

9TH PAN-EUROPEAN GREEN BELT CONFERENCE



CONCLUSIONS

9th Pan-European Green Belt Conference

31st October – 03rd November 2016 in Koli, Finland

The 9th Pan-European Green Belt Conference was attended by more than 125 participants representing all 24 countries along the European Green Belt. They shared best practice examples, experience and knowledge. The conference served as an important market place for exchanging ideas and thoughts about improved preservation and restoration of the European Green Belt and enhanced sustainable development along the European Green Belt.

Key conclusions of the 9th Pan-European Green Belt Conference:

- 1) The 9th Pan-European Green Belt Conference sends out a strong message for enhancing cross-border cooperation in Europe and improving the connection of nature and people.
- 2) The biodiversity targets of the CBD and the EU Biodiversity Strategy are still not achieved. Especially when it comes to green infrastructure and connectivity of habitats and ecosystems as well as their restoration, there is considerable space for improvement.
- 3) The mid-term review of the EU Biodiversity Strategy as well as the REFIT analysis show clearly that the targets of the EU Biodiversity Strategy will not be achieved without introducing more effective funding instruments.



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- 4) Therefore the participants of the 9th Pan-European Green Belt Conference call on the European institutions, EU member states and the European public in- and outside the European Union to provide sufficient funding instruments to enhance connectivity among habitats and ecosystems. Therefore a strong and well-funded financial programme for Green Infrastructure for the EU and adjacent countries has been requested.
- 5) The 9th Pan-European Green Belt Conference highlighted various important benefits the European Green Belt provides for biodiversity and nature, climate adaption and mitigation. This is underpinned by very recent findings: First analyses within the European Green Belt Area show clearly that the closer you are at the Green Belt, the higher is the percentage of protected areas and the better the connectivity among them.
- 6) The 9th Pan-European Green Belt Conference highlighted various important benefits the European Green Belt provides for human well-being. This is underpinned by recent findings: Research in Finland clearly proves that 1 EUR public investment in nature conservation along the Green Belt of Fennoscandia pay back to local private income with 10 EUR.
- 7) The participants of the 9th Pan-European Green Belt Conference are aware of the fact that nature in general and along the European Green Belt in particular provides recreation opportunities and health services for people.
- 8) The participants of the 9th Pan-European Green Belt Conference are aware of the facts that there are even more benefits for biodiversity and for human well-being provided by the European Green Belt. All relevant publications on these issues will be shared and further research will be encouraged.
- 9) First steps to come up with a clear understanding and a mutual definition of the European Green Belt Areas were made. The participants of the conference see that more efforts are necessary in order to agree on an overall valid definition of the European Green Belt Area.
- 10) Nevertheless, the 9th Pan-European Green Belt Conference calls on all countries along the European Green Belt to include the European Green Belt Area into their spatial planning system with the clear objective to preserve existing valuable habitats and ecosystems and to enhance their connectivity.
- 11) The participants of the 9th Pan-European Green Belt Conference elaborated important milestones for the work programme of the European Green Belt Association and the European Green Belt Initiative.

Koli National Park, 3rd November 2016



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