

# Naturathlon 2009

Nature without borders  
Natur grenzenlos



umweltbundesamt<sup>®</sup>

An den  
President European Parliament

Rue de Levant,  
6700 Strasbourg

## Memorandum

### for the conservation and preservation of the European Green Belt

### By the participants and visitors of the NATURATHLON 2009

#### **The European Green Belt**

Europe was divided by an inhuman border for more than 40 years: The “Iron Curtain” – a result of Europe’s political division after World War II. Due to the restricted accessibility and remoteness of the former border area between West and East Europe, a unique diversity of animal and plant species has been able to survive. Today, the former border strip is home of many threatened species.

This European Green Belt is an important European ecological corridor interlinking adjacent valuable natural and semi-natural areas. The Green Belt has developed from a once separating border into a connecting element of outstanding meaning for Europe’s natural heritage and at the same time living memorial of the former separation of Europe.

The year 2009 marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the fall of the Iron Curtain.

**Mindful that** that the European Green Belt includes valuable natural and cultural landscapes and forms an important ecological corridor,

**Recognizing** that the Green Belt is an essential contribution to the conservation of biodiversity and that it is an outstanding part of the European natural and cultural heritage,

**Aware of the responsibility** that the Green Belt has to be maintained as a living memorial for Europe’s former separation for future generations,

**Committed** to achieve the aims of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and to fulfill the requirements of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands,

**Aiming** to sustainably develop the Green Belt regions and herewith to support a sustainable economic development

**Wishing** to protect the European Green Belt at the best,

The subscribers call on the European parliament to increasingly campaign for the conservation and further development of the European Green Belt.

**We underline the following wishes:**

- Concrete steps should be taken to permanently conserve the European Green Belt in its remarkable biological, scenic and cultural diversity and as a living memorial.
- Gaps in this ecological network should be closed as far as possible – both within and across national borders. In doing so sovereign instruments and contract nature protection schemes should be used at their best.
- The Green Belt's representative landscapes as well as its fauna and flora and habitats should be secured at the best.
- Trans-boundary and multilateral nature conservation and sustainable regional development projects that add to international understanding and to Europe's growing together should be preferably supported.
- Forces should be joined and joint goals for sustainable use should be further strengthened through enhanced cooperation between local and regional land users and other stakeholders.
- Protected areas, products and services that result from nature conservation work and from a cross-border sustainable regional development should be merchandised increasingly with the label "European Green Belt".
- Awareness rising on the nature conservation values as well as the cultural and historical importance of the European Green Belt should be enhanced.
- Unavoidable infrastructure developments in the area of the Green Belt should only be allowed to be planned under consideration of the sensitiveness of the area. The impacts have to be attenuated by adequate compensation measures.
- The European Green Belt's ecological network should be further promoted towards the European Union including seeking for further support.

Sopron/ Strasbourg, August 2009 – The participants of the NATURATHLON: