



Walk *on the Wild side*

Building up capacity and strengthening cooperation for the promotion of transboundary nature conservation along the South Eastern European Green Belt

Background

The European Green Belt initiative (www.europeangreenbelt.org) has the vision to create the backbone of an ecological network, running from the Barents to the Black Sea that is a global symbol for transboundary cooperation in nature conservation and sustainable development. Spanning the historic course of the Iron Curtain in Europe, the former “death strip” shall be converted into a network of transboundary protected areas. Moreover, the initiative shall serve to better harmonize human activities with the natural environment, and to increase opportunities for the socio-economic development of local communities.

In South Eastern Europe – along the border zones of Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, Macedonia, Albania, Greece, Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey – conflict prevention and building of international understanding are of special importance. In this context, local acceptance for the work of armed forces and border police along the borders has to be improved, requiring an increased involvement of military actors in local communities, the region and into society. The need for protection of shared natural values and the unique biodiversity of the area offers a possibility to facilitate such an involvement.

The project is of a clear international scope involving target groups from Kosovo, Albania and Macedonia. It will focus its activities across the trilateral border zones which are characterized with outstanding biodiversity and landscape values, in particular the area in the high mountains show outstanding species diversity.

The overall objective of the project is to strengthen transboundary cooperation on nature conservation along the border zone between Kosovo, Albania and Macedonia.

The immediate objectives of this project are to:

- Increase capacities of stakeholders involved in activities related to management of biodiversity along the border zone of Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia;
- Strengthen cross-sectoral and international cooperation on conservation of biodiversity;
- Increase awareness of key stakeholders and civil society on the conservation of valuable natural heritage;
- Mitigate project's carbon footprint.

The project is being implemented by IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) in cooperation with BfN (German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation) and local partners – DEM Macedonia, REC Albania and REC Kosovo and is funded by German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety through The Federal Environment Agency.



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