



BESTbelt Conference

1.–4. November 2022

Ulcinj

Montenegro

BESTbelt



More power for the European Green Belt

Conclusions of the BESTbelt Conference 2022

The first BESTbelt Conference took place in Ulcinj, Montenegro in November 2022. It offered a great opportunity for the European Green Belt (EGB) community to connect again in person and welcome new members and organisations. For four days 70 participants from 22 countries discussed challenges and opportunities, shared experiences and approaches to strengthen the EGB. After challenging years for the peaceful and sustainable development of the EGB, the BESTbelt project and its huge potential for the further development of the EGB set the frame for this Pan-European gathering.

During the official opening Montenegrin ministers and envoys from the EU stressed the importance of the EGB and expressed their support for this pan-European nature conservation project.

The BESTbelt Conference 2022 also gave a stage to the eleven projects selected in the 1st BESTbelt Call for Proposals and raised awareness for the BESTbelt small grant schemes. Through a brief introduction on stage, followed by a poster session, the new funded BESTbelt projects were presented to the audience. This opened the door to many lively discussions and new ideas for the upcoming 2nd and 3rd BESTbelt Call for Proposals.

The potential of the EGB for green jobs was further explored with support of experts from the consultancy firm Trinomics, the European Commission, and experienced organisations from along the EGB contributing knowledge and best practices. The potential of green jobs along the EGB was considered to be high due its outstanding natural and cultural value. But next to creating specific green jobs it was stressed that it is necessary to make every job a little greener.

In various sessions with different topics the participants deepened their knowledge about the EGB and gained insights into activities taking place in Ulcinj as well as in other places all along the EGB. The participants appreciated the opportunity to meet colleagues, and exchange and learn from each other in diverse settings.



With financial support of the European Union

But the EGB was also explored from a different perspective. The photo exhibition “Border barriers and eco corridors at the Edge of Europe” by Alex Kemman, Researcher & Photographer, offered a thought-provoking counterpart on the EGB and gave an insight into how fragile peace in Europe actually is.

The BESTbelt Conference 2022 was a successful reunion of an enlarged network dedicated to further developing the EGB as Europe's longest green network. The conference also showed that the potential of the EGB and its historical background is today more important than ever. Cooperation across borders is essential in current times of crises and global challenges. With the fresh wind of BESTbelt, there is a growing opportunity to bridge ecological, cultural and geographical borders, to develop and explore new and innovative approaches, and to effectively conserve the unique history, culture and natural wonder of the EGB.



Picture 1: Participants of the BESTbelt Conference 2022 in Montenegro © PR Media