



BESTbelt Conference

1.–4. November 2022

Ulcinj

Montenegro

BESTbelt



More power for the European Green Belt

Report on the exhibition: “Only the birds still cross. Borderbarriers and Ecocorridors at the Edge of Europe”

At the evening of 2nd November 2022, Alex Kemman (photographer and cultural anthropologist) presented the participants of the BESTbelt Conference his exhibition: “Only the birds still cross. Borderbarriers and Ecocorridors at the Edge of Europe”.

Fifteen impressive, striking and careful selected pictures illustrated the various facets of the border regions of the countries from the Black sea to the Ionian sea. Alex Kemman described his exhibition with the following words:

“Border barriers and Ecocorridors at the Edge of Europe Europe’s nature is more fragmented than ever. Decades of economic development without too much consideration for nature is taking its toll. At the same time mobility of flora and fauna is more urgent than ever. To survive the changes in climate and precipitation patterns animals and other species need to be able to move.

Many of the European Union key natural areas lie at its borders. Extensive forests, rough mountains and wild rivers form naturally drawn borders. Being far from the centre of the states and sometimes even forbidden, these regions are often less accessible and economically underdeveloped. It is in those areas where nature thrives. At the same time, it is exactly here that borders become politicized once again.

The European Union wants to ecologically connect the European continent with the European Green Deal. Massive amounts of euros will be available to make the EU climate neutral in 2050. Connections between nature reserves (ecocorridors) are an essential point, but on the other hand its borders are more impenetrable than ever. Over 2000 km of border barriers have been built in the past years. The political use of refugees have popularized those interventions. In addition to the human rights violations taking place, these barriers have an effect on nature too. Some animals die in the barb wire fences, but more importantly populations are fragmented and their genetic diversity threatened through border barriers.

This project follows the outer border of the European Union, from the Black sea to the Ionian sea. Traversing boundaries of Turkey, Bulgaria, Greece, North Macedonia and Albania it shows the (former) barriers, but also the possibilities to coexist. This is a region that is intrinsically ecologically connected but at the same time affected by the human drawn borders both in the past and in the present.



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Alex Kemman © 2022 (<https://www.alexkemman.org/>)



Picture 1: Opening of the photo exhibition by Alex Kemman © V.Juhaz/ Public Institution Virovitica-Podravina



Picture 2: Participants at the BESTbelt Conference enjoying the photo exhibition © F.Hofmann/ EuroNatur



Picture 3: Photo exhibition at the BESTbelt Conference © F.Hofmann/ EuroNatur



Picture 4: Photo exhibition at the BESTbelt Conference © A.Kemman