rural development. The paper by Dr. Bernhard Seliger of Hanns-Seidel-Foundation Korea, the guest editor of this special issue, introduces the Schaalsee Biosphere Reserve as a case study for large-scale conservation areas along the Green Belt, the former inner-German border. The article of Prof. Dr. Bernhard Köppen, University of Landau (Germany), looks to tourism development in East Germany and the potential role of the Green Belt. Finally, the contribution by Prof. Dr. Jarmo Kortelainen, University of Eastern Finland in Joensuu (Finland), analyses the European Green Belt not only in its spatial dimension, but also as a concept of environmental governance and a transnational network of actors.

This work is the outcome of a project of Hanns-Seidel-Foundation Korea for knowledge transfer regarding the sustainable development in the inner-Korean border area. Since 2005, Hanns-Seidel-Foundation cooperates with Goseong county and since 2006 with Gangwon province and the Research Institute for Gangwon in making the German experience of border development useful for development of the inner-Korean border, with a focus on sustainable development. Experts of Germany were brought to Korea and study trips for around ten delegations from Korea were organized in the former inner-German border area, today's Green Belt. In 2009, Hanns-Seidel-Foundation Korea carried out a study on the valuable lessons of border development in Germany for the Korea Research Institute of Human Settlements (KRIHS). This special focus issue is one of the outcomes of this research.

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Fundamentals of a Spatial Development and Planning Before and After the Reunification of Germany

• Peter Jurczek

The background features two large, overlapping, organic shapes. The shape on the left is a light grey, and the shape on the right is a medium blue. They overlap in the center, creating a darker blue-grey area. The text is positioned in the white space between these shapes.

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Fundamentals of a Spatial Development and Planning Before and After the Reunification of Germany

Peter Jurczek

Beyond the general development of nations, matters of regional importance within a country are also very important. In the majority of states, we usually encounter regional disparities which have a more or less strong impact on their inhabitants. In addition, there are frequently special situations which shape a nation temporarily or in the long run. Germany had been temporarily separated for about fifty years and was reunited in 1989/90. This political turning point resulted in the accession of the former German Democratic Republic to the Federal Republic of Germany but similarly ignited a comprehensive process of integration throughout Europe. One of these effects was the dissolution of the two European power blocs, which has induced the continuing endeavour for liberation in eastern-European countries.

In view of these and further state-internal and territorial changes in Europe (e.g. the Baltic States), it is conceivable that countries from other continents are interested in this development. Understandably, the Republic of Korea (South Korea) is one of these countries. Since 1948 it has been confronted with a similar situation to that of the Federal Republic of Germany until the years 1989/90. The Republic of Korea borders in the north on the so-called Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) with which it is pursuing a reunification under democratic conditions of western character.

In the light of the profound significance of regional developments within a country, this approach will be taken into account in the following. Therefore, the first chapter outlines the regional development of the inner-German border area considering the time before and after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

The second chapter presents a relatively new approach including the promotion of the co-operation between municipalities and regions. For this reason, regional initiatives as well as municipal networks were created throughout Germany and Europe respectively to intensify spatial development in addition to the already established planning authorities. Such co-operations exist at different levels: locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally. In this respect, the cross-border collaboration is of particular importance (in Germany: national borders, borders between federal

states/city-states, administrative districts, rural districts/independent cities, and towns belonging to administrative districts/municipalities).

1. Regional Development of the Inner-German Border Area Before and After the Political Change

It is very difficult to illustrate this broad and complex topic in brevity. Thus, the following statements do not claim to be exhaustive. On the contrary, they are made in keywords and somewhat cursory and superficial. The situation before and after the political change is depicted on the basis of fundamental functions of human life: the population, the infrastructure (traffic), the economy, and other aspects. Moreover, a distinction is made between the Federal Republic of Germany in its borders from 1949 to 1989/90 (former F.R.G.), the former German Democratic Republic (G.D.R.) and the Federal Republic of Germany in its borders from 1989/90 onwards (F.R.G.).

1.1 Regional development of the inner-German border area before the political change

The border regions towards the G.D.R. were then called borderland of the zone (“Zonenrandgebiet”) (Figure 1.1). This is related to a ca. fifty kilometre broad strip along the border to the G.D.R. (formerly Soviet occupation zone) and to Czechoslovakia. The character of this border was exceptionally negative because it was closely guarded and practically closed. This meant in effect that the population of the G.D.R. was only entitled to leave the country for the F.R.G. on the basis of a visa, for which cogent reasons were necessary (e.g. illness of relatives, professional purposes), and the border controls were extremely stringent. A similar procedure applied to the citizens of the F.R.G. who wanted to travel to the G.D.R. It was prohibited to visit the respective border areas, though.

With regard to the outlined circumstances, it was an appropriate measure to support the eastern border areas of the former F.R.G. by the state. On the one hand, this included tax concessions to attract companies to establish here. On the other hand, it involved the subsidisation of the public infrastructure (e.g. public swimming pools). The target of these measures was to provide equality for every part of the country, first and foremost for the border areas.

1.1.1 Population

The eastern border areas of the former F.R.G. were generally characterised by migration. Particularly, younger people who were not able to find a decent job saw themselves forced to leave their home area. This resulted in the tendency of superannuation of the population, the negative effects of which are perceptible even today.

Figure 1.1. The FRG and the Area Adjacent to it as well as the GDR Prior to the Reunification of Germany



Note. Edited by the Chair of Social and Economic Geography at Chemnitz University of Technology, 2009.

Furthermore, the citizens of these areas were isolated towards the east. Many inhabitants of the border areas have lost their relatives and friends in the G.D.R. because it was not possible to freely cross the border for a visit. The situation of people who lived in the immediate vicinity of the inner-German border was particularly grave since mutual visits were strictly forbidden. It cannot be ruled out that this extreme situation caused loneliness and depressions.

In the G.D.R., the government exerted pressure on the people living near the border to the former F.R.G. to move away. The population in the west of the country decreased whereas in the east (e.g. the town Hoyerswerda), new jobs were provided and flats were built (concrete tower blocks). The ageing population remaining in the western border area were closely watched and controlled. Apart from the fact that their level of material prosperity was low – as it was the general case in the G.D.R. (e.g. no private cars) – their everyday life was additionally aggravated by the remote location (e.g. bad supply situation [tropical fruits]). Neither were visits to the former F.R.G. allowed nor was it possible to receive guests from there.

1.1.2 Infrastructure (Traffic)

Very few highways connected the former F.R.G. with the G.D.R or went across the latter (to West Berlin). In addition, the road network in the border areas was more and more thinned out over the years, and a similar situation could be stated for rail links. Moreover, there was practically no benefit for the municipalities in the border areas from the then upcoming air traffic.

The same applied to the western border regions of the G.D.R. The road network was gradually reduced, and it was tried to constrain the orientation of road users by removing sign posts or by installing incorrect ones. All these measures aimed at the defeat of an attempt to escape.

1.1.3 Economy

During the post-war period, numerous new enterprises were founded in the former F.R.G. along the border to the G.D.R. (and Czechoslovakia). A common practice of large companies was to establish subsidiaries here to create new (but usually unskilled) jobs. For this, these companies could obtain government subsidies for a certain period of time (e.g. in the scope of the promotion of border areas). However, some of these new subsidiaries moved elsewhere after the promotion had expired. This practice was later dubbed “windfall gain” (“Mitnahmeeffekt”) of subsidies. On the one hand, the population in the border area were supplied with jobs; on the other hand, the salaries of the people employed were in general below average. It should also be taken into

account that these new manufacturing companies in the border areas did not necessarily belong to innovative and promising branches of the economy.

Apart from the industry, it was invested in the emerging tourism near the inner-German border. These areas mainly consisted of low mountain ranges, and their picturesque landscapes were, in principle, particularly suitable for a touristic opening-up. Nevertheless, the development of tourism in these regions was not as successful as it was initially hoped for. The reason for it was that people increasingly preferred to spend their holidays abroad (Austria, Italy, and Spain).

Noticeable G.D.R. enterprises of the border areas were rare and primarily located in the south-west of the country. The most important companies (e.g. leather industry in Hirschberg/Thuringia or lace manufacturing in Plauen/Saxonian Vogtland) widely remained here. In general, these were companies which required certain natural resources (such as water, timber, etc.) or which products were exported. Owing to the nearby border to the west, the employees were strictly controlled. As a matter of fact, the east of the G.D.R. was the preferred area for the erection of new industrial plants.

Along the inner-German border, there were equally attractive landscapes which were used for tourism. The holiday resorts in the border areas enjoyed great popularity and a high occupancy rate because the proportion of people who travelled abroad (to other COMECON countries) was very low. Holiday accommodation was company-owned to some extent and, thus, very inexpensive. The G.D.R., however, aspired to create new touristic capacities in the heartland and to avoid the border areas respectively.

1.1.4 Other aspects

As already hinted at, the social life in the border areas of the former F.R.G. was on the verge to becoming gradually impoverished. The so-called endogen potential was reduced to a considerable degree. For example, bigger and/or more modern events could not be offered very often because it largely lacked both the number of the remaining population as well their interest in such events. By contrast, a funding mentality developed that fostered the advantages of permanent subsidisation. Finally, some selective advantages for the individuals should be mentioned, such as the relatively inexpensive construction of private homes compared to that in conurbations.

In contrast to this, the population of the G.D.R. was predominantly concentrated in the towns, only very few of which were situated near the border to the former F.R.G. All measures implemented by the state had the aim to aggravate life in the border areas and, finally, to thin them out. Thus, the quality of life here was incomparably poorer than that of people living on the west side of the border.

1.2 Regional development at the inner-German border after the political change

The reunification of Germany came unexpectedly. Formally, the former G.D.R. entered into the former F.R.G. The number of federal states increased to sixteen (Figure 1.2), five of

Figure 1.2. “Bundesländer” in Germany After the Reunification of the Country (Including the City States of Berlin, Hamburg and Bremen)



Note. Edited by the Chair of Social and Economic Geography at Chemnitz University of Technology, 2009.

which are situated in the east of Germany (Saxony, Thuringia, Saxony-Anhalt, Brandenburg, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania). Hardly anybody had anticipated the reunification; almost nobody was properly prepared for it. In the beginning, there was an overwhelming joy on both sides of the border. Strangers embraced each other and celebrated this historical event. In the former border areas, people visited each other and explored the lifestyle of their respective neighbours. The east-German visitors received “welcoming money” so that they could buy western products which were not available in the G.D.R. With a certain temporal delay, the savings of the east-Germans were exchanged: 2,000 Mark of the GDR was exchanged 1:1; the remaining money 1:2. The private properties were given back to the original owners as well. After that, euphoria faded and everyday life returned. Meanwhile, new prejudices developed in the former border area of east and west-Germany. This was also owed to a general economic recession in the F.R.G. Furthermore, the respective population on both sides of the border was still characterised by obvious mental differences.

1.2.1 Population

Immediately after the political change, an influx of east-Germans to the west of the country could be noticed. They found work in different branches (e.g. building industry, cleaning, and gardening). These were usually such jobs which were unattractive for local residents (due to the wages below average). Some years later, many of the east-Germans, who lived here for a certain period of time, moved to conurbations where they mostly find both attractive jobs and metropolitan lifestyle. This is one of the reasons why the number of inhabitants stagnates.

On the *east-German side*, the personal freedom with all its consequences was celebrated at first. To begin with, people bought new cars and western products. Later, however, problems appeared as well, such as the loss of the job due to the privatisation of the economy, the increasing bureaucracy, the pressure to adapt to a western lifestyle, etc. A part of the population moved to the west or commuted. The birth-rate decreased rapidly as well. This resulted in a significant decrease in population which will probably cause serious problems in the future (e.g. underutilised infrastructure facilities).

1.2.2 Infrastructure

On the *west-German side of the former inner-German border*, roads across the borders between - now - federal states were built rapidly. Additionally, existing traffic infrastructure had to be extended to cope with the enormously increasing number of visi-

tors from the east of Germany. Some time later, the planning for the long-distance traffic was forwarded. While the construction of the motorway from the west to the east was pushed, the building of railway lines left a lot to be desired, which was due to financial as well as ecological reasons. The latter would probably have caused disadvantages for the former border area because it would have been used only for transit and, thus, would have had only a small number of stops. During the last years, it could be noticed that infrastructure facilities in this regions were becoming more and more obsolete, and little has been done to modernise the technical infrastructure (e.g. swimming pools, sewage treatment plants).

In the *eastern area of the former inner-German border*, the regional road network was refurbished, and new sign posts for a proper orientation were installed. Moreover, with a certain delay, the railway network was enhanced and new rolling stock purchased. A special challenge was the modernisation and renewal of the systems of water supply and wastewater disposal. A novelty was the introduction of the market economy, usually based on structures of the private economy (e.g. private limited companies [Ltd.]).

1.2.3 Economy

On the *west-German side of the former inner-German border*, some of the companies took over east-German enterprises; these had been either private property before the Second World War, or they could be purchased relatively cheap and became subsidiaries. The manufacturing, however, was scarcely placed in the new federal states. It was preferably relocated to the bordering Central and Eastern European countries (CEEC) Czech Republic and Poland because of the even lower labour costs. This was a common business strategy during the 1990s. In the course of the last years, the number of manufacturing companies – predominantly small and medium enterprises (SME) – and the number of jobs steadily declined which resulted in an disproportionately high unemployment rate (> 10 percent). This can be traced back to the globalisation of the economy, the reduction of the subsidies at the site of the firm, and the grant of subsidisation in the east of Germany (that is, only few kilometres eastwards). Ultimately, the industrial plants of the remaining companies became obsolete.

The economic development on the east side of the former inner-German border adhered to the so-called unification treaty. One of the most important core issues was the introduction of the market economy, which implemented comprehensive and long-winded processes of privatisation. In the eastern border area, mostly SME were established. However, the number of jobs created was insufficient to supply employment for everybody. Therefore, a part of the inhabitants started to commute to the

western border area and to conurbations respectively, or they migrated. In comparison with the western side, the unemployment rate was with over 20 percent even worse. The unemployment rate is usually higher than that of the western part but lower compared to central-Germany because of the people commuting to the west.

Tourism on the *west-German side of the former inner-German border* could experience an intermediate upswing. This was due to numerous tourists who wanted to visit east-German places. However, owing to different reasons (e.g. equipment, prices for accommodation), they preferred to stay overnight on the western side of the former inner-German border. During the last years, the number of visitors has levelled out roughly on the level before the wall came down. These are predominantly elderly travellers, people with low income, or those who travel several times a year. Furthermore, it can be noticed that small traditional lodgings (e.g. inns, guesthouses, and holiday flats) dominate because their facilities meet the average standard. Although they are of certain economic importance, their economic contribution for the region is usually small (mainly largely below 10 percent).

On the eastern side of the former inner-German border, some of the existing holiday lodgings were modernised, and many new ones were built. Furthermore, a market oriented tourism management was implemented, and the personnel had been intensively trained beforehand. In the meantime, these areas have established on the tourist market and make undeniably attractive offers for relatively low prices. Again, mostly elderly people and low-income tourists as well as people who travel several times a year dominate this segment. Although many local authorities invest in tourism – which is certainly important as an additional economic branch – its economic significance is generally overestimated.

1.2.4 Other aspects

All in all, it seems that the *west-German side of the former inner-German border* lost its importance. At least, the support for the border areas expired, which had guaranteed secure subsidies for the regions at the border of the former G.D.R. Thereby, especially the economic development suffered considerably and led to a noticeable recessions. This, in turn, caused a new trend towards emigration of the population there. In everyday life, however, the advantages prevailed. After about fifty years of isolation, it was now possible to communicate with the east of the country without restrictions, which intensified visits to and tourism in these areas.

On the eastern side of the former inner-German border, the achievement of personal freedom was one of the most important basic factors of the German reunification. Along with this, the range of activity was extended towards the west, linked with gen-

erous small and large-scale interactions. Worth mentioning are also the modern infrastructure facilities, which could be created by means of extensive investments. Nevertheless, the cost of living in these areas may range below national average. It has to be taken into consideration, though, that people earn lower income. The introduction of the market economy brought mainly advantages, with which new competitively viable firms were established. Thus, new jobs were created here or by commuting. Closely linked with this, however, is the insufficient overall supply of employment due to complex restructuring. In addition, even though now there are more opportunities for individual development in these peripherally situated areas, on country level, these regions are still characterised by their marginal position and overall development below average.

2. Regional Developmental Initiatives

2.1 The history of regional initiatives and municipal networks

Despite the constant trend for Europeanisation and globalisation respectively, the tendencies for regionalisation and localisation took on importance. With regard to the federal regional planning, this development refers to established institutions (e.g. federal, regional, and municipal planning), which have undergone an enormous change recently. Therefore, these institutions on their own were often unable to cope with complex challenges. This was the reason why since the 1960s numerous regional initiatives and municipal networks have been created, usually formed across formally defined boundaries. These include, for example, regional clubs or communities of interest as well as Euro-Regions (at first at the western border of Germany). This trend has experienced a repeated upswing since the 1990s. Since then, areas with regional marketing are developing increasingly as well as those with sub-region advice, development concepts, regional conferences, and regional forums.

With regard to the aforementioned examples, the arising economical problems could neither be solved by the existing institutions nor within the formally defined boundaries. The political change provided a new momentum for the development of additional initiatives as well as new regional and municipal entities. This development, however, was the reason only in individual cases. In fact, it could be rather regarded as the trigger for a foreseeable general development. In the beginning of the 1990s, it was profoundly thought about how regional planning can be better adapted to the zeitgeist, and, above all, how to promote the co-operative commitment on regional and local levels.

2.2 Examples for regional initiatives and municipal networks

Städtenetze (City networks) is a form of co-operation of municipalities within a region. Their partners pool and add their skills and potentials voluntarily and equally to jointly solve their tasks. In the beginning of the 1990s, twelve pilot projects participated within the scope of an experimental project work in a nation-wide competition, which was suggested by the responsible Federal Ministry. A result of this was the foundation of numerous inter-municipal co-operations. Such topics were concerned which were suitable for a joint solution and which gained highest efficiency, such as in the department of traffic, culture, tourism, and technology in the Saxon-Bavarian City Network. After the expiration of the experimental phase, the responsible institutions continue to work in the “Forum Städtenetze” (forum city networks) to sustain their inter-municipal co-operation (<http://www.staedtenetzforum.de>). In doing so, they pursue to acquire new knowledge about “networking.”

Another network was set up in the framework of the federal contest “Regionen der Zukunft” (regions of the future) (<http://www.zukunftsregionen.de>). This initiative aims at the exploration and mobilisation of regional scopes for action to achieve a sustainable development of regions and municipalities. This should be accomplished by the promotion and teaching of creative planning, by negotiations and mediation of different interests as well as by the search for suitable measures. Twenty-five regions across the country participated in this contest and shared their experience (e.g. “Neuorganisation der Stadt-Umland-Beziehungen” [reorganisation of the relationship city-environs]). Particularly remarkable is the fact that this idea of network has been transferred to the European level (<http://www.iclei.org>).

The *Inno-Regio-Programm* (Inno-Regio programme) is an initiative with which the Federal Ministry of Education and Research promotes selected innovation concepts of integrated projects in twenty-three pilot regions in the east of Germany (<http://www.innoregio.de>). Innovative regions are special units that are smaller than federal states and in which different people and institutions join forces. The aim is to develop technical, economic, and social innovations which have not been accomplished within and outside the respective region so far. By doing so, they sustainably consolidate their innovation competence and with it their competitive ability in their scope of action. The major objective of InnoRegio is to permanently improve the employment situation in the new federal states and to consolidate competitiveness. Approximately one-third of the supported projects is carried out in Saxony and comprises different branches of industry (e.g. high-technology, biomedicine, automobile, music, and textile industry).

Finally, the Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection has launched the competition “*Regionen Aktiv – Land gestaltet Zukunft*” [regions in action –

the countryside creates the future]) (<http://www.modellregionen.de>). The target is to demonstrate in selected rural regions how the demands of the population on agriculture can be considered more carefully, and which new approaches are appropriate for rural development. Partnerships on regional levels develop and implement these models. In suitable regions, a process should hereby be initiated that will finally pay for itself. Furthermore, it thus becomes a model for the bond between town and countryside. The “Fördergesellschaft Nordhessen” (funding institution Northern Hesse), for example, participates with the project “Stadt-Land-Genuss” (city-countryside-delight). Among others, this scheme promotes the conversion to organic farming, the implementation of a marketing agency for regional products as well as the setup of an information system for quality products, offers for leisure time activities and tourism.

These network examples are nation-wide model projects. Apart from this, the majority of the federal states themselves support initiatives of this kind - either on their own territories or across federal borders and even across state borders. In the Free States of Bavaria and Saxony alone, there are – more or less area-covering – various regional initiatives and municipal networks. A notable quantity of them is of long-term nature and has been established for several years.

2.3 Evaluation of regional initiatives and municipal networks

If we concentrate on the significance of regional initiatives and municipal networks as a whole, it becomes obvious that the co-operations, launched and promoted by federal ministries and regional authorities, usually start their intra-regional and inter-municipal co-operation in a contest. At first, the particular institutions express their interest by applying to the respective sponsor. Then, after the evaluation of their submitted material, they are accepted (or not) and will be supported during the start-up phase (ca. three to five years). The funding is usually limited to the promotion of the execution of the particular model project. This means that in general the investment costs are not taken over. Thus, the aim is that regional initiatives and municipal networks take part in a competition to improve the infrastructural development in their particular scope of action by the outstanding commitment of the participants.

Several years of continuous evaluation have gathered extensive knowledge about the chances and problems of regional initiatives and municipal networks. In order to avoid a possible failure, it is advisable to take notice of these facts and to consider them when new projects are planned. In the end, they contribute to the success of painstakingly initiated co-operations.

Based on thorough research, the following guidelines are fundamental for successful initiatives:

- Motivation of the participants for utmost flexibility and optimal creativity
- Mobilisation of inventiveness and the eagerness for innovation of all people involved
- Bringing about of synergy effects (e.g. by cost-efficient joint activities)
- Forward-looking orientation of conceptual measures and project management
- Inclination and aptitude of people for co-operation and networks

Based on these points, immaterial preconditions seem to be favourable to achieve the effectiveness of spatial development and co-operation as the overarching goal. Notwithstanding, it appears to be necessary to continually train the persons involved in regional and local networks respectively. However, when a regional initiative should operate successfully, it is not enough to concentrate only on the optimisation of 'soft' factors (human resources). Adequate material resources (e.g. infrastructure, project means) are equally essential.

In contrast to that, it is also necessary to pay attention to possible problems which may aggravate or even prevent the efficient work of regional initiatives and municipal networks. These include:

- Lacking motivation and little commitment of significantly involved people
- Inadequate aptitude and/or inclination towards co-operation
- Informal character of the co-operation and, thus, lacking obligation
- High dependency on funding and, therefore, insecure existence
- Insufficient infrastructural equipment and inadequate project means
- Counterproductive overlapping with conceptual formulations of established institutions.

Such and similar aspects affect the reputation of regional initiatives and municipal networks, which are often set up with much enthusiasm. Sometimes, these projects are the stage for actionists who pursue to satisfy their own demands (e.g. self-display, self-promotion, prestige, windfall gain). In this way, regional development strategies would rather be a fashionable phenomenon than a new planning approach, and relevant institutions would appear dubious. Regional initiatives and municipal networks should, therefore, be regarded as an addition to established planning authorities. Manageable in numbers and with a clear direction in terms of content, these projects should take over reasonable tasks to make a valuable contribution to a spatial development and co-operation.

2.4 Outlook

Despite a balancing overall assessment, it is true that established planning authorities on their own are unable to comprehensively solve complex problems. Minor and major difficulties can be detected in all special planning sectors and will probably become even more severe in future. In the light of this aspect, regional initiatives and municipal networks seem to have an important task in a sustainable spatial development – at least in addition to the established planning authorities.

It has become evident that despite the progressing European integration, there are increasing regional disparities within a country. These complex problems can be better solved with a thoroughly adjusted system of professionally working regional initiatives and municipal networks.

It becomes clear that the economic aspect is more significant today than it was in the past. Insofar, regional marketing and regional management are gaining considerable importance and add in a modern way to the primarily regulating and developing character of a spatial planning. Still, it must be paid attention to a balanced proportion between economic, socio-cultural, and ecological aspects.

Consequently, it seems crucial to strategically develop long-term goals, which should be actively supported by all social groups. Hereby, it is necessary to clarify very soon the following fundamentals for a co-operation:

- Implementation of stable organisational and working structures
- Agreement on the general direction of the co-operation
- Defining of the specific measures and their priorities
- Achievement of ample political justification
- Organisation of manifold public relations and the appropriate involvement of the citizens.

Another important point is the funding of regional initiatives and municipal networks. Although their aim is usually to become financially independent, most of them receive public subsidies. The subsidisation is limited to the start-up phase. In the case of a positive evaluation of the results after this phase, this approach is basically acceptable. This implies that a permanent funding by third parties should be avoided because every material support is based on the principle “helping others to help themselves.” As a matter of fact, it should be assumed that firstly, a project receiving funding always makes its own financial contribution and, secondly, the self-sufficient continuation of a project in the long run is seriously pursued. Only at this stage it can be assumed that regional initiatives and municipal networks have a lasting effect on the region which they minister.

Apart from the general conditions (form of organisation, funding options), optimal human resources are equally important. This applies to both a sufficient number of co-workers, and their qualification and commitment. This field of activity demands particularly creative and flexible people who are always motivated and open to new ideas. As a rule, personalities who are ready and able to co-operate are urgently wanted by the decision makers as well as by the project managers. Along with beneficial formal conditions, such personnel structures are essential to assign regional initiatives and municipal networks a decisive role in the creation of a sustainable spatial development.

These strategies try to tackle hindrances of a balanced spatial development in Germany that have occurred recently. Although they can minimise different problems or even resolve them sometimes, their overall effect is limited. Nevertheless, the following can unambiguously be stated: If there hadn't been a political change in 1989—with the result of the German reunification—Germany would probably still be separated, and Europe would still consist of two power blocs.

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From Death Zone to Life Line – 20 Years of Green Belt

• Uwe Riecken & Karin Ullrich

The background features two large, overlapping, organic shapes. The top-left shape is a light grey color, and the bottom-right shape is a medium blue color. They overlap in the center, creating a darker blue-grey area.

KRIHS SPECIAL REPORT

2010

From Death Zone to Life Line – 20 Years of Green Belt

Uwe Riecken & Karin Ullrich¹⁾

Figure 1.1. The German Green Belt at the Border Between Thuringia and Lower Saxony



Note. Photo by U. Riecken.

1) Dr. Uwe Riecken & Dr. Karin Ullrich, Federal Agency for Nature Conservation, Konstantinstraße 110, Bonn, GERMANY, corresponding E-Mail: Uwe.Riecken@BfN.DE 20 years of the Green Belt Seite 2 von 18

1. The Inner-German Green Belt: Importance and Opportunity

The German Green Belt has a length of 1,393 km and covers an area of some 177 km². It spans along the former inner-German border from the Baltic Sea to the Saxon-Bavarian-Czech border triangle. Thus it forms part of the largest national ecological network existing within Germany. On its way it touches nine federal states, 38 administrative districts and two independent cities. The Green Belt includes all major landscape types in Germany except the alpine region (Figure 1.2).

Figure 1.2. Map of the Inner-German Green Belt



Note. Map of the Inner-German Green Belt also indicating the areas of running large-scale nature conservation projects (no. 1-4) and one planned one (no. 5), all funded by the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation.

The Green Belt contains and connects different habitat types like grasslands, fallows, dry meadows, wetlands, small stands of mature woodland and close to natural forests. In some regions brooks, rivers and lakes also form parts of this belt. All these habitat types have become rare in the present-day cultural landscape and can often only be found as isolated patches in monotonous agricultural landscapes (Figure 1.3).

Figure 1.3. Part of the Green Belt in an Intensively Used Agricultural Landscape



Note. Photo by K. Leidorf.

In some regions of Central Europe, the Green Belt forms the last remaining close to natural structure within the countryside. In these landscapes it is often one of the most important retreats for endangered species and plays a major role as connecting line or stepping stone within the national ecological network. Different habitat types occur tightly meshed within the Green Belt. This leads to its high diversity in structure and species. Over 600 animal and plant species from the German Red Data Book have made their homes in the Green Belt.

The Green Belt also connects many large areas of high value for nature conserva-

tion that serve as core areas in an ecological network. Therefore the Green Belt is expected to fulfil the function of a backbone for an ecological network of national and European importance. The German Green Belt is part of the German natural heritage.

A habitat mapping project financed by BfN in 2001 impressively demonstrated this importance (Schlumprecht et al. 2002). About 85% of the area of the Inner-German Green Belt had not yet been degraded.

On the other hand an increasing number of local human impacts could be observed. Around 11 % of the Green Belt had already been converted into intensively used arable land and grassland. Furthermore 2.4 % had been destroyed by traffic infrastructure, buildings and settlements.

Along the Green Belt 32 focus areas for nature conservation and development were selected (Schlumprecht et al. 2006). 21 of these areas were rated as focus areas of national or European importance. They cover 937 km (67 % of the length and 79 % of the area) of the German Green Belt. BfN is focusing its activities on these areas especially.

2. Implementing the Green Belt in Germany by Large-Scale Nature Conservation Projects

The Federal German Government supports Large-Scale Nature Conservation Projects in nationally important landscapes to protect the German natural heritage and to fulfil international obligations. This program focuses on the long-term preservation of natural landscapes as well as the conservation and development of outstanding cultural landscapes with their valuable habitats and endangered species.

Support primarily covers the purchase or long term lease of sites, compensatory payments for conservation-related restrictions and measures to manage and develop sites. Furthermore socio-economic studies, staff salaries, public relations efforts and monitoring investigations can be financed. Along the Inner-German Green Belt several Large-Scale Nature Conservation Projects are funded by BfN, another is in preparation (Figure 1.2).

2.1 Landscape of the Lake Schaalsee

The Lake Schaalsee (No. 1 in Figure 1.2) in the border area between Schleswig-Holstein and Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania is located in a scenic landscape characterised by woodlands, lakes, reed beds, fens and unique cultural habitats like extensively used meadows. This lake forms one of the largest clear water lakes in Germany,

which is still poor in nutrients (Figure 2.1).

Characteristically, the Lake Schaalsee is a breeding ground and resting place for rare wetland and water birds like e.g. the corncrake, the crane and the osprey, of which the latter in the meantime once again occurs in considerable numbers, especially in Eastern Germany. This landscape also hosts the European otter and a huge number of endangered plant species such as flea sedge, Rannoch-rush, fen orchid and various other orchid species.

The main objective of this project is to develop and preserve the landscape around the Lake Schaalsee in its close to natural state and complexity in the long term. Therefore a special focus is laid on the initiation of dynamic processes within semi-natural and natural ecosystems and on the reduction of negative human impacts and disturbances. The federal government supports this Large-Scale Nature Conservation Project with approximately €25 million (Duration: 1992-2009).

Figure 2.1. The Schaalsee, the First Large-scale Nature Conservation Project at the Green Belt



Note. Photo by K. Leidorf.

2.2 Floodplain of the river Elbe near Lenzen

The floodplain of the river Elbe near the small city of Lenzen is part of the biosphere reserve 'River Landscape Elbe'. This area is characterised by typical ecosystems of the Elbe region and offers good conditions for the future development of floodplain forests, which belong to the most endangered habitat types in Germany. Intense pressure by settlement and different land uses led to a dramatic decrease of these forests over the past centuries (No. 2 in Figure 1.2).

Therefore the restoration of some 400 hectares of floodplain has been undertaken by the relocation of the river dyke allowing flood dynamics to model the floodplain landscape in a natural way (Figure 2.2).

In this area large softwood and hardwood floodplain forests are meant to redevelop and to provide habitat for many endangered species like beaver, white-tailed eagle and European tree frog in the future.

Figure 2.2. A New Floodplain for the River Elbe



Note. Photo by C. Damm.

2.3 Drömling landscape

The Drömling landscape is located on both sides of the inner-German Green Belt between Lower Saxony and Saxony-Anhalt (No. 3 in Figure 1.2). It forms the remnant of a former extended wetland area. In this region two Large-Scale Conservation Projects adjoin. The project in Saxony-Anhalt has already been started in 1993.

The project in Lower Saxony has been supported by the federal government since 2002. Until 2012 overall some €31 million will be provided in both parts.

Main objective of these projects is the regeneration of the hydrology as the main precondition for the long term conservation and development of the remaining wetlands, elder forests, swamps and small rivers. Another focus lies on the long-term conservation of extensively used grasslands (Figure 2.3). A number of threatened species like the European otter, the red and black kite, the common snipe, curlew, corn crake, crane, stork and other wetland birds, amphibians, insect and plant species are expected to benefit from these projects.

Figure 2.3. Drömling Landscape



Note. The protection and management of extensively used grasslands, bogs and fens is the main objective of the project Drömling Landscape. Photo by G. Woithe.

2.4 Green Belt Eichsfeld - Werratal

South of the Harz Mountains the landscape traversed by the Green Belt is formed by multifaceted cultural landscapes which alternate with richly structured deciduous woodlands and semi-natural brook valleys (No. 4 in Figure 1.2).

Beginning at the border triangle between Lower Saxony, Thuringia and Hesse the river Werra with its adjoining mountain ranges becomes a constant companion of the Green Belt. Outstanding features of this area are vertical cliffs, rising up more than 100 m above the river and south-facing slopes with a very special micro-climate. On the edges of the valleys open areas are used as extensive limestone meadows. The steep escarpments are covered by richly-structured deciduous woodlands dominated by beech interspersed with patches of maple, oak and lime trees. These woodlands harbour many endangered species, like the yew tree (Figure 2.4).

Since 2009 BfN is supporting measures to protect this unique section of the Green Belt with financial and scientific aid (Keil et al. 2009). This project is the first Large-Scale Nature Conservation Project in which three federate states cooperate.

Figure 2.4. Large-Scale Nature Conservation Project Eichsfeld-Werratal



Note. Photo by U. Riecken.

3. Nature Experience at the Green Belt

The Green Belt is more than an important part of the national natural heritage. For many people this area has already developed to a recreation area and a place to enjoy nature (Geidezis and Fröhling 2009). At the same time it forms a living monument which reminds people of the younger German and European history. Especially young people, who did not witness the time of the Iron Curtain, are addressed by the historical aspects of the Green Belt.

3.1 Testing and development project ‘Experience Green Belt’

To assure the continuing existence of the Green Belt, it is very important to raise the public awareness and understanding of the Green Belt both for people from the region as well as for visitors from outside. To promote this idea and to develop sustainable nature tourism a Testing and Development Project called ‘Experience Green Belt’ is supported by BfN. This project is intended to increase the local acceptance of the Green Belt, to improve its visibility and thus the possibility to experience its landscapes with their specific history (Gerstner and Leupold 2009).

For this purpose measures for habitat management and landscape development are implemented, bicycle and hiking routes signposted, exhibitions and points for border experiences established and touristic offers in the context of ‘nature-culture-history’ developed.

Additionally a broad range of events will be arranged. Target groups addressed are hikers, local visitors and tourists, providers of tourist activities as well as managers and rangers of protected areas within the region. The project comprises three model regions in which the measures will be implemented. Every model region has its own slogan:

Elbe – Altmark – Wendland: Border experiences in the four-state-corner
 Harz: Harz without frontiers - on border paths through nature and history
 Thüringer Wald – Thüringer Schiefergebirge – Frankenwald: The Green Belt
 - an (inter)active experience

Transboundary cooperation is an important foundation pillar in all model regions. This concerns not only the overcoming of administrative borders but also of borders between different disciplines like nature conservation, agriculture, forestry and tourism. Finally historic facilities like e.g. border museums and memorial places will be integrated (Figure 3.1).

On this basis the project is meant to support efforts for a sustainable regional development. The regional project managers are assisted by a professional scientific attendance which is responsible for the evaluation of the project and in addition for the development and implementation of a corporate identity as well as for concerted tourism marketing.

(Further information: <http://www.erlebnisgruenesband.de>.)

Figure 3.1. Former Border Police Watch Tower



Note. As new facility to experience nature a former border police watch tower at the river Elbe has been transformed into a bird watch tower containing a small exhibition. Photo by S. Ziehe.

3.2 Naturathlon 2009

Naturathlon is a BfN communication and nature sport campaign which addresses the public. The main idea is to communicate that nature conservation and a sustainable use of nature are compatible. However, some nature sport activities can cause problems in nature like habitat destruction or disturbance of species and ecosystems. Therefore Naturathlon tries to demonstrate where and how nature can be used for

recreation and sport activities without causing damage and how cooperation between the different stakeholders can be organized and managed.

The motto of the Naturathlon 2009 was “Nature connects: Green Belt – biking on the life line.” With this largest nature sports event in Europe BfN intended to set the European Green Belt in public focus and thus to contribute to its protection and conservation. The Naturathlon started on August 19th at the location of the pan-European Picnic close to the Hungarian town of Sopron and ended on August 30th with the delivery of an appeal to preserve the European Green Belt addressed at the European Parliament in Strasbourg.

24 athletes from Germany, Austria, Slovenia, Slovakia, Czech Republic and Hungary spent twelve nice but strenuous days covering 1,600 very special and beautiful kilometres of the Green Belt between Lake Neusiedel and Point Alpha in the Rhön region. They experienced the former border line between Eastern and Western Europe as unique and valuable natural heritage and home of many endangered animal and plant species. They visited protected areas along the Green Belt and demonstrated that nature conservation and nature sports have the same basic aims, the conservation of nature and landscape. For the athletes this event was an unforgettable experience as political borders also vanished in their minds and friendships started in the sense of a Europe without borders.

Many prominent athletes supported this event as well as important politicians like Mikhail Gorbatshev, the former president of the Soviet Union, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, the former German minister for foreign affairs and Klaus Töpfer, the former director of UNEP, who all emphasized the importance of the Green Belt in personal greetings. Accordingly this international event managed to gain a lot of attention especially in the foreign media, who picked up the topic in the context of the commemoration days with regard to the fall of the Iron Curtain.

By combining nature conservation issues with aspects of tourism, recreation, sports and the historical background a broad audience has been addressed and informed about the idea and aims of the Green Belt.

4. The European Green Belt

Along the former Iron Curtain nature remained undisturbed in huge areas throughout Europe. Based on some prior initiatives in Fennoscandia and on the Balkan, during an international conference in Bonn in July 2003 BfN proposed the joining and enlargement of the Green Belt initiatives to cover the entire route of the former Iron Curtain (Riecken and Ullrich 2009). As one result of this meeting an international working group has been established.

4.1 Main landscapes along the European Green Belt

The route of the European Green Belt touches 23 countries and traverses most climate and vegetation zones in Europe (Figure 4.1).

In Fennoscandia (Norway, Finland and the Russian Federation) it crosses parts of the East Eurasian taiga and boreal forests with numerous rivers and lakes. Further on (Baltic States, Poland) it follows the shoreline of the Baltic Sea with many undisturbed coastal ecosystems.

It continues inland through Central Europe (Germany, Czech Republic, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Italy and Croatia). In this section, cultural landscapes, rivers and mountains dominate. In the south a branch of the Green Belt passes the Alps and reaches the Adriatic coast.

The Balkan Green Belt (Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia, Romania, Bulgaria, Albania, Greece, Turkey) is an extremely heterogeneous, but mostly natural corridor. It is characterised by undisturbed river and lake ecosystems, traditional cultural landscapes and varied mountain ranges. It contains important habitats for bear, wolf and lynx. The Green Belt forms branches around Albania and ends at the shoreline of the Black Sea. All together the European Green Belt is an important backbone of a European ecological network (Terry et al. 2005). It provides valuable habitats and connecting lines facilitating dispersal for numerous endangered animal and plant species. But it also offers a cross section through the different cultures and peoples of Europe, which have shaped the European landscapes over centuries (Lang et al. 2009). The European initiative has

Figure 4.1. Map of the European Green Belt



been started with a workshop organised by BfN in 2003 in Bonn. Guest of honour was Mikhail Gorbatshev, last president of the former Soviet Union.

4.2 The European Green Belt initiative

In September 2004, the first meeting of this working group with representatives of national authorities (National Focal Points) and NGOs from countries adjoining the Green Belt was organized by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and supported by BfN. It took place at the Fertő-Hanság National Park in Hungary, where the former Iron Curtain had been opened for the first time in 1989. The main outcome of this conference was the development and consultation of the Green Belt “Programme of Work” (PoW), which lists the main tasks and activities for the initiative in the coming years (Riecken 2005, Terry et al. 2006).

The conservation and development of the European Green Belt is a big challenge. In the end it shall fulfil the function of an ecological corridor and thus, contribute to the conservation of biodiversity. However, it should also enhance people’s connection to their natural heritage and increase the opportunities for regional rural development that is beneficial to local communities and biodiversity as well.

The Green Belt offers a unique chance to overcome the old boundaries and barriers between East and West. It can work as a living symbol for a Europe growing together.

The Secretariat for the European Green Belt is hosted at the IUCN Regional Office for Europe. The Secretariat gathers and exchanges information with stakeholders active in the area and supports studies and pilot projects throughout the Green Belt.

Figure 4.2. The Programme of Work



Note. The Programme of Work of the European Green Belt initiative has been published in the first volume of the IUCN Green Belt newsletter.





4.3 Cooperation

International cooperation is the most important basis for the Green Belt initiative. Accordingly conferences and workshops are organized on a regular basis and transboundary nature conservation projects are initiated.

The backbone of the Green Belt activities is formed by the international working group, the three regional coordinators (Fennoscandia and the Baltic States, Central Europe, South Eastern Europe) and the overall coordinator and secretariat at the IUCN regional office for Europe.

The international working group involves many state authorities, nature conservation agencies and NGOs, initiates projects and tries to rise funding for Green Belt activities. Table 4.1 gives an overview on the structure of the initiative.

Table 4.1. Structure of the European Green Belt Initiative

Function	Contact Data	Logo
European Green Belt secretariat	IUCN Programme Office for SEE, European Green Belt Secretariat, Dr. Ivana Ribara 91, 11070 Novi Beograd, SERBIA Tel.: +381 11 / 2272-411 Mail: see@iucn.org Internet: www.iucn.org	
Regional coordinators:		
Fennoscandia	Association of Zapoveniks and National Parks of Northwest Russia c/o Baltic Fund for Nature(BFN), Universitetskaya emb. 7/9, 199034 St. Petersburg, RUSSIA Mail: bfn@bfn.org.ru Internet: www.bfn.org.ru	
Centrale Europe	BUND-Friends of the Earth Germany, Project Office Green Belt, Bauernfeindstr.23,90471 Nürnberg, GERMANY Tel.: +49 911 / 81878-17 Mail: greenbelt@bund-naturschzt.de Internet: www.bund-naturschzt.de	
Balkan	European Nature Heritage Fund (EURONATUR), Konstanzer StraBe 22, 78315 Radolfzell, GERMANY Tel.: +49 7732 / 9272-0 Mail: info@euronatur.org Internet: www.euronatur.org	
23 Countries	National focal points(for details see newsletter on http://www.europeangreenbelt.org)	

4.4 Background data

The Green Belt has been mapped within a ‘Research and Development (R+D) project’ funded by BfN and the German Federal Environmental Foundation (DBU). Before no transboundary datasets existed. The resulting detailed map of the Green Belt gives an impressive overview on the protected areas and land use practices (Figure 4.3, Schlumprecht et al., 2009). Areas of importance for nature conservation on a European scale have been identified as well as such with a high potential for development. This GIS-map and the related database is used as a tool to identify areas where project activities should focus. All information and data collected has been made available to the public, e.g. via internet.

Figure 4.3. Detail of the European Green Belt Map



Note. Schlumprecht et al., 2009.

4.5 Information

As a result of the first conference of the international working group on the European Green Belt at the Fertő-Hanság National Park in Hungary in 2004, in 2006 the book “The Green Belt of Europe - From Vision to Reality” which has been published by IUCN and BfN (Terry et al. 2006). This book provides the first solid basis of background information on the European Green Belt for policy makers and stakeholders in governmental and non-governmental organisations from international to local levels.

The Green Belt secretariat regularly publishes a newsletter that is available in print and as electronic version. This newsletter provides an overview on activities and news as well as information on the Green Belt partners (Focal Points) in all countries.

The newsletter and further information can be procured from the IUCN Green Belt homepage (<http://www.europeangreenbelt.org>).

4.6 Implementation by multilateral projects

In addition to local and regional bi- and tri-national projects large multinational projects are very important for the implementation of the goals and tasks of the European Green Belt Initiative. These offer the necessary settings to work in a network in a target-oriented and coordinated way, to make use of synergies and to accomplish bigger tasks by joining forces.

A very successful project of this kind was the EU-funded INTERREG III B-project ‘Green Belt – protection and valorisation of the longest habitat system in Europe,’ which ran from 2006 to 2008. In this project 19 partners from Germany, the Czech Republic, Austria, the Slovak Republic, Hungary, Slovenia, Croatia and Bulgaria cooperated in the fields of nature conservation, sustainable development and environmental education (Figure 4.4). One product of this project is a web-page (www.greenbelteurope.eu), which contains comprehensive information on various aspects of the Central European Green Belt including many local projects and offers an overview of the results of this INTERREG-project. In the area of the Central European Green Belt a follow-up INTERREG-project is in preparation which hopefully will be funded.

The project ‘Baltic Green Belt’ was started in 2009 in the framework of the INTERREG IV B-Baltic Sea Region Programme. This project can contribute importantly to developing the Green Belt in the Baltic Sea region along the coastline from Germany to Russia (Schmiedel et al. 2009; www.balticgreenbelt.uni-kiel.de).

Figure 4.4. Mobile Exhibition on the Central European Green Belt



Note. A product of the INTERREG III B-project ‘Green Belt – protection and valorisation of the longest habitat system in Europe.’ Photo by BUND-project office Green Belt.

4.7 Examples for local implementation: Project ‘Wolf, Bear and Lynx at the Balkan Green Belt’

The European Nature Heritage Fund (EuroNatur) has run a project on the protection of large carnivores along the Balkan Green Belt with financial support from BfN. The project aimed at securing the Jablanica-Shebenik mountain range as a trans-boundary protected area between Albania and Macedonia that is meant to serve as an ecological corridor for Wolf, Bear and Lynx (Figure 4.5; Schwaderer et al. 2009). The protection of this area is very important, as it represents one of the last habitats of the Balkan Lynx subspecies.

A second focus was put on capacity building within the fields of wildlife ecology and management. Local experts were trained and are now able to support future work in these fields. The project will be continued and extended to other regions along the Balkan Green Belt.

Figure 4.5. The Jablanica-Shebenik Mountains at the Border Between Albania and Macedonia



Note. They serve as an important ecological corridor for wolf, bear, and lynx. Photo by U. Riecken.

5. Outlook

The project Green Belt contributes significantly to the conservation of the European natural heritage and will have positive effects on sustainable regional development based on nature tourism. Furthermore, the border areas form a living memorial that serves to keep the former division of Germany and Europe in peoples' minds as reminder.

During the last twenty years the Green Belt Initiative has had a lot of success both for nature as well as for the people in a Europe growing together. On the other hand a lot of economic changes happened which generate several threats for the landscapes and habitats of the Green Belt. Examples are infrastructure measures (roads, railroads, river constructions, etc.) and changes in agricultural land-use mainly caused by the EU common agricultural policy. The latter is responsible for both, intensification of land-use as well as abandonment of important cultural habitats with a high

level of biodiversity.

Therefore BfN and its partners in Germany and all over Europe have to continue to actively engage in the protection of ecosystems and landscapes along the Green Belt and its sustainable development. In cooperation with national and international partners the main focus will be laid on habitat conservation, trans-boundary cooperation, knowledge sharing and public relations (Ullrich et al. 2009).

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Volume . 15



Large-scale Protection Areas Along the Green Belt – the Example of Schaalsee Biosphere

• Bernhard Seliger



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Large-scale Protection Areas Along the Green Belt – the Example of Schaalsee Biosphere

Bernhard Seliger¹⁾

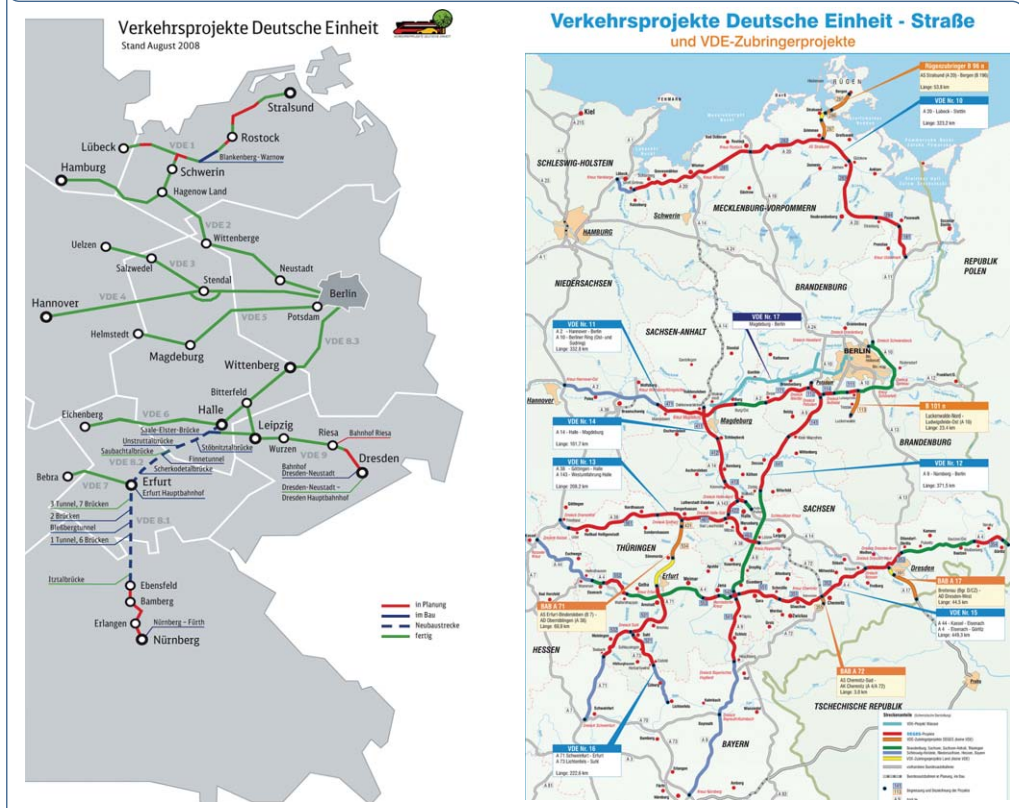
1. Introduction

The Green Belt of 1393 kilometer length along the former inner-German border has been from unification a contested area, where competing economic, agricultural and environmental concepts existed. Among the most important tasks after unification was the re-establishment of the old transportation lines between East and West. The most important of these projects were financed by the Federal government as part of the “Transportation projects German unity” (Verkehrsprojekte Deutsche Einheit). They included nine major railroad projects, seven motorway projects and one canal with a total budget reaching almost 39 bn. Euro. In particular the motorway projects included major cuts through the Green Belt, from the Northern part (Baltic Sea highway between Lübeck and Stettin, motorway Hannover-Berlin) over the central area (motorway Göttingen – Halle) to the Southern part (motorway Kassel – Eisenach, Thuringia motorway between Schweinfurt and Erfurt, motorway between Lichtenfels and Suhl).

But also other uses were reducing the environmental value of the Green Belt, like intensive use of agricultural land, or the designation of industrial zones near the border area, e.g. alongside the former large transit control stations. Therefore, it is no wonder that the vision to preserve the Green Belt in its entirety meets challenges in the implementation. Around 15 percent of the Green Belt area is considered to be endangered in terms of their environmental value. Spatial and environmental planning has to cope with the fact that human development has certain needs which collide sometimes with preservation needs.

1) Bernhard Seliger is resident representative of the Hanns-Seidel-Foundation Korea. The views are those of the author, not necessarily of Hanns-Seidel-Foundation.

Figure 1.1. Railroad and Motorway Development as Part of the “Verkehrsprojekte Deutsche Einheit [Transportation Projects German Unity]”



Note. From Sachstandsbericht Verkehrsprojekte Deutsche Einheit (VDE) - Stand Mai 2009 [Report on Transportation Projects German Unity – May 2009], by the Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Development. Retrieved November 29, 2009, from <http://www.bmvbs.de/Verkehr-,1405.1033253/Sachstandsbericht-Verkehr.htm>

However, while road and railroad links are certainly important, other uses can be reversed. Nevertheless, the federal structure of environmental policy in Germany as well as the long former border line of almost 1400 kilometers of a rather narrow strip (of only 100-200 m on average for the core Green Belt) make it impossible to focus protection on the Green Belt in its entirety. Instead, important focus areas have to be identified and protection has to be adapted in these focus areas. This is truer since habitats are quite diverse and in fact all German valuable habitat types besides Alpine habitats coexist along the Green Belt.

In this paper, the development of large-scale protection areas along the Green Belt is discussed. The second section describes the process and outcome of the stock-taking of habitats in the development and model project of 2001, funded by federal authorities. The third section focuses on one large-scale protection area, Schaalsee biosphere reserve. In the fourth section the development approach reconciling human development and

nature protection for Schaalsee biosphere reserve is described. Section five presents innovative approaches for nature protection in Schaalsee area and its potential uses in Korea.

2. Large-scale Conservation Areas and the Mapping of Focus and Development Areas Along the Green Belt

Since 1979 the West German government promotes large-scale conservation areas of nationwide importance with financial aid, helping to secure biodiversity as well as national natural heritage. This is one of the fiscally most relevant programmes with an annual budget of currently 14 mio. Euro and accumulated expenses of more than 370 mill. Euro. Today, the total size of these projects is more than 2,250 km² or 0.7 percent of the total area of Germany. There are different types of protection areas, which are listed in table 2.1.

Table 2.1. Different Types of Protection Areas in Germany

Name (in German/ in English)	Legal Basis According to the Federal Law on Nature Conservation (BNatSchG)	Characteristics
Naturschutzgebiet (Nature Protection Area)	§ 23 BnatSchG	The strictest form of protection. Destruction, change or impairment is not allowed. Use is only allowed, if it does not contradict protective goals.
National Park	§ 24 BnatSchG	Large-scale landscapes of nationwide importance, dominated by areas not mainly influenced by human activity.
Biosphere Reserve	§ 25 BnatSchG	Large-scale protection of natural and cultural landscapes, to maintain biodiversity and achieve sustainable development
Landscape Protection Area	§ 26 BnatSchG	Large-scale protection areas important for the balance of nature in areas also important for human use, in particular recreational use
Nature Park	§ 27 BnatSchG	Large-scale cultural areas, in which protection of biodiversity and the recreational function for people is jointly developed, with eco-tourism and sustainable use of land as important features

Note. From Own Development After Federal Agency for Nature Conservation, 2009, Gebietsschutz/ Großschutzgebiete. Retrieved November 29, 2009, from http://www.bfn.de/0308_gebietsschutz.html

Large-scale protection areas have to be role models in terms of planning, management and legal preconditions as well as clearly superior in size compared to other protected areas, to become eligible for federal subsidies. Decisions about eligibility are made by the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety. Functionally and fiscally the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation is responsible for large-scale protected areas. Funding concerns the development and maintenance of the area, the buying of land, special measures of renaturation (like raising the groundwater level for wetlands), personnel, material and travel costs of the executing organization of the protection area and adjustment payments, for example, for farmers. The federal share in these costs can be up to 75 percent of the total costs, the state share is usually 15 percent and 10 percent are the own contribution of the executing organization. Usually, these projects are carried out in two phases: in a first phase of one to three years, with the help of external moderators a regional development plan for the project area is designed, which needs the final approval of the executing organization, the state (Länder) and the federal government. In the second phase of around eight to ten years, the plan is realized. After that the state as well as executing organizer have to manage the project sustainable. Core areas of the large-scale protection areas are designated as nature protection areas according to § 23 BnatSchG (Federal Law on Nature Protection).

For the Green Belt along the former inner-German border, in 2001 a so-called “development and model” project (Entwicklungs- und Erprobungsvorhaben or short E + E project) Green Belt was approved by the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation, to shift the concentration of environmental protection in the Green Belt to particularly important areas. The first step of this project consisted of a large-scale mapping effort, being less trivial as well as more costly as it sounds. First, habitat types according to the German Red List endangerment levels 1-3 had to be identified. Small-scale units (of around 100 m lengths) were selected to map these habitat types. All these units had to be evaluated, with a division into “deficit areas” with intensively used biotopes, roads etc., non-endangered areas and medium-endangered areas. A second evaluation concerned regionally important areas and priority type FFH habitats (the highest priority areas according to the European guidelines for nature protection). Finally, the small-scale areas had to be aggregated to large-scale focus areas (with valuable habitats) and development areas (with deficits in habitats). Recommendations for state and federal level projects were made for each of these areas.

According to the results of this mapping effort, 65.11 percent of the Green Belt consists of areas of nationwide importance and additional 6.68 percent of areas with state-wide importance for nature protection. 7.12 percent are development areas, and only around 10 percent are currently not valuable habitats, but have the potential for renaturation. This shows the nationwide and European importance of the Green Belt,

the largest European wildlife corridor and habitat network. Around 20 percent of the Green Belt has been selected as focus areas for large-scale nature protection. The following section will present one of these areas, the Schaalsee Biosphere Reserve.³⁾

3. The Schaalsee Biosphere Reserve – An Overview

The Schaalsee Biosphere Reserve is a protection area of European and national importance, leading for 65 kilometers along the border between Schleswig-Holstein in the West (which is not directly part of the reserve) and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern in the East. It covers 309 km² and is located between the large urban centre of Berlin and the smaller cities of Lübeck in the West and Schwerin in the Northeast. Core of the area is the Schaalsee, an inland lake of 24 km². But also the surrounding areas are important due to their biodiversity. The total area of 30900 ha is divided as follows:

Table 3.1. Schaalsee Land Use

	Area (percent)
Forest	18
Fields	53
Grassland	17
Settlements	2.5
Waterbodies	9
Other	0.5

Note. From the official webpage of Schaalsee Biosphere Reserve. Retrieved November 29, 2009, from http://www.schaalsee.de/inhalte/seiten/landschaft/zahlen_und_fakten.php

18 areas covering 25 percent of the total land are protected as nature protection areas. Besides the Schaalsee itself, 12 smaller lakes (ground moraines) exist. Schaalsee Lake itself is the deepest inland lake in Northern Germany with a depth of 72 m. Differences in altitude along the lakeside are considerable and contribute to the ecological value of the lake, with the highest hill being the Hellberg of 93 m. Five watercourses

3) Detailed results of the mapping for Schaalsee can be found in Schlumprecht et al., 2006, pp. 28-36.

structure the landscape. Administratively, the biosphere reserve is part of two counties in the state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Nordwestmecklenburg and Ludwigslust. The Schaalsee biosphere landscape is dominated by the Baltic beech grove type of forest, moors and wetlands, but also grasslands and fields in a landscape divided in rather small sections.

Already in the late 1950s the environmental value of the Schaalsee was recognized in East and West. In East Germany, in 1958 a landscape protection area “Schaalsee mit Heckenlandschaft Techin” was designated; in the West in 1960 the more comprehensive nature park “Lauenburgische Seen” was designated. In 1986-1989, before the political changes leading to German unification, preparations for a joint German nature protection project were carried out by the East German Institut für Landschaftsforschung und Naturschutz Halle (Saale). The transformation of 1989 and 1990 brought a rapid succession of new protection areas in the East, including in September 1990 the designation of a nature park Schaalsee. In 1992 this nature park was elevated to the rank of a nationwide important project. Already in 1994 the nature park applied to become a biosphere reserve, but only in 1999, preconditions were in place and in January 2000 Schaalsee was recognized as a biosphere reserve.

Figure 3.1. Schaalsee Biosphere Reserve in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (East), Bordering Schleswig-Holstein (in the West)



Note. From the official webpage of Schaalsee Biosphere Reserve. Retrieved November 29, 2009, from <http://www.schaalsee.de/inhalte/seiten/landschaft/karte.php>

Figure 3.2. The Logo of Schaalsee Biosphere Reserve



Note. From the official webpage of Schaalsee Biosphere Reserve. Retrieved November 29, 2009, from <http://www.schaalsee.de/index.php>

Since the biosphere reserve is no museum, but humans are living there, a division in different zones took place to order human activity in the reserve. The core zone is the zone close to a natural state of the region. This zone is located in the 18 nature protection areas, which represent 25 percent of the total area of Schaalsee Biosphere Reserve. This zone in particular comprises moors, siltation areas of lakes and richly structured forests important for biodiversity. This core zone of around 6.2 percent of the area is free of any human activity. The maintenance area consists of 28.9 percent of the area of Schaalsee, with valuable eco-systems. Here sustainable, “soft” land-use techniques are prescribed. This zone includes those parts of the nature protection areas not in the core zone as well as certain representative and valuable and extensively used cultural landscapes important for synanthropic species like hare (*Lepus europaeus*) and white stork (*Ciconia ciconia*). The largest part of the Biosphere reserve, 64.9 percent, belong to the so-called development zone, in which a balanced, sustainable regional development in the sense of the UNESCO programme “Man and Biosphere” takes places.

4. Towards a Comprehensive Development of Schaalsee Biosphere Reserve

As in other large-scale protection areas, in Schaalsee Biosphere Reserve a process of definition of development goals according to the two-tier planning approach (definition phase and implementation phase) took place, in form of a consensus-oriented regional Agenda 21 process of citizens, administration and associations. In February 2004, the multi-annual process was finalized. It includes the mission statement and goals of the Biosphere reserve, the status analysis of the area as well as the implementation concept including an overview over individual projects. Regarding the mission statement of the Biosphere reserve, the preservation of natural basis of human life and life quality are in the center of the goals of Schaalsee Biosphere reserve, understood as the basis of development of this structurally (industrially) weak, largely agricultural area with a relatively low population density. Former disadvantages of the border region, like its seclusion, should be understood as advantages for becoming an attractive area for recreation for the urban regions, in particular the Hamburg metropolitan area. In the framework of this mission three functions of the biosphere reserve were identified—a protection function, a development function and a logistics function. The protection function relates to the importance of Schaalsee biosphere reserve for international bird migration as well as nationwide and Europe-wide important protection area (notified as so-called Natura 2000 area in the European Union). Valuable areas include

lakes, moors, beech groves, extensively used grasslands and hedges. The preservation of these areas is the most important task of the reserve, in case of the water systems also renaturation of moors and wetlands; besides, the dynamics of natural development should be unhindered. The richness in natural assets should also benefit the population of the Schaalsee area in an economic sense.

The development function of the Schaalsee relates to the regional identity of the Schaalsee region as a particular region in the Europe of the regions, and in competition to other regions. In terms of natural development, Schaalsee biosphere reserve and the nature park Lauenburgische Seen (on the former West German side of the border) belong together, but administratively and historically they have been separated. The formation of a particular regional identity, marketing of the “brand” Schaalsee biosphere reserve and modern concepts for agricultural, forestry and fisheries in the area have to be developed. Sustainable tourism is fostered by a marketing campaign “Resting area for migratory birds” and the regional brand plays an important role (see below). The logistics function relates to the development of educational and research concepts for sustainable development and the development of modern nature protection concepts, in particular by the administration of the Biosphere reserve. For this function, the office of the Biosphere reserve, the so-called Pahlhuus in Zarrentin, includes an information center for visitors, including a permanent exhibition on the biosphere reserve and information about special tourism offers, attracting around 40,000 visitors every year.

Among the important innovations of Schaalsee Biosphere Reserve is the creation of a regional brand, “Biosphärenreservat Schaalsee–Für Leib und Seele” (Biosphere Reserve Schaalsee –for body and soul), which is protected by patent and which is appointed by the Biosphere office together with a regional jury. The regional brand is appointed according to the criteria of regional production and environmentally-sound production.

Currently, the brand includes 17 companies of the sectors agriculture and alimentation industries, including bee honey production, fruit production, eco-farming,

Figure 4.1. Regional Branding – the Schaalsee Biosphere Reserve Brand



Note. From the official webpage of Schaalsee Biosphere Reserve. Retrieved November 29, 2009, from <http://www.schaalsee.de/index.php>

almost 40 companies related to gastronomy and accommodation business, seven art and art craft studios, ten businesses related to recreation, including museums and a lake shipping company, and six companies in the sector health and social issues. Every month, in the Biosphere office Pahlhuus a regional market with participants of the branding initiative is held with great success.

5. Innovative Approaches to Nature Protection in Schaalsee Biosphere Reserve – New Concepts for Korea?

Among the rare species attracting most interest in the Schaalsee Biosphere Reserve is the Eurasian crane (*grus grus*), as well as a breeding species as a migratory bird, using

Figure 5.1. Internet Screenshot of the Crane Protection Project at Schaalsee Biosphere Reserve

Schenken Sie den Kranichen am Schaalsee ein Stück Moor !

Home | Kranich-Moor-Projekte | Kraniche schützen | Klima schützen | Biosphärenreservat Schaalsee | Engagieren | Stiftung

- Engagieren
- Moorfläche spenden
- Betrag spenden
- Kranich-Schutz-Aktie
- Zustiften
- Kranich als Erbe

Tessiner Moor
[Mehr Informationen hier](#)

Die Kranich-Schutz-Aktie
Für die Kraniche am Tessiner Moor

Neben der Spende für eine Moorfläche haben Sie die Möglichkeit für das **Tessiner Moor** zu spenden. Hier wurden bereits Flächen gesichert und Renaturierungsarbeiten durchgeführt. Doch für die Erfolgskontrolle, Wasserstandsmessungen, Pflege und weitere notwendige moortypische Bepflanzungen wird weiter Geld benötigt.

Mit 50 Euro Spende werden Sie Kranich-Schutz-Aktionär

Wenn Sie für 50 Euro eine Kranich-Schutz-Aktie zeichnen, erhalten Sie nicht nur dieses dekorative Schmuckpapier, sondern auch eine Einladung zum herbstlichen Kranicheinflug am Schaalsee. Wir informieren unsere Aktionäre regelmäßig per E-Mail und persönlich über alle Projekte am Schaalsee.

[Hier eine Kranich-Schutz-Aktie online zeichnen](#)

Klicken Sie in den grünen Balken, um eine Aktie zu zeichnen. Möchten Sie nicht online zeichnen, dann nutzen Sie bitte die rechts stehende Möglichkeit "anders spenden" oder drucken das [Zeichnungsformular für die Kranich-Schutz-Aktie](#) aus und schicken es uns ausgefüllt und unterschrieben per Fax oder Brief zu.

Die Kranich-Schutz-Aktie ist ein schöner Anblick an jeder Wand und ein gutes Geschenk.

anders spenden
 Sie wollen nicht online spenden? Wählen Sie hier:

- Formular per Post / Fax
- Selbst überweisen

Note. Retrieved November 29, 2009, from <https://www.kranich-schutz.de/kranich-schutz/kranich-schutz-aktie.php>

in the autumn and in spring the secluded shallow waters for resting at night and searching for feed on the extensively used fields. To improve the protection of cranes in the area, two innovative marketing approaches have been invented by Schaalsee Biosphere Reserve. Under the motto “Donate a piece of Schaalsee moor to the cranes” visitors of Schaalsee Biosphere Reserve and visitors of the website of Schaalsee biosphere reserve alike are able to buy so-called “crane shares” and to select a piece of moor for cranes and buy it electronically by clicking on the webpage.

The “crane share” (Kranichaktie) is a “share” at the fixed value of 50 euro. As a representative document, it shows the appreciation of the Biosphere reserve for funding. A private name can be inserted. Using the analogy of the market fulfils two desires of buyers: that to do something good, to have an intrinsic value, and that of having bought a real value as represented by the price of 50 euro. Buyers automatically are included into the distribution of a newsletter and are invited each autumn to a crane watching tour. Donators are mentioned on the website of the reserve

A similar idea of personalization of nature protection donations has been followed with the “donation of moor” programme. In the computer, the user can decide for a minuscule piece of an existing moor to be bought by funds of the executing organization (Trägerverein Schaalsee). By clicking that particular piece, one is the fictitious owner. Again, donators are mentioned on the website.

Both ideas show a way which might also be successful in Korea, where the idea of nature protection took an unprecedented upswing in the past years. The close linkage of nature protection areas with symbolic animals has been very successful in particular in the case of mammals (otters, bears, lynx and wolf) and migratory birds, like here the crane. The crane, already the symbol bird of Korea and used for centuries as a meaningful, but also decorative element in Korea art, is ideal to evoke feelings of compassion and interest, much

Figure 5.2. The Crane Share



Note. Retrieved November 29, 2009, from <https://www.kranichschutz.de/kranich-schutz/kranich-schutz-aktie.php>

more than abstract concepts like “nature preservation.” The compatibility of the preservation of the creation and of the economic development is the main challenge for sustainable development efforts in South Korea, particularly in the border region. The aim of one project of Hanns-Seidel-Foundation Korea, in cooperation with the border regions (mainly Gangwon province and Goseong County), is the protection of the unique nature in the inner-Korean border region. In January 2009, Rainer Mönke, deputy director of the Schaalsee Biosphere Reserve at the green belt in the former inner-German border together with Jürgen Fiebig, head of the ornithological collection of the Natural History Museum Berlin with long lasting experience in North and South Korea and Dr. Wolfgang Mewes, spokesman of the association for crane protection (AG Kranichschutz) Germany visited Korea on a lecture tour. They presented the German experiences with protection of large-scale areas

along the former inner- German border and discussed together with Korean experts the challenges in the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) and the so-called Civilian Control Zone (CCZ) at the inner-Korean border. In Korea the discussion about the future development of the border region now intensifies. First steps, e.g. the mapping of biodiversity in the border region, have already taken place. Rare species like leopard cats (*prionailurus bengalensis*), Eurasian black vultures (*aegyptius monachus*) or especially the Manchurian crane (*grus japonensis*), symbol bird of Korea, arouse sympathy and interest for the protection of the endangered nature in the border region. Especially on the western Peninsula, economic development projects of Greater Seoul restricted many living habitats dramatically.

The group of experts discussed the possibilities of creating large-scale protection areas, which also serve the people. They talked with experts from the partner institutions of Hanns-Seidel-Foundation Korea, amongst others with the Gangwon Development Research Institute and the County chief of Goseong, Hwang Jong-Guk. At the Institute

Figure 5.3. Donate a Piece of Moor



Note. Retrieved November 29, 2009, from <https://www.kranichschutz.de/kranich-schutz/kranich-schutz-aktie.php>

for DMZ-Ecology in Paju, director Kim Seung-ho pointed out the challenges on the western part of the border. During discussions in Cheolwon, which were organized by the county council of the district, especially the situation of the highly endangered cranes was reconsidered. A meeting with the environmental association KFEM (Korean Federation for Environmental Movement) in Goseong district also took place, as well as a visit at Korean Association of Wild Bird Protection in Kimpo and with Nial Moores of Birds Korea in Busan. The opinion of the experts was also in great demand at the environmental policy institutions in Seoul: Among others they gave lectures at Korean Wetland Society and at the Korean Institute for Bio Resources in Incheon as well as at the Environmental Ministry and at the Korea Environmental Institute.

Certainly, there will be difficulties for Korea to create a Green Belt similar to the German model: Until now, only one part of the border is opened, and nobody knows when and if the other part will be transforming. Mechanisms to create consensus and to foster dialogue, to come to accepted development goals including environmental goals are much less widespread than in Germany. And, material aspects of development are much stronger. Nevertheless, given the potentially strong economic forces for other uses of the DMZ once it is opened, it might be a good time to think today how to preserve the splendid nature of the DMZ for future generations. Long-term spatial planning and the introduction or at least preparation of large-scale protection areas may help to achieve this goal.

Figure 5.4. Seminar with Rainer Mönke, Deputy Director of Schaalsee Biosphere Reserve in Seokcho



Note. By Hanns-Seidel-Foundation Korea.

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Tourism Development and Aspects of Spatial Planning in the Former German Border Area

• Bernhard Köppen



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Bernhard Köppen

1. Introduction

Almost all over the world tourism is a growth market which has also great significance for regional development. In Germany, the tourist industry is of high importance. It is estimated that at least 2.8 million employees are directly related to this sector (Deutscher Tourismusverband 2009).

When old industries disappear or major economic changes occur, the orientation towards the local tourist assets and their exploitation can provide a new source of income. In some East German regions, after the severe economic, institutional and societal changes since 1990, tourism has become one of the most important branches of the economy (BMVBS/BBR 2007). This is especially true for the peripheral North-Eastern federal state of Mecklenburg-Pomerania, which has been a classical tourist destination already in GDR. There, the Baltic sea coastline is a major destination for longer stays from one to three week. Weekend and short-time tourism as well as one-day-excursions are common for the German central highlands and cities of historic and cultural importance (such as Weimar and Dresden or – certainly - the German capital city of Berlin).

After German unification, the radical economic shift of East Germany from a fordistic to a post-fordistic society, led to significant changes in the relative importance of the service sector in comparison to the other economic sectors of industry and agriculture, which have formerly not only been *de facto* rather important but were also the major icon of the GDR's self identification and self-description as a true "*workers' and peasants' state*."

As a consequence, reinforcement of tourism and the exploration of further regional potentials became one important strategy amongst others in order to face the new economic challenges. Finally, there was also no other option than looking for new fields in the service sector which could replace at least some of the many workplaces which have been lost mainly in industry, forestry and agriculture.

Reflecting the topic, one territorial entity soon comes up as being potentially exploitable also through tourism: The former borderline itself. After all, it was almost immediately after the fall of the iron curtain recognized as a very precious zone in terms of environmental and natural specifics. Nature reserves and their vicinities do always bear the potential of developing some kind of tourism. So what is today's situation in this context at the former inner-German-border? Is "border-tourism" within Germany a significant phenomenon?

2. The Relevance of the Tourist Industry for Eastern-Germany

In comparison with the "Alte Laender" (West German Federal States), the "Neue Laender" (the new Federal States in Eastern Germany created after German unification including Berlin), the total numbers in tourism are less impressive. Only about 25% of all touristic overnight stays in the year of 2008 were registered in the eastern federal states (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2009), whilst just in the federal state of Bavaria another 20% of overnight stays are registered. The highest share of tourists in Eastern Germany is reported for Mecklenburg-Pomerania (7.4%), followed by the German capital city of Berlin (4,8%) and the state of Saxony (4.4%). All other eastern states have a share of less than 3% of all overnight stays in German tourism.

On the other hand, the relative importance of tourism is very high in the northern part of Eastern Germany, even compared to West German federal states. The biggest ratio of overnight stays per 1000 inhabitants in whole Germany is in Mecklenburg-Pomerania, followed by Schleswig-Holstein (both coastal states in the North, the first being East-German, the other West-German) and Bavaria (South Germany). On fourth rank already, there is Berlin (Deutscher Tourismusverband 2008). In the rest of Neue Laender, the ratio of overnight stays to the number of inhabitants is not so high. It is even below the national mean. On county-level in Eastern Germany only the Landkreise Rügen, Ostvorpommern, Nordvorpommern, Bad Doberan and Müritz show a far above average tourism intensity (measured by the ratio overnight stays per inhabitant). All those counties are in Mecklenburg-Pomerania and are located on the Baltic sea except for Müritz, which is a well known and attractive lakeland in the hin-

terland of Mecklenburg (Statistisches Bundesamt, destatis.de/Regionalatlas, BBR INKAR 2007).

It has to be mentioned, that generally day trips and short term tourism are of higher relevance than overnight stays in terms of volume of sales. About 2/3rd of all volume of sales are due to day-tourism. This is important, as traditionally cities and any attractive landscape (like long stretches along the former German-German border) – also without a worldwide known reputation - within the reach of urban agglomerations tend to be the major destinations for that kind of tourism.

Nevertheless, overnight stays are a common indicator for measuring regional tourist-attraction, as only few reliable data on day-trips is available, whilst overnight stays are monitored and reported on a regular base.

As already mentioned above, tourism is an important sector of Germany's economy. Regional economic development can be mainly depended on income from the tourist industry. This is often the case in remote areas. This means regions which are located relatively far from urban agglomerations or regions of low economic power.

Structural weakness is the dominant characteristic of almost all Eastern Germany. Hence, hope and efforts were put into developing and strengthening the nationwide and internationally growing tourist sector (BMVBS/BBR 2007). Within the last decade, especially this sector also showed significant growth rates in the "Neue Laender" and even became the most important source of income in some regions.

From the years of 1996 to 2006 the number of overnight stays in the Neue Laender increased from 43.3 to 65.8 million annually (Bundesregierung 2008). The volume of sales for longer trips is estimated to count up to €5.7 million, whilst the impact of day-trips sums up to €11 million/year. About 450,000 people in Eastern Germany are directly employed in the tourist sector. It is estimated that until 2020, every tenth job (full time or part-time) may be dependent on tourism (Bundesregierung 2008 and BMVBS/BBR 2007).

The current situation is judged as followed by the national planning agency BBSR, based on on-target studies: "Attractive and diversified scenery appeals to the customer in the New as well as in the Old Laender. The tourism-related opening up of those parts has nearly been completed. Due to the conditions given by unspoiled nature's attractiveness, potentials can only be spotted few and far between."

The tourism-related degree of opening up the New Laender reflects itself in the de facto reached market share which constitutes itself from the relation between the volume of over-night stays and the accommodation offer. Significant discrepancies or competitive disadvantages towards the Old Laender can hardly be spotted. Whereas Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania comes off with an extremely positive proportion between supply and demand, Brandenburg as well as Saxony-Anhalt slightly drop down and come off the worst concerning the accommodation capacity.

But still, the New Laender have a lot to catch up concerning the opening up of foreign markets. According to the nationwide trend, the number of guests from abroad has also increased in the New Laender in the past few years. But in comparison to the old federal states, the number of foreigners concerning arrivals and overnight stays is still much below the federal average.

Having a closer look on the city tourism segment (a market with an enormous potential of economic growth), the New Laender's metropolitan cities come off well. As measured by their market share (overnight stays) in comparison to their number of inhabitants, the city of Dresden ranks on top, followed by Rostock and, last but not least, Potsdam." (BMVBS/BBR 2007, English website).

For the future, East German tourist regions are exposed to harder competition, as travel destinations in Eastern Europe appear on the market. Those places are especially known for being better priced at even equal or sometimes higher judged attractiveness in terms of scenic and cultural aspects. "Furthermore, the people in Eastern Europe are considered to be more hospitable. East Germany's strengths are therefore to find in fields of qualified gastronomic staff, safety as well as neat villages and cities."

Whereas Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania procured itself an exceeding market position on the basis of its given natural resources (coastal scenery), nationally as internationally, Saxony could improve the profile, image and degree of popularity of its most important travel destinations with its strategy to focus on its past and its cultural heritage. Up to now, Brandenburg and Saxony-Anhalt could not as successfully position themselves on the market. With regard to its tourism-related attractiveness and its image shaping elements, Thuringia takes over an average competitive position.

Basically, tourism-oriented marketing structures are not to be aimed at a country's frontiers, but rather on regions offering a destination character. There is no such thing as the typical Brandenburg, Saxony or Thuringia tourist. According to travel destination preferences, only those target segments can be differed, which are attracted by the water site (coast, lakes, fluvial topographies), those that travel preferably to the low mountain range and those that are mainly interested in city tourism." (BMVBS/BBR 2007, English website).

In this context it also was stated, that only by providing service-oriented strategies, niche strategies and theme marketing, the New Laender will be able to face future challenges. One of those niches is and could be even more the niche of the "former inner-border theme" in tourist-marketing.

3. Tourism and Regional Planning

The German planning system is divided into several levels, which basically reflect the

federal principle of the Republic. Although there is a national agency for regional and spatial planning and urban affairs (BBSR), this authority and its supervising ministry (ministry of transport and urban affairs) do not elaborate detailed plans and concepts for regional planning and policy. The central competence for actual planning and action is held by the local communal authorities (municipalities and towns). Actions can be initiated, proposed and monitored by expert planners (either as consultants or as clerks of that local authority) but decisions are made by the local councils, which is a basic principle of Germany's federal understanding of democracy.

So what is the role of national, federal and regional planning authorities or departments? In general on national level the spatial development of Germany is monitored, advices are given and if there is a high desire of specific actions to be taken on regional level, thematic programs and model-projects are developed. These projects are connected to attractive financial funding. Hence, local authorities are very often interested in participating and even compete for being chosen for model-projects of state-funded programs. Briefly: If national planning wants to intervene in regional and local planning, it is mostly done by giving incentives, as there is only very limited (or almost no) possibility to press local authorities on a legal way. Virtually all national ministries use that strategy, when an impact on local level is desired.

On the other hand, there are – certainly – major guidelines of legal character for national and regional planning, which have to be absolutely respected. These are, as already mentioned, quite universal and do never contain statements for or against concrete local actions. Only very few projects of national importance (e.g. the fast improvement of West-East-transportation-infrastructure after German unification called “Verkehrsprojekte Deutsche Einheit”) have a clear “top down” character and are implemented rather radically using specific legislation, if needed.

On the level of federal states, which are responsible for state-planning (Landesplanung), legally binding state-development-plans (Landesentwicklungsplan) are regularly elaborated. The content of those plans cannot contain actions which are against the general rules as marked by the national ministry, certainly. They are quite detailed and have clear statements on local and regional projects to be established.

Within the federal states, regional plans are set up by regional planning agencies which follow the leitmotivs and ideas of the state-development-plan and also detect the actual needs of local development. This is done by sensing and counterbalancing the respective interests of the local authorities in order to guarantee successful and adjusted development for the planning region and neighboring areas.

This system leads to the situation that planning and implementation of tangible projects is always limited to certain areas, for which the respective authority is responsible. The borders of these planning regions are identical with the borders of municipalities, in case the planning is done on local level, or states, or if the planning is done

on the regional level, i.e. the level of the federal state. Hence: The borders of federal states are also borders of regional planning. If integrated strategies are wanted or necessary, politics and planning are certainly free to set up contracts and phase different plans in order to follow similar leitmotifs. This situation does contain potential for conflict and may be inefficient in some cases, but proofed to be rather good. Note: On European level, where there is no formal planning strategy, the so called “method of open coordination” which is totally dependent on mutual agreements between the planning ministries of national states, is even less “powerful”, but proofed also to work astoundingly good.

Tourist planning and the development of tourism are a competence which is located within the ministries of economics but nevertheless taken into consideration at almost all levels by special sector planning. Regional planning basically gets involved, when tourist planning touches – or might touch – diverse fields of spatial and social relevance. Regional planning does guarantee the fair and useful balance of different interests. If legally binding current standards of regional and spatial planning are not respected in projects, these actions will be forbidden. This might especially happen when new projects for mass-tourism are developed.

In order to deal with the important tourist market, federal states as well as local authorities develop “tourism plans” with specific ideas and guidelines. They are adapted to the specific potentials and needs of the respective regions or states.

As for local authorities, the preparation of such a “tourism plan” is not compulsory and the actions and guidelines proposed in those plans are not binding (Becker 1998 p. 459).

For the case of developing border-tourism along the former iron-curtain this means, that tangible measures and projects are much more likely prepared on local and regional level, than being introduced by higher authorities.

4. Tourism in the Former German Border Area

It has been mentioned already, that due to the Green Belt project (see also the specific articles in this publication) many sections of the former borderline are of high value in terms of landscape and ecological importance. This already could be a starting point to promote nature related soft-tourism. On the other hand, the former border could be seen as an important symbol of German history, worthwhile visiting.

Nevertheless, both features did not lead to the genesis of a specific border related tourist attraction of high visibility until now.

Despite its significant ecological importance and being an outstanding project in nature protection, the “Green Belt” is not widely known amongst most people. Thus the number of those traveling for recreation especially in one of those nature reserves

is quite limited. On the other hand, the Green Belt soon became an aspect for local tourist marketing “in situ.” This means, in local initiatives, soft tourism related to the Green Belt is promoted, but mainly for tourists who came to that place anyway. They are then informed by leaflets and so on, provided by local tourist information or tourism and regional policy related associations of formal and informal character.

The old borderline and some of its relicts could certainly be judged as important heritage and symbols of Germany’s youngest history. In fact, there have been practically no initiatives to keep longer stretches or a large number of facilities (e.g. watchtowers) maintained for symbolic purpose. In some places, watchtowers remained visible, in most places, they didn’t last. It is the same for the old “Kolonnenwege”, the surveillance road of GDR Grenztruppen (border guards) parallel to the fences and walls. They still can be found, but large parts of them have been demolished. The border infrastructure from the past has not been erased on purpose, but rather vanished by neglect – the people, who suffered from the border installations, were happy to see them gradually disappear. On the other hand, one should keep in mind, that major efforts were necessary when life threatening installations, as the mine fields and automated killing devices of the GDR, had to be eliminated on the whole length of the border. This process also changed the direct borderline-landscape a lot. Thus, today it is very often not so easy to identify the former borderline itself, if there are no outstanding landmarks (as abandoned watchtowers) or signs.

For more than one decade after German unification there was practically no widely noticed initiative to promote or deal with the old Inner-German-Border except for the Green Belt project. In 2004 finally, a non-governmental initiative of “Deutsches Kuratorium zur Förderung von Wissenschaft, Bildung und Kultur e.V. – Gestaltungsfonds deutsche Einheit” developed and “opened” (with support of the federal government) the so called “Erlebnisstraße Deutsche Einheit” (Recreation and Experience Road of German Unification). This “Road of German Unity” is about 2500km long and follows the old border, oscillating from western to eastern Germany, crossing the border counties of ten Federal States. Major sights of that road are 25 border-museums and 80 border-monuments, but there are – certainly – also references to the Green Belt with its 150 nature reserves. Important remark: The purpose of this initiative was not to promote tourism at first place, but to contribute to democratic political education!

Although the “Erlebnisstraße Deutsche Einheit” has some official character, the type and quality of the particular sights with reference to the history of German separation is not monitored or set on a verified standard. Hence, the information given at the museums e.g. can be more or less elaborated. This is also due to the situation that there is no certification system or official approval for museums. So it is not impossible, that museum guides providing florid statements about the sad, strait times of German separation and cold war, turn out to be former officers of GDR’s Grenztrup-

pen (as it used to be the case in the well known Mödlareuth museum in the mid 1990s). Thus, exactly some of those geezers which were highly involved in maintaining the inhuman aspects of the German socialist state, made their living in exploiting the criminal system they served before even further.

Until now, there are no specific studies on that topic, yet, but it can be concluded that traveling along the old border is a niche sector in German tourism. Nevertheless, it is of some significance. Example given, quite continuously, German journalists and authors do such a travel trying to “investigate” the true state of German unity, produce documentaries or write novels (e.g. East German author Landolf Scherzer) and reports on it. Sportsmen run or cycle the former border, and there are also specific hobby-historians especially interested in cold war and German separation, exchanging information in the internet.

When the border is the main motivation for recreation and tourism, cycling or hiking is a rather common activity. Those trips are mostly individually planned and can practically not be booked via mass-tourism oriented travel companies. But those interested in such a trip, do find good information and offers. This is not problematic, as individual and soft tourism is the appropriate approach to developing tourism in the frequently ecologically sensitive border-zone, anyway.

Tourism is intensive there, where the 1378 km long border crossed or touched traditional tourist areas of high popularity. But it is not due to the former border. Those tourist regions along the former iron curtain are the Western part of Vogtland, facing Upper-Franconia in Bavaria on the other side, with its spas and middle-range mountains, the large Thüringer Wald forest-mountain range in Western Thuringia and the Rhön mountains of North-Bavaria and Hessen, the Harz mountains - which were split into almost two equal halves during the time of German separation - and the Western part of the Mecklenburg Baltic-sea coast. Only these areas of the former borderland are classified as nameable touristic regions of national and partly international relevance (Leibniz Institut für Länderkunde 2000, p. 19). And they have been important tourist destination beforehand. Thus, the border itself didn't play in developing any of them, but even was a hard obstacle for West German tourism in former times. This also means that the longest stretches of the old borderline are crossing rather unspectacular areas without outstanding potential for developing tourism (at least at a first look). Also the so called “tourist attractiveness index” for German counties published by the Federal Agency of Spatial Planning (BMVBS/BBR 2007 p. 10) reveals a rather sobering situation along the border. Only few counties show values way above the national mean. It is quite obvious, that the border could be used as a “hook on” for promoting tourism in any of those counties, but the prospects for a purely border-centered tourist marketing are not very promising. The border-theme is not strong enough for outdoing a lack of general regional tourist attractiveness.

Border-tourism is definitely not the “engine” for tourism industry in the former-border region. Nevertheless it is a quite easy to identify niche, with some specific offers, mainly suitable for individual travelers and day-trips. In any case: Due to the character of the former-border and the numerous nature reserves within the Green Belt project, this area is not suitable for mass tourism.

The combination of ecological preservation in the Green Belt concept with recreational and educational aspects in soft tourism occurs to be a very suitable strategy for tourism to the former iron-curtain. Current projects of local initiatives use this approach. The case of “Das Grüne Band interaktiv erleben – Modellgebiete Thüringer Wald – Thüringer Schiefergebirge/Obere Saale – Frankenwald,” a project led by Regionalverbund Thüringer Wald (Regional Association) which was initiated and supported by the Federal Agency of Nature Conservation (BfN) is a case in point

Twelve partner associations dealing with nature conservation, regional planning and tourism as well as general regional development in Thuringia and Bavaria are trying to promote tourism at the former border by considering seriously the ecological necessities of environmental protection at the same time. The Green Belt itself is the “red line” as well for the touristic “product,” as for communication of the partner from several spheres (environmental protection, tourist industry, education, museums...).

The basic challenges are to combine nature conservancy and increased tourism, to interconnect landscape conservation and tourism, to promote the Green Belt concept and to establish a vivid case-centered inter-administrative and interstate cooperation.

Tangible actions to achieve those aims are pedagogical work camps for the youth, continuous and vocational training for nature guides, the establishment of info points and the connection of theme-related points of interest by hiking trails. Also the inclusion of existing trails and cycling routes is to be examined.

For marketing purposes and public relations, the leitmotiv “Ruhe” (silence) has been chosen, in order to state the intended character of the specific kind of tourism to be developed but also to target exactly a special kind of tourist, who is not attracted by typical offers of mass tourism.

The two other model-regions with similar approaches are “Elbe – Altmark – Wendland: Grenzerfahrungen im Vierländereck” and “Harz: Harz ohne Grenzen – Auf Harzer Grenzwegen durch Natur und Geschichte.” (see also <http://www.bfn.de/fileadmin/MDB/documents/presse/21.5.GruenesBand.pdf>).

Those projects are quite recent, which shows that the approach of combining the border theme in tourism with the Green Belt concept of environmental protection, still has to be tested and tightened.

Choosing again a wider scale and looking on selected indicators revealing the relative role of tourism and the service sector for all counties even do not show only average or even below average values along the former borderline. The share of

employment in the service sector is higher in the above mentioned “classic” tourist regions and not so high in other areas (BBR INKAR 2007). From 1995 until 2005 the share of employees in the service sector was even decreasing with the exception of the Harz mountains and Braunschweig and Magdeburg area (this means on both sides of the ex-border). Also the number of overnight stays in tourism on community level does not reflect any significance of the former border, but reveals the location of larger tourist regions which had been existing already before German separation (BBR INKAR 2007).

Thus, the former German border GDR-FRG is not a particular tourist attraction although the Green-Belt represents a unique feature of landscape and nature protection. This statement could lead to the misleading idea that the former border is without any relevance, today. Quite the contrary, an analysis of the border area checking various economic and social indicators shows, that there is still an obvious difference between East and West (Gatzweiler & Pütz 2007).

For the future it seems very probable, that the interior tourism will stay tourism’s strongest supporting leg with respect to East Germany (BMVBS/BBR 2007). The case of inner German border tourism is, and will be, a niche sector within (East-) German tourist business. Given that the border area is characterized by sensitive landscapes needing a certain isolation, this form of soft eco-tourism can be expected to prevail in the former border area.

5. The Relevance of the German Experience for the Korean Case

As there is neither a specific strategy for border-related tourism in Germany nor reliable empiric studies on its effects and weight within the whole of tourist business have been conducted, no detailed suggestion for planning in Korea can be given. Also the future of the DMZ is subject to speculation, mainly due to the relative unpredictability of the DPRK’s policy as well as a general lack on information about the condition of all sectors of the North-Korean state. Hence, only one general idea seems to be worth mentioning.

Regardless the actual way, the DMZ and CCZ might become (more) accessible to the civilian society, the aspect of nature conservation occurs to be a crucial aspect. Even more than in Germany, where the border zone was neither that large in width (and in Western Germany there was nothing comparable to the CCZ in the Republic of Korea e.g.) nor intersected by difficult to access remote areas of mountainous character, in Korea unique ecosystems of international – maybe global - relevance have

been preserved. First, a Green Belt concept could be developed. Second, the borderline as a symbol could be reflected more, than was (and is) the case in Germany.

Tourism can be an important connective link between promoting ecological as well as democratic awareness and regional development. A certain quality-standard for the information given and the facilities involved should be set and verified.

Measures of nature preservation could even be funded by smart strategies of environment-friendly, soft tourism. As in Germany, the concept of soft tourism could be the general guideline of tourist development. This certainly does not preclude that in certain, designated areas mass oriented tourist offers can also be part of that strategy. An evaluation beforehand could identify the stretches of the DMZ with low value in terms of nature conservation. And certainly it can't be an acceptable and feasible strategy to replace the political and military border by an "eco-border" with continued separation of the Korean people.

The idea of creating a similar tourist road as the "Erlebnisstraße Deutsche Einheit" or the recently implemented "Romantic Road" at the Eastern coast of Korea in Gangwon-Do, might seem a project worthwhile to be followed at first glance. Taking into consideration that there is neither a resilient civilian road infrastructure from West to East nor nameable tourist infrastructure to hook on, such a project does not occur very useful, right now.

Instead, the invention of soft-tourism related strategies with significant ecological, cultural and pedagogical approaches in terms of political, ecological and cultural education would be very innovative and could probably even be marketed internationally.

6. Conclusion

Tourism is one of most important sources of income in many Eastern German regions. Inner German border tourism whereas represents a very particular niche sector. The lack of reliable empiric studies on the true effects, acceptance effects and weight of "soft-border-tourism" on the other hand, does not allow an extensive evaluation of what has been achieved until now.

Despite its symbolic value and precious natural reserves, the former inner German borderline is not an outstanding tourist attraction. Also the "Green Belt" initiative is not widely known amongst most people. On the other hand, references to the Green Belt become an aspect for local tourist marketing and national as well as regional governmental agencies do actively support the interconnection of promoting ecological awareness, nature protection and soft-tourism. As many sensitive landscapes can be found in the former borderland, soft-tourism seems to be the appropriate form of tourism for that specific area.

Such a strategy could also be an option to be checked in the case of Korea, where the DMZ and CCZ of the Republic of Korea represent a zone of even higher ecological value than it has been the case in Germany.

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The European Green Belt as a Form of Environmental Governance

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1. Introduction

The article aims at scrutinizing the emergence and growth of the European Green Belt (EGB) conception. Usually, the concept is used in its regional sense referring to the areal zones on the ground. In this article, a broader approach is utilized which sees the formation and enhancement of the EGB as an environmental governance process. From this perspective EGB means three things. Firstly, it consists of certain areas on the ground with certain characteristics that make it possible to define them as GB zones. Secondly, EGB is, simultaneously, a tool of environmental governance which aims to bind the areas together and enhance defined ecological and social purposes. Thirdly, EGB refers to a transnational network of actors which designs the conceptions, coordinates the process and puts EGB into action. These three interlinked elements together create a whole which is called the European Green Belt.

The article aims to link the formation and furtherance of EGB in the environmental governance discussion which has been increasingly popular subject in the literature on environmental policy and planning. EGB can be approached as green belt governance and in order to understand its roots and significance, its functioning as interplay between above mentioned three elements is necessary to be scrutinized. The article aims at answering the following questions: How the areas, tools and networks of EGB have emerged and developed? How the governance networks operate and which actors are involved? By answering these questions, it is possible to draw conclusions concerning concept's applicability in other parts of the world than Europe as well.

The article starts with a brief introduction of environmental governance perspective. It continues as a description of the formation of GB in its three senses as socio-ecological regions on the ground, as a governance tool and as a network of actors. The article is based on literature sources and a systematic analysis of available EGB documents.

2. Green Belt as Environmental Governance

The governance concept has become a popular notion among scholars examining a changing role of government and emergence of new forms of governing (e.g. Rhodes, 1996; Jessop, 1998; Pierre, 2000; Kooiman, 2003; Bulkeley, 2005). This change has been interpreted as a shift from government to governance. The concept of governance refers to dispersed, multi-scalar and hybrid stakeholder networks which have challenged hierarchical, territorially bound and organizationally fixed governmental structures as the only forums of policy making. The concept means, on the one hand, that there has been a 'horizontal' transfer of state operations to civil society and business actors, and on the other hand, that there has been a 'vertical' shift of responsibilities of the nation-states to other geographical scales.

Echoing Rhodes (1996) governance is often defined as self-organizing, interorganizational networks which complement markets and governmental hierarchies as governing structures. Governance networks allocate resources and exercise control and co-ordination. Some governance scholars exaggerate the importance of non-state actors in steering public affairs. I do not, however, believe that these networks would totally undermine state bodies. Multi-organizational and –sectoral governance networks have complemented existing governmental regulations, formed novel combinations with civil and business organizations and reorganized governmental hierarchies (see Whitehead, 2003).

Sørensen and Torfing (2005) suggest that such networks have a relatively stable horizontal articulation of interdependent, but operationally autonomous actors, who interact through negotiations. They take place within a regulative, normative, cognitive and imaginary framework that, to a certain extent, is self-regulating. Governance networks can emerge and exist in many different forms. Some of them are self-grown and growing from below, and some others are initiated from above. The network relations can be informal in nature or assume the form of highly formalized associations. Usually, they cross organizational boundaries but they can sometimes be intra-organizational. Their temporal existence varies and the geographical scale can range from local to national and global levels (Sørensen and Torfing, 2005, pp. 205-206).

The development of the governance conception is largely based on studies on

public services, international relations and other such ‘societal’ topics, but it has been adopted also by numerous researchers focusing on the natural resource related politics (e.g. Cashore & Newsom, 2004; Bulkeley, 2005; MacCarthy, 2005; Kortelainen et al., 2009). Issues related to natural resource utilization and conservation have generated novel governance arrangements, networks and processes at different spatial scales. Governmental agencies have lost much of their previous monopoly in regulating resource use and protection since various other stakeholders from the sphere of civil society to business are participating in official and unofficial decision making and enforcement. Numerous studies have witnessed these developments (e.g. van Kersbergen & van Waarden, 2004; Agrawal et al., 2008; Bodin & Crona, 2009). Various sorts of public-private partnerships are part of everyday practises of environmental planning and management at all geographical scales from local projects to transnational policies. The following definition summarises main elements that usually are linked to environmental governance:

“..environmental governance is synonymous with interventions aiming at changes in environment-related incentives, knowledge, institutions, decision making, and behaviors. More specifically, we use “environmental governance” to refer to the set of regulatory processes, mechanisms and organizations through which political actors influence environmental actions and outcomes. Governance is not the same as government. It includes the actions of the state and, in addition, encompasses actors such as communities, businesses, and NGOs. Key to different forms of environmental governance are the political-economic relationships that institutions embody and how these relationships shape identities, actions, and outcomes...” (Lemos et al., 2006).

Forest utilization and management gives an example of these developments. Previously, it was almost solely conditioned by state-centred top-down regulatory systems, but today it is increasingly influenced by hybrid networks combining actors from business, ENGOs, certification agencies, community groups and numerous others. These networks are self-organizing entities which can appear in an instant manner as in ENGO-led campaigns or attain such an institutionalized form as forest certification systems. They are transnational, since sovereign states—although being still highly significant—have lost their previous monopoly and manifold non-state actors have entered the scene (see Cashore & Newsom, 2004; Kortelainen & Kotilainen, 2006; McCarthy, 2006; Agrawal et al., 2008).

Above and most of the other such definitions, however, neglect one important element in environmental governance – the environment itself. I believe that it is necessary to further broaden the meaning of the concept and use it to describe socio-ecological milieus which hold enabling and conditioning properties and are spatio-tem-

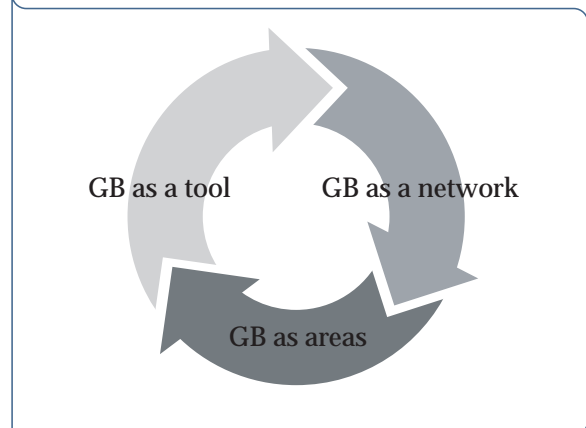
porally contingent. In their discussion on governability, Chuenpagde et al. (2008) include 'natural systems' as elemental parts of their holistic approach to environmental governance (also Jentoft, 2007). Using different terms, I maintain that the local and regional combinations of social and ecological features condition, support, transform, allow or deny the materialization of environmental governance systems and practices. In this approach environmental governance is afforded by geographically varying socio-ecological milieus, which provide different modes of environmental governance with geographically variable amount of opportunities, support, obstacles, resistance or building-blocks. These relational mixes are co-constructed by a heterogeneous set of relations ranging from locally bound practices to governmental policies and transnational networks. They form locally specific constellations and provide divergent affordances for different environmental governance arrangements (Kortelainen et al., 2009).

Green belt initiative and projects provide us with an illustrating example of hybrid multi-sited and transnational nature of contemporary environmental governance. EGB has been designed, promoted and materialized by a heterogeneous set of actors originating from various European countries. The network consists of actors from different societal fields especially from NGOs, research communities and governmental agencies. Figure

2.1 illustrates the three elements of EGB concept and their mutual interdependence.

Firstly, EGB exists as areas and their socio-ecological milieus on the ground along the external borderlands of the former socialist block. Secondly, EGB is a tool or combination of instruments of environmental governance which are aimed to preserve environments and create connections in these border areas. Thirdly, EGB forms a network of actors which aims at enhancing the concept and implementing EGB initiative on the ground in borderlands. These three interlinked and simultaneous elements are in a necessary relation with each other. They are all required and mutually influence each other forming the environmental governance process called the European Green Belt. I will start with presenting the areas of EGB.

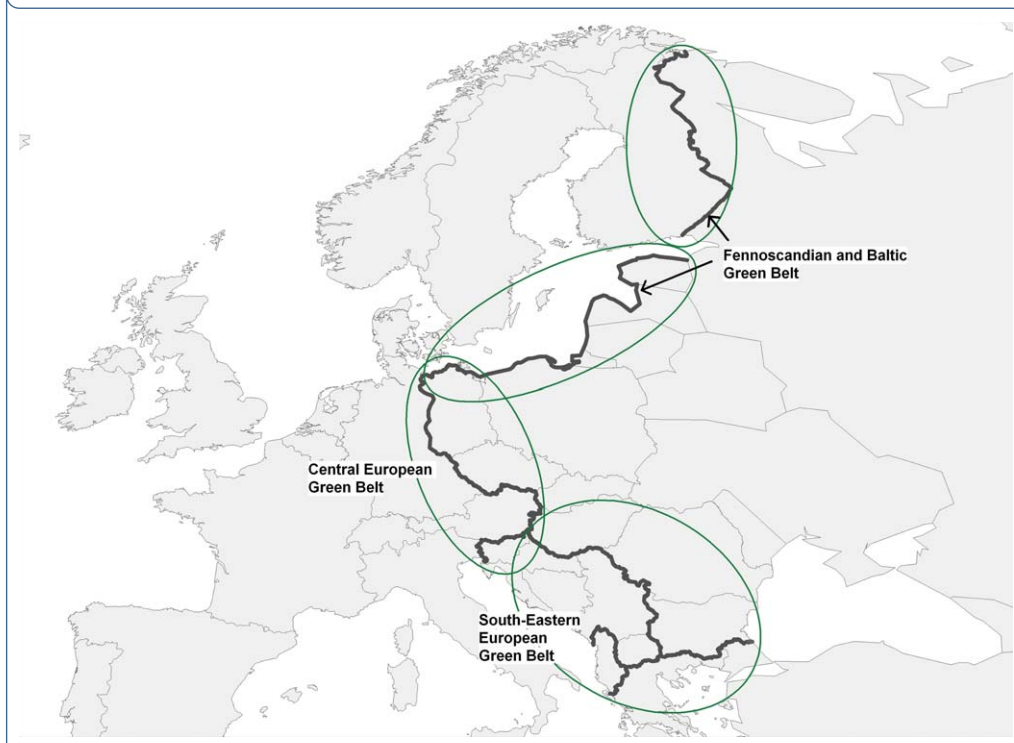
Figure 2.1. The Green Belt as a Process of Environmental Governance



3. Green Belt on the Ground

The original idea to develop EGB initiative was strongly shaped by the border areas as a heritage of the cold war geopolitical order and tensions. This cold war boundary cut Europe from the Barents Sea to Mediterranean and divided the whole continent in two rather different and separated worlds. A strictly controlled and impenetrable boundary was framed by border zones inaccessible to economic or other human activities. The width of the zones varied being usually wider on the 'socialist side' of the border, and in them the widest in more remote areas. After the collapse of socialist block, however, it lost its role as a barrier to the movement of people and information. As the significance of the borders diminished allowing more open communication, also the border zones were made thinner or dissolved. The heritage of the former geopolitical boundary is still visible in the landscape of various parts of Europe. Closed border zones were usually left out of economic utilization making many of the regions ecologically valuable zones or corridors.

Figure 3.1. A Map of the European Green Belt



The European Greenbelt refers to areas along the former boundary between the so called socialist block and West-European societies. Although it is presented as a continuous zone, in most of the regions it actually consists of scattered protected areas in the vicinity of the border. It is more like a chain than a continuous zone. The Greenbelt activists themselves divide the area into three sub-regions: the Fennosandian and Baltic Greenbelt in the North and along the coastline of the Baltic Sea, Central European Greenbelt and South Eastern European Greenbelt. These regions will be described in more details below.

Table 3.1. The Borders and Their Length Along the European Green Belt

Norway – Russia:	196 km	Austria – Slovenia:	330 km
Finland – Russia:	1340 km	Slovenia - Hungary:	102 km
Estonian coastline:	3794 km	Italy – Slovenia:	232 km
Latvian coastline:	531 km	Croatia – Hungary:	329 km
Lithuanian coastline:	90 km	Hungary – Serbia:	151 km
Kaliningrad Oblast coastline:	140 km	Serbia – Romania:	476 km
Polish coastline:	491 km	Serbia – Bulgaria:	318 km
German coastline:	381 km	Bulgaria – Greece:	494 km
Germany – Germany:	1393 km	Bulgaria – Turkey:	240 km
Germany – Czech Republik:	784 km	Macedonia – Greece:	246 km
Czech Republic – Austria:	362 km	Serbia – Albania:	115 km
Austria – Slovakia:	91 km	Montenegro – Albania:	172 km
Austria – Hungary:	366 km	Albania – Greece:	282 km

Note. Retrieved from http://www.europeangreenbelt.org/002.theborders_sites-details.html

The border area between Finland and Russia forms the major part of the Fennoscandian Green Belt (FSGB). The area is and has during its history been extremely sparse populated and remote from the population centres. The scale of economic activity has always been small, only forest related industries (tar-burning, slash and burn -cultivation and modern forestry) have had significant environmental effects on the peripheral woodlands. Nevertheless, extreme remoteness and wide border zones especially on the Soviet side left huge areas of forests practically untouched (Hokkanen et al., 2007). After the collapse of Soviet Union, these huge intact areas started to be of interest of multinational forestry companies in the 1990s. This led to conflicts between forestry companies and transnational environmental organizations which aimed at preserving the old-growth forests of the North-West Russia (Lehtinen, 2006; Kortelainen, 2008).

The origin of the Fennoscandian Greenbelt dates back to the time before the collapse of Soviet Union, since the discussions concerning cross-border cooperation in nature protection started in late 1980s. As a result, Friendship Park was established consisting of five separate protected areas on the Finnish side and Kostamukshsky Strict Nature Reserve in Russia. Since then, there have been several working groups coordinating and joint projects carrying out environmental cooperation between Finland and Russia (Karivalo & Butorin, 2006; Lehtinen, 2006).

In spite of its remoteness, FSGB does not form a continuous belt along the border but consists of a scattered protected areas in Finland, Norway and Russia. In Norway there are four protected areas covering altogether 27,000 hectares of land, in Finland the combined size of 14 protected areas within the green belt is 580,000 hectares and in Russia there are 6 protected areas with 508,000 hectares which belong to the green belt (Karivalo & Butorin, 2006, pp. 40). In addition to this, there are several hundreds of thousand hectares of old-growth moratoriums along the Russian side of the border which have been conserved by an unofficial agreement between environmental groups and forestry companies (see Kortelainen, 2008; Tyshianiouk, 2009).

The Baltic Green belt (BGB) is the most recent part of the area of EGB. It differs from the other parts of the green belt because it consists predominantly of shore line environments along the east coast of the Baltic Sea. The German part of BGB consists of a dense net of national nature protection and NTURA 2000 areas. Especially, in the eastern parts of the coastal strip is unsettled and unutilized due to former GDR's system of restriction and control zones which reached up to 5 kilometres inland (Körner & Barkowski, 2009). In Poland, the green belt activities concentrate on projects which aim at transforming agriculture into a more sustainable and less polluting direction in the coastal zone of the country (Skorupski, 2009).

Lithuania's and Kaliningrad's (Russia) coast is dominated by 100 kilometre peninsula of Curonian Spit. The peninsula is protected area consisting of two national parks, the other being on the Russian and the other on the Lithuanian side (Albrecht, 2009). Within

the green belt scheme the Lithuanian organizations are developing recommendations and good practice of coastal protection and conservation aiming to reduce the threat of erosion and other damages (Morkvenaite & Blazauskas, 2009). In Latvia, public access to the coastal zone was strictly restricted which left large parts untouched. There is a large national park as well as network of NATURA 2000 areas which form the backbone of the green belt on the Latvian shoreline (Damberg & Ratkevica, 2009). Finally, Estonian part of BGB is characterized by areas of the former military bases of the Soviet army. Some of the areas were polluted by the army but many of them represent areas of ecological importance (Sepp, 2009).

In Central Europe, the green belt runs through Germany along the former GDR border. After the fall of iron curtain, the border was dismantled entirely and as its heritage there is a narrow zone which has been outside economic and other utilization for decades. The plan is to protect the narrow central strip which would function as a corridor between larger reservation areas along the zone. The Green Belt continues along the borderline between Czech Republic and Germany, consisting of, for example, a transboundary national park (Bavarian Forest/Sumava). EGB continues along the Austrian border against the former socialist countries of Czech republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Slovenia where it reaches the Mediterranean Sea. There are national parks and other important protected areas also in this part of the EGB (Geidezis & Kreutz, 2006).

The South-Eastern European Green Belt (SEGB) consists of areas where iron curtain existed in Southern Europe. Here, EGB branches off to several lines that criss-cross the Balkans. This part of the EGB separate former Yugoslavian countries from Hungary Romania, Bulgaria and Albania, and, furthermore it detaches Greece and Turkey from the above mentioned countries. Also the core of SEGB consists of protection areas and other ecologically important sites in different countries and in this part of the EGB landscapes are dominated by mountainous environments (Schneider-Jakoby & Fremuth, 2006).

The concrete socio-ecological milieus of these border areas affect and afford the EGB governance in many ways. Firstly, they 'took part' in the original initiation of EGB concept. The regions themselves as relatively intact areas and their opening after the political changes enabled and induced interested people to develop the GB idea in the beginning (see Riecken et al., 2006). Secondly, the former borders between East and West define the regions where the green belt concept is possible in the first place since all border areas are not eligible to join EGB. Due to its definition, it is restricted only to the boundaries of former socialist countries. Thirdly, the regions influence the EGB concept through their geographical difference. Geographical variation in socio-ecological circumstances affects strongly how the concept is being defined, interpreted and implemented. The border areas are different in terms of openness, population density, political role, human land use and biophysical characteristics. When materializing EGB concept on the ground, local and regional socio-ecological milieus affect strongly how the projects are carried out. Conser-

vation plans, for example, may cause conflicts with local population which require negotiations and new approaches (e.g. Lehtinen, 2006).

4. Tool of Environmental Governance

The concept EGB itself, its definition and use, is an important tool of environmental governance. The concept of the green belt has been used for different purposes. In planning literature, it originates from Garden City movement in the 19th century and has been used in urban planning ever since describing the unbuilt zones around and within urban environments (Thomas, 1963; Amati, 2008). The use of the concept was extended to environmental planning and management when it started to be used to express the ecological importance of wildlife areas on former or existing national boundaries. It started in the in the late 1980s when it was realized that former 'iron curtain' borderlands represented an important ecological zone and corridor across the European continent.

The green belt concept was used to describe border areas in both Finnish-Russian border area and Germany independently of each other. Already in the 1970s satellite images detected a dark green zone of old-growth forests on the Finnish-Russian border. At the same time, environmental cooperation between the Finnish and Soviet authorities was started. The cooperation intensified in the 1980s and especially in the early 1990s when the border zones were partly opened for economic activities. An inventory project on border forests was carried out in 1992-1994 which showed the ecological value of ecosystems and species in the area. The results led to an idea to establish a network of separate protected areas in the Finnish-Russian border areas. The concept Fennoscandian Green belt was used to describe the network (Lehtinen, 2006).

In Germany, the green belt concept developed soon after the fall of iron curtain in 1989. Environmental activists all over the unified Germany gathered together giving birth to the idea of the green belt. The dismantling of the border had exposed the ecological value of the border zone. Environmentalists generated the idea that the former GDR border should be preserved and seen as a backbone of the ecological network in the central Europe. In 1990, the then environmental minister Klaus Töpfer started to support the idea of the green belt. From 1992 Federal Agency of Nature Conservation started to fund various nature conservation projects along the GB. The German government declared the German part of the GB to be part of the national natural heritage in 2005 (Riecken et al., 2006).

Although the initiation and invention of the concept took place independently in the beginning, quite soon actors from different regions found each other and started to design a more general concept and framework for EGB. The initiative includes two

basic goals that the actors and projects should try to reach in all parts of EGB. Firstly, from an ecological perspective the green belt should be seen as a network which connects parks and protected areas with their surrounding landscapes. Secondly, from a more social perspective the green belt should foster sustainable development initiatives and bring together people in regions adjoining the former iron curtain. The conception of EGB is based on the vision of ecological networks and on the idea of trans-boundary cooperation. In other words, the goal is to create connections and mobility ecologically along the green belt and socially across the green belt. The targets related to the ecological network perspective have especially guided the initiation but also major part of activities is concentrated on it.

“Based on all the information generated in the different parts of the Green Belt .. and the history of cooperation across the different borders, it became clear that a similar situation existed throughout the route of the former Iron Curtain. This suggested that this border system could provide the basis or backbone of a European ecological network with large core areas and connecting areas that stretches along the entire length of the continent and that should be preserved and developed further. Therefore the vision was born to establish a Green Belt from the Barents Sea to the Black Sea including the Balkan Green Belt and the border between Italy, Austria and Slovenia, taking into account that the latter section had not been separated by as strong a barrier as other parts. It was clear from the beginning that as this ecological network would travel through an immensely diverse set of countries, the structure and implementation of the Green Belt would differ in the various regions depending on the specific natural, historical, political and social preconditions” (Riecken et al., 2006, pp. 6).

Table 4.1. Criteria for the Determination of Elements That are Important to the Function of the Green Belt as an Ecological Network (Schlumprecht, 2006)

Type	Description
Core areas	Large protected areas like national parks including their planned enlargements, very large SCI/SPAs or nature reserves, or UNESCO World Heritage Sites.
Cluster of stepping stones	a) Small- to medium-sized SCI/SPAs or nature reserves (similar sites with common conservation targets) which are grouped together. b) Biosphere reserves (their zonation usually reflects a similar situation).
Linear corridors	Narrow but long continuous protected areas running on or along the Green Belt or crossing it (e.g. parts of the river Elbe, or of the Drava-Mura-River system) and connecting protected areas along the Green Belt.

Type	Description
Satellite areas in buffer zones or core satellite area	Small- to medium-sized protected areas in the direct neighbourhood of/in a buffer zone around core areas, assumed to be functionally connected to the core areas or having a high potential for the development of connectivity.
Stepping stones	Small- and medium-sized protected areas (important on a regional or local scale, but not on an international scale).

The ecological perspective of EGB is based on theoretical discussion on ecological networks and landscape ecology (e.g. Jongman, 1995; Ingegnoli, 2002). The ecological network is a concept developed to enhance the conservation of biodiversity. The concept is based on an idea that usually separate and unconnected nature reserves or other ecologically valuable areas should be connected together by different kinds of ecological corridors or gateways. This is supposed to enable different species to migrate and interact, and thus maintain or even diversify biodiversity. Usually the ecological network is divided into core areas (protected areas or high nature value areas), corridors or stepping stones and buffer areas (allowing more intensive human use, but taking full account of the provision of ecosystem services). Table 4.1 provides us with an attempt to create basic criteria to develop EGB as an ecological network.

Ecological network concept forms the conceptual core of EGB process, but the more practical instructions how to enhance the implementation and maintenance of the green belts are specified in the Programme of Work –document. Experts and national representatives from the countries along the Green Belt prepared these instructions in a meeting at the “Ferto Hanság National Park” in Hungary in 2004. It identifies the steps required to implement the green belt concept. The programme of work consists of three elements: 1) direct actions for the establishment of the EGB, 2) institutional structure and stakeholder participation and 3) enabling activities (Programme of Work, 2005).

The first element lists specific targets and suggests actions that should be carried out. Suggestions include, among others, GIS mapping, research and data generation of the regions. One of the main tasks is also to include the concept of EGB in all possible projects, and make it more visible and well known by integrating it into different local and other events. There are also suggestions to activate and increase collaboration and information exchange between different stakeholders involved in or affected by EGB. The second element specifies the roles of actors in the initiative including transnational NGOs, national NGOs and governmental actors. This element details the organization of actors and their operational roles (see below). Third element, enabling activities, identifies operational tools which aim at ensuring that the preceding two elements are achieved. There are propositions concerning, for example, a web site, work-

shops, funding opportunities, the coordination of separate projects on the ground and design of a brand for the EGB (Programme of Work, 2005).

The ecological network concept forms the core of the EGB initiative. The final target of the EGB governance is to create such a network that would connect ecologically valuable areas together along the former cold war boundary. This would form a continuous chain which would cross the entire continent. The other goal of EGB, cross-border contacts, receives much less attention in EGB documents. The social aspects of EGB seem to be perceived more like an implement for or a by-product of the ecological programme.

5. Building the Networks

The third aspect of the EGB is the network of actors which sets the process in motion, promotes the concept and tries to implement it on the ground in different parts of the Belt. In the beginning, there were actors working separately on a national basis. German ENGOs organized meetings and developed the idea of EGB. The Finnish and Russian authorities carried out cooperation projects in their own border areas. However, in order to become a European project international networks and collaboration practices had to be created. This was one of the issues discussed in the all-European meeting in Hungary 2004. As a result of the discussions, the Programme of Work presented the main guidelines for building the network of actors and specifies their roles and goals in generating EGB governance. According to the programme the EGB network of actors is intended to be open for all countries and stakeholders along the belt.

European Green Belt community represents presently a quite typical form of environmental governance where actors from different societal fields form a hybrid network of actors. This is indicated by the EGB organization itself by following words:

“A wide variety of actors is active in the European Green Belt initiative. Members are national and international NGOs, state agencies for nature conservation and regional development, protected areas' management authorities and the regional coordinators and national focal points...” (<http://www.europeangreenbelt.org>)

The main coordinating body of EGB is the Secretariat of the initiative. A transnational ENGO, IUCN - the World Conservation Union - coordinates the pan-European Green Belt initiative. It links the stakeholders with each other and with the secretariat, contributes to the development of projects and acts as an information hub. The position of the Green Belt coordinator is embedded with IUCN's Programme Office in Belgrade. Regionally the Green Belt organisation is divided into three organisational sections:

Fennoscandia and Baltic, Central Europe and South-Eastern Europe. Each of the regions has a regional coordinator.

The Programme of Work defines some tasks for the involved stakeholders. Countries bordering the green belt should have a representative who has been authorized by national authorities. These representatives are called National Focal Points, and at the moment there are 18 such focal points. Not all the countries along the Green Belt have Focal Points, and Norway, Russia and Finland are among these countries. Focal points are either members of NGOs, researchers and their research institutes or administrators of protected areas (<http://www.europeangreenbelt.org>). National Focal Points are important actors towards national governments since they are the ones whose task is to promote the Green Belt concept within state conservation policies. Focal Points' task is to also to intensify collaboration with governmental bodies, also others than conservation bodies (Programme of Work, 2005).

Finally, the network of actors includes also the numerous concrete projects that take place in various locations within the Green Belt regions. The aim of these projects is to attract actors to join the EGB and simultaneously expand the significance of the concept as an environmental governance tool. The actual work of the EGB actors consists of projects at different spatial scales. There are activities that are called pan-European projects including occasional international workshops and a special database project which is establishing a common and transboundary database consisting of information on important protected areas and other related topics. However, most of the projects are regional or local projects of which some examples are listed below.

Table 5.1. Some Examples of Regional and Local EGB Projects

Regional projects:

- Interreg IIIB Project: Protection and Valorisation of the longest habitat system in Europe – Green Belt
- Balkan Lynx Recovery Programme 2006-2008 (FYR Macedonia, Albania, Kosovo)
- Balkan Green Belt as Ecological Corridor for Wolf, Bear and Lynx (Jablanica-Shebenik Mountain Range)
- Civil-military Cooperation for Transboundary Nature Conservation along the European Green Belt
- INTEREG VI B Baltic Sea Region Programme project: Baltic Green Belt

Local Projects:

- Integrating Local Communities and Nature Protection in the European Green Belt (Gornje Podunavlje Special Nature Reserve, Serbia)
- Raising Awareness about Biodiversity and Sustainable Community Development in the Stara Planina Area
- Experience Green Belt (Germany)
- Testing- and Developing Project (F+E Vorhaben) “Habitat Type Inventory of the German Green Belt”
- Billy Bushcricket walks along the Green Belt
- Land Purchase in the German Green Belt
- Living Werra - Lebendige Werra
- Species and Habitat Protection Project “Steinachtal and Linder Ebene”
- Wo ist meine Zeltbahn? Where is my shelter?
- Green Belt Photo Exhibition
- Cross Border Stones
- The Pamirian Winterfat (ÖNB)
- Willow Pollards (ÖNB)

Note. Retrieved from <http://www.europeangreenbelt.org>

6. Conclusions

This article has discussed EGB as an environmental governance process consisting of the concrete areas, conceptual and operational governance tool and network of actors. All these elements have been necessary for the emergence and growth of the EGB initiative and process. Firstly, the borderlands along the boundaries of previous socialist countries have, through their socio-ecological properties, afforded and enabled to initiate and implement such concept as EGB. Secondly, the concept itself has been further designed and utilized as a tool of environmental governance by connecting it to the theoretical basis of ecological networks, and by preparing standard measures to guide efforts in all parts of EGB. Thirdly, due to the transnational character of the concept, a broad international network of actors has been created reaching from the Barents Sea to Mediterranean and from governmental offices in national capitals to local projects at borderlands.

This article has shown that implementing of EGB is not only a process that takes place through the projects on the ground but is a construction work which tries to attract as many actors as possible to support and join the initiative. Especially strong emphasis seems to have been put on attracting governmental agencies and local

groups to support the initiative in all involved countries as well as in the border regions. One of the main goals has been trying to integrate the EGB concept within governmental projects and policies. The construction work of EGB takes place also on a more symbolic level. A brand for EGB initiative has been developed which tries to make the idea and approach associated with the Green Belt visible and widely known. This includes, for instance, the design of a logo and its usage in all possible occasions, publications and events related to the Green Belt.

The EGB is an umbrella notion which covers and integrates projects, protected areas, actors and institutions under the common concept and 'label'. Most of them would exist also without the broader concept of EGB. Thus, it is extremely difficult to assess the significance of the green belt governance. Doubts have been presented about the ecological importance of the process since the belt seems to resemble more a scattered archipelago than a connected ecological network. The pan-European ecological network resembles more a conceptual framework than a material thing on the ground (see Lehtinen, 2006). The significance of EGB rests more on its political, social and economic potentials.

EGB projects are socially important because they provide people with various kinds of possibilities for contacts across the borders. Until now EGB has been a process which has brought mainly authorities, researchers and NGOs from the opposite sides of the borders together within common cross-border cooperation projects. However, EGB has many but yet unrealized potentials that would bring people together across the borders. The EGB concept expresses various economic potentials since it creates new opportunities for tourism and recreation business. There are several projects related to EGB which especially try to enhance ecological tourism in the European borderlands. Finally, the EGB possesses a strong symbolic and political aspect since the positively valued green belt concept has replaced the earlier, more negative iron curtain images. This is a great change keeping in mind the heavy historical burden the cold war border has.

Hitherto, the green belt concept has been applied only in the European context, but it could be a feasible initiative in other parts of the globe as well. There are various national boundaries in the world with political tensions and problematic historical encumbrances. The European experience has shown that the EGB can create positive images, ease tensions, bring actors closer together and have several positive ecological and social potentials. The border between two Koreas is one of the most impermeable borders in the world. The EGB is mainly designed to be implemented in more open borderlands, and thus, it is as such not applicable in Korea. However, experiences at the Finnish-Russian border, as part of EGB, illustrate how green belt cooperation is possible even across a relatively closed border. I hope that EGB concept presented in this article would become familiar in Korea among authorities, researchers and NGOs. It

could give some conceptual and practical building blocks to design a Korean Green Belt initiative. I would see it as a usable tool for arranging the environmental governance of the border landscapes, bring people closer to each other and improve the extremely negative image of the present border between two Koreas.

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