

## PROJECT INFORMATION

As at February 2012

# Balkan Green Belt Meeting 2011



Participants of the Balkan Green Belt Meeting 2011 in Ulcinj, Montenegro. Photo: Gabriel Schwaderer

## Background

The initiative „European Green Belt“ is existing since 2003. Its goal is to secure and further develop the former Iron Curtain, which separated Germany and Europe, as a joint European nature preserve and as a living monument for Europe's past separation under the label “Green Belt”. For practical and logistical reasons, the European Green Belt has been divided into three regions: Fennoscandia (including the Baltic coast), Central Europe and South Eastern Europe. A particular feature of the section through South Eastern Europe, also called “Balkan Green Belt”, is the variety of different landscapes. It is characterised by many - partly very small - states. The great significance of this region's natural and cultural heritage is hardly known in Europe and to some extent insufficiently protected. The effective implementation of the European Green Belt initiative can be a crucial contribution to preserve these unique natural regions. This, however, requires close cooperation across borders of all relevant state and non-state nature preserve organisations (GOs/NGOs), for example under the umbrella of a major regional, i.e. multinational, project that considers nature conservation and regional sustainable development likewise.

## Project

The project intended to stimulate the urgently needed exchange between various GOs and NGOs that are active in the Balkan Green Belt initiative, thus improving the cooperation in nature conservation in the Balkans. It should bring out clearly the significance of large-scale conservation areas for the regional development and cooperation across borders and a regional project in the Balkan Green Belt should be initiated.

Mid November 2011 a two-day regional meeting for the Balkan Green Belt was organised in Montenegro. Approximately 40 representatives from all countries along the Balkan Green Belt participated in this meeting. Successful approaches of other projects along the European Green Belt were presented and experiences in their development and implementation were exchanged. A comprehensive agenda included the discussion of a possible regional Balkan Green Belt project and funding options for it.

The regional meeting created the platform for a transboundary dialogue between politics, administration and NGO representatives. Presentations and workshops provided the necessary basics and the necessary expertise for initiating a regional project, e.g. general surveys of existing protection areas and areas, which still require mapping, were completed.

Thus the regional meeting is considered an important milestone for the implementation of a new regional project in the Balkans.

- Target region: Countries along the Balkan Green Belt
- Duration: 10/2011 – 02/2012
- Beneficiaries: National Focal Points of the countries along the Balkan Green Belt, other governmental and non-governmental organisations
- Implementing organisation: EuroNatur, [www.euronatur.org](http://www.euronatur.org)
- Project identification: FKZ 380 01 274