

Naturathlon 2009

Nature without borders
Natur grenzenlos



Press release

umweltbundesamt^U

Naturschutz/ Sport/ Vermischtes/ Naturathlon

Michail Gorbatschow becomes Naturathlon-patron:

- **Europe's Green Belt is an amazing Paradox**
- **Involuntary nature protection area deserves conserving**

Bonn/Wien July 27rd, 2009: Michail Gorbatschow, the central committee's former secretary general of the communist party in the Soviet Union and at that time president of the Soviet Union, is patron of the "Naturathlon – nature boundless". Gorbatschow writes in his greetings: "I liked and was interested by the information, two federal agencies the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation in Germany (BfN) and the Austrian (Federal Environment Agency), decided to accomplish an unusual activity during august this year – the so called Naturathlon 2009. It connects the act of a gentle exposure to nature with sports and summery recreation."

However, the Russian president showed a critical appraisal about the chances for the approximation of the nations: "Not all of these chances have been used, how we can see today. This stays the challenge for present and future generations."

Michail Gorbatschow continues: "The European Green Belt was an amazing Paradox that appeared after the Cold War. It came into view that the nature benefitted from the situation on its way: Since the border strip was inaccessible for most humans over the years, many plants and animals, which vanished without a trace anywhere else, remained. Like a Russian saying says: "There would not be any luck, if the misfortune did not help." This unique "unintended nature reserve" deserves to be conserved, so that it doesn't turns into an ordinary piece of land, which can be built on gainfully or be used for agriculture. The Naturathlon 2009 is presented precisely to point out the Green Belt's fortune to the public. It has an outstanding motto: Nature borderless! According to its character it mainly applies to the youth."

You can find the whole text of the greeting on www.naturathlon.eu

Unterstützer:



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The “NATURATHLON 2009 – Nature borderless” occurs from August 19th to 30th, 2009. 24 athletes from the six abutting nations (Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Slovenia, Czech Republic and Hungary) of the central European Green Belt follow its run by bike. The starting signal of the NATURATHLON 2009 will be in the Hungarian city Sopron on August 19th, 2009. At the exact day 20 years ago, the Iron Curtain was broken, near the border between Austria and Hungary, for the first time. The mass flight of citizens of the German Democratic Republic took place at this point. The 1,600 km tour takes twelve days and goes along Europe’s most beautiful nature regions until the Point Alpha/Rhön and then further to The European Parliament in Strasbourg.

The European Green Belt

The European Green Belt is the backbone of a network which spans 12,500 km and connects biotopes with many ecological corridors and large expanses of unspoiled nature, strung together like a string of pearls. Because they have remained relatively undisturbed, these areas along the former east-western border have formed a network of ecological sites of unique dimensions, running from the Arctic Sea to the Mediterranean and the Black Sea or, within Germany, from the Baltic Sea in the north to the Fichtelgebirge mountains and the Vogtland.

Further informations:

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