

European Green Belt - Romania

Regional perspectives, changes and opportunities



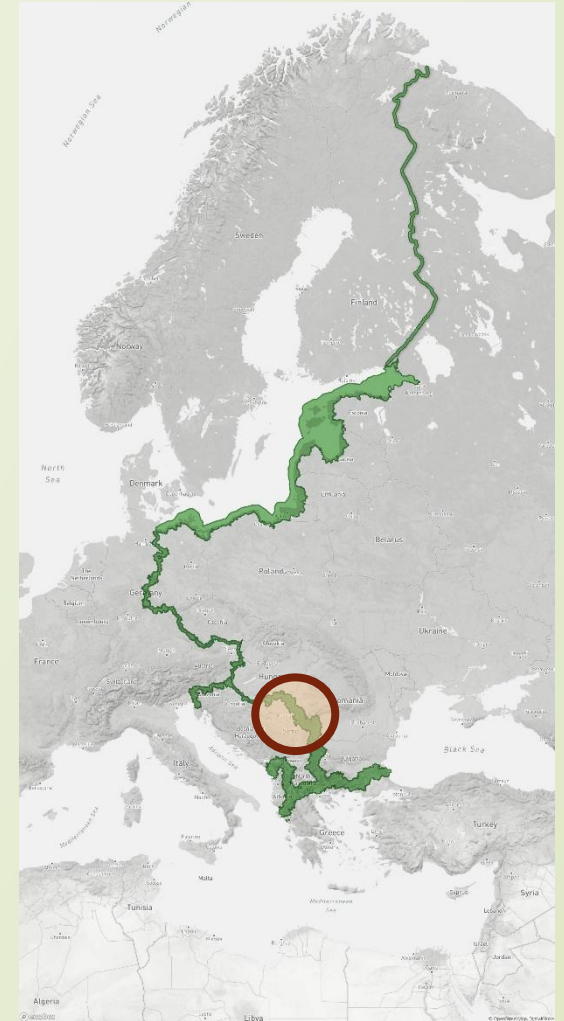
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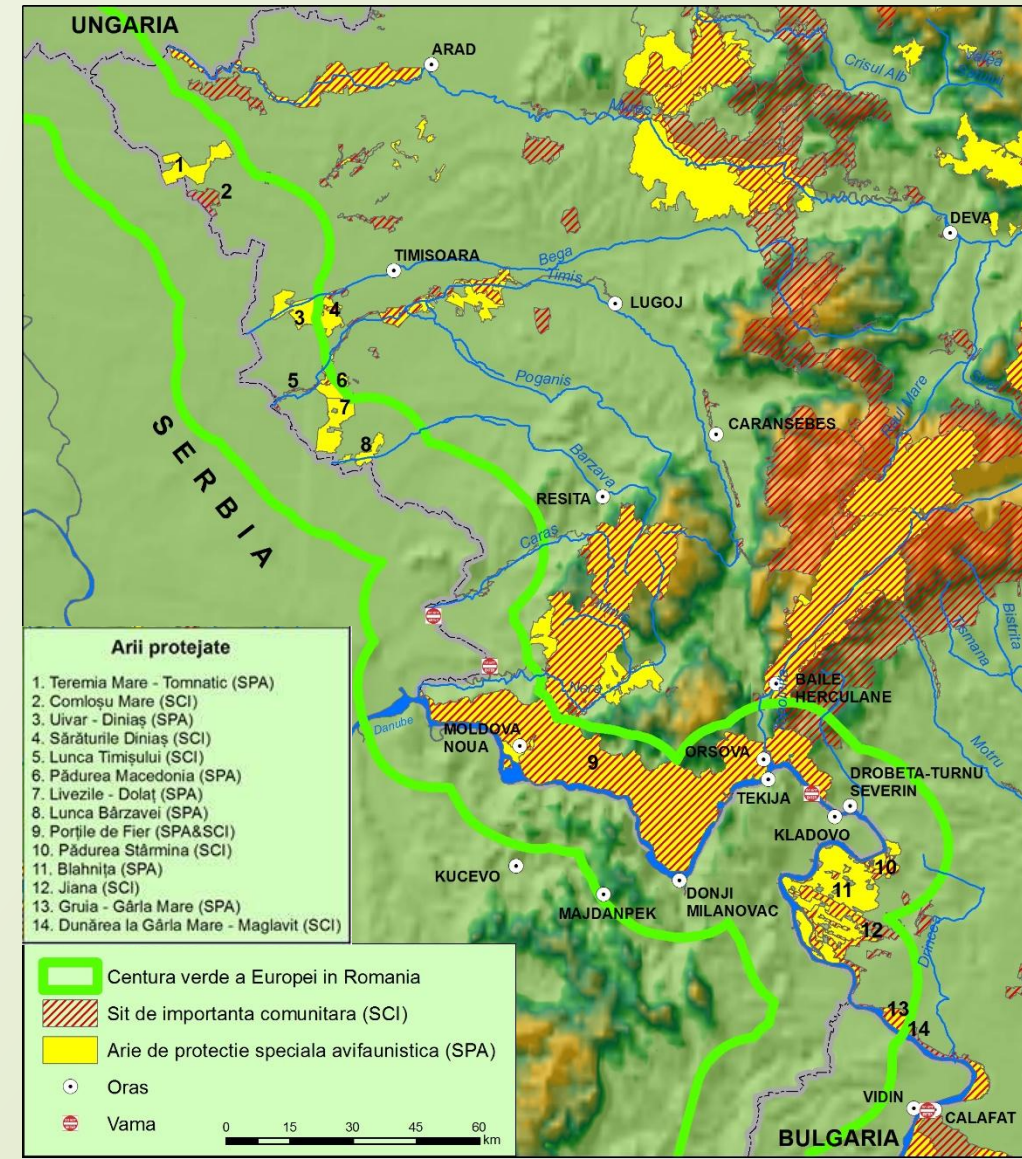
Administrative data:

- Location: Romanian / Serbian border
- Length of the border: 543,5 km
 - 310,5 km on dryland (grassland, shrubland, woodland)
 - 233,0 km of wetland (the Danube river)
- Counties:
 - 219,5 km in Timiș county
 - 157,2 km in Caraș-Severin county
 - 166,8 km Mehedinți county
- Towns, cities, villages:
 - 5 towns
 - 179 villages and communes
- Population: 244.696



Protected areas:

- 21 Protected areas of National Importance:
 - 19 natural reservations
 - 2 natural parks
- 20 Protected areas which are important at European Level:
 - 17 Sites of Community Importance (SCIs)
 - 3 Avifauna Special Protection Areas (SPAs)
- 2 Protected Areas of International Importance
 - 1 Ramsar site
 - 1 Geopark
- Administration:
 - The National Agency for Protected Natural Areas – state public institution.
 - Romsilva – state economic entity.
 - Mehedinți County Council – County level public authority



The Green Belt Context in Romania

Challenges:

- ❑ The expansion of residential ensembles along the Danube.
- ❑ Virgin forest exploitation
- ❑ Excessive hunting.
- ❑ Excessive fishing, illegal methods.
- ❑ Mining pollution (tailings, left-over materials).
- ❑ Waste-water pollution, as well as improper waste management practices



Opportunities:

- ❑ 310 km of borderland with limited human access due to border regulations
- ❑ Wild carstic environment, difficult to access
- ❑ Islands that are rarely visited.
- ❑ Caves that are numerous and difficult to access.
- ❑ State - owned land which could be declared protected areas.
- ❑ The European Union strategy for the expansion and strict safeguarding of natural protected areas



History – A. S. Exploratorii

- **1959** The speleological group starts to form
- **1961** The founding of the association
- **1975** Becomes a member of the Romanian Federation for Alpine Climbing
- **1991** Legal establishment of the association as NGO
- **1994** Becomes a member of the Romanian Speleological Federation
- **2007** Becomes a member of the International Union for Conservation of Nature
- **2012** Member of “Clisura Dunării” Local Action Group
- **2014** Member of the European Green Belt Association.



60 years of activity

1961 - 2021

Explore and protect the karst!



Achievements 1 – Explorers S. A.

- **15%** of all the caves in Romania have been studied by the Explorers S. A.
- **1650** caves discovered, researched, and inventoried
- **110,8** km of mapped galleries.
- **175** caves depolluted, restored, and preserved
- **>50** projects undertaken
- **3** partnership projects financed through Life Nature
- **50** partners and collaborators from institutions and associations for nature conservation.
- **22** caving associations from Romania, Germany, Poland, Czech Republic, Belgium, Hungary, and Serbia
- **32** funding from financing programmes
- **849.430,00** Euros - the largest amount of financing obtained through the Life + programme for LIFE 13 NAT/RO/001488.



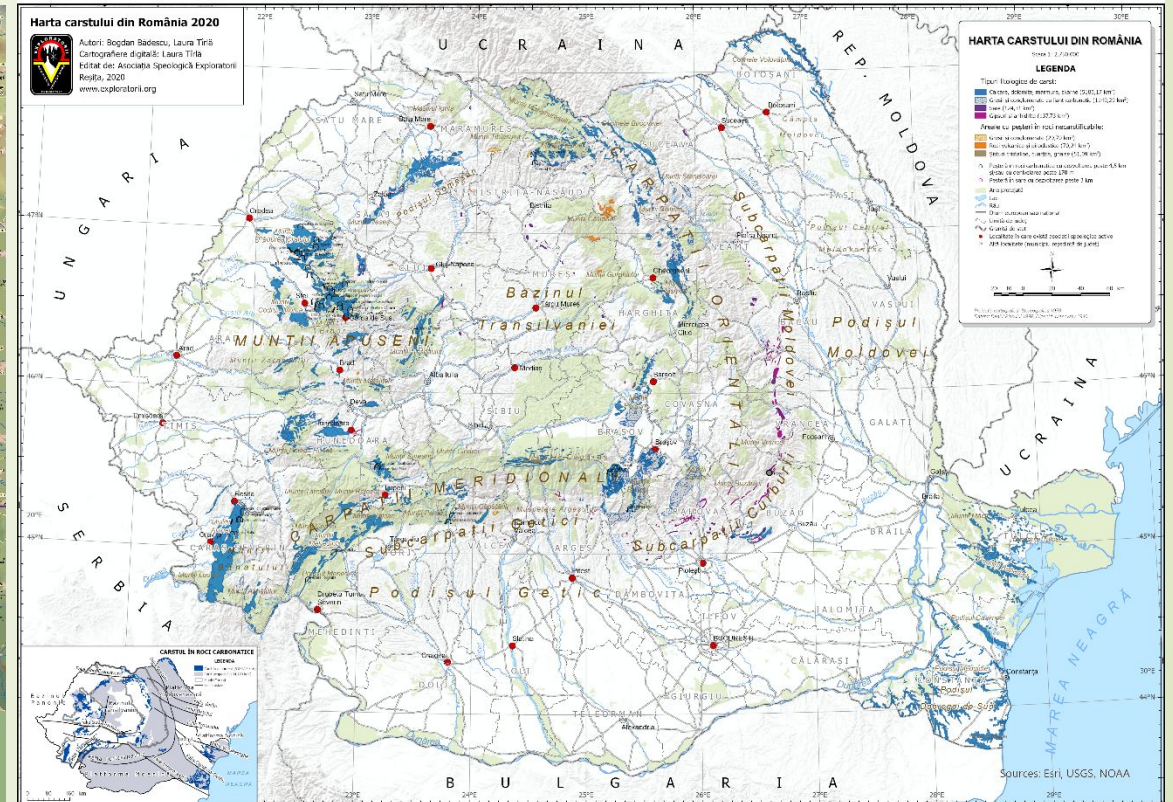
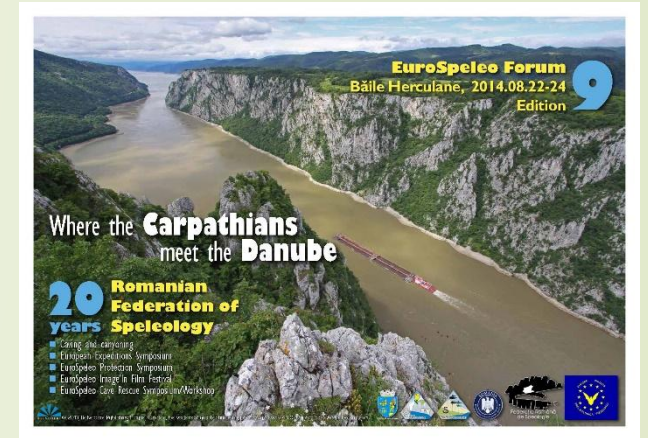
Achievements 2 – Explorers S. A.

- **1980** – Organising the Centre for the Study and Protection of Karst
- **1998** – Purchasing the space that would become headquarters for the Reșița organisation.
- **2008** – Building the Centre for Education and Promotion of Tourism in Cărbunari (Green Belt area)
- **2016** – initiative for the construction of the Speleological Museum, in Oravița
- Organised Courses: Organisational Management; Project Writing; Strategic Development; First Steps in Caving; Karstology; Geology; Conservation; Biospeleology; Protected Areas; GIS.
- Organised conferences: The National Speleological Congress (1977, 1996, 2016), Cave Tourism (2009), European Speleological Congress (2014), Green Belt Conference (2016)



Maps

- **2009** Speleo-tourism map for Green Belt România – Serbia.
- **2020** Romania karst area map



Green Belt Projects – Explorers S. A.

- ❑ **1998** Common responsibility for the Danube, Moldova Nouă, Romania.
- ❑ **2008-2009** Speleo Tourism in the European Green Belt, Reșița, România / Serbia.
- ❑ **2015-2016** Protecting Biodiversity in the Balkans – Strengthening Cooperation along the Balkan Green Belt, Reșița, România.
- ❑ **2016** Balkan Green Belt Regional Conference, Herculane, România
- ❑ **2017** Green Belt Day Celebration Project, Kladovo, Serbia.



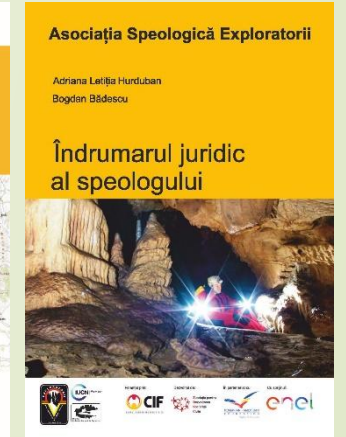
Recent Projects

- Project name: **Conservation of Habitat 8310 in Nera Gorge - Beușnița Nature2000 Site**
Duration: 01.07.2014 – 31.12.2021
- Coordinator: Timiș Environment Protection Agency
- Partener: Explorers S. A.
- Buget: 849.430,00 euros (50% European Comission for the LIFE Programme + Nature and Biodiversity și 50% Romanian Government).
- Objectives:
 - Rehabilitation of 110 cavities (Habitat 8310), which are degraded or polluted
 - Conservation of 14 chiroptera species
 - Development of the best practices for the management of habitat 8310 at regional, national, and european level
 - Disseminating information throughout 15 local communities and among conservation specialists



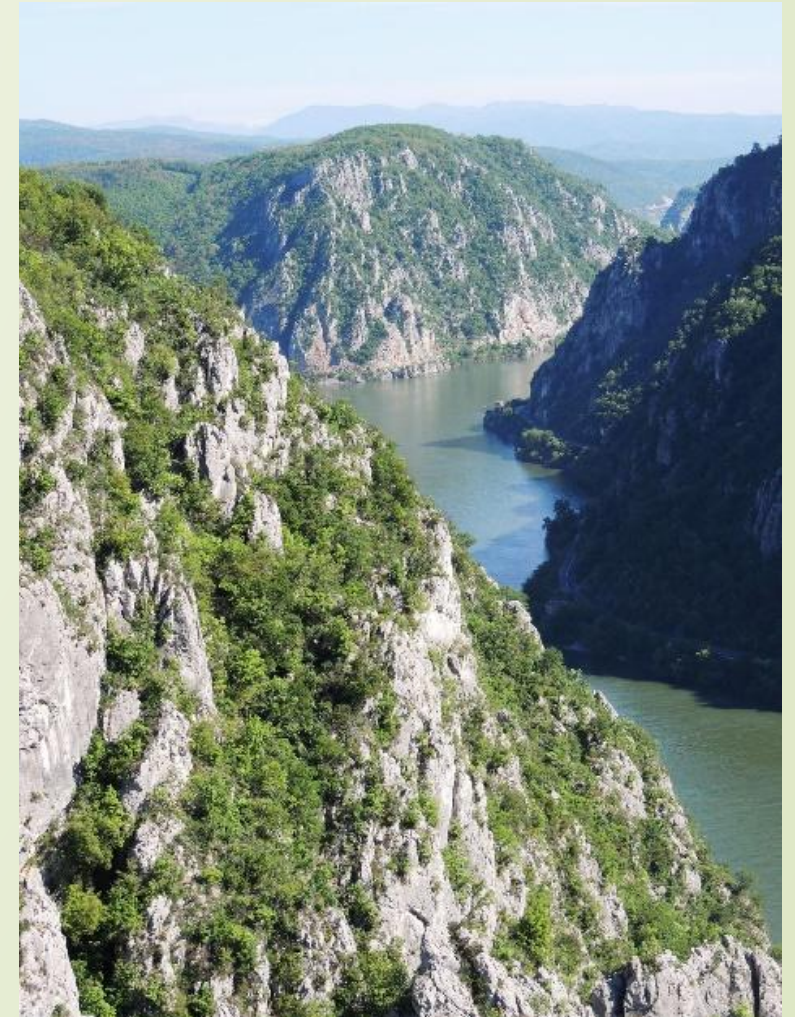
Recent Projects

- Project name: **Bringing the Romanian Caves to Light.**
- Duration: 15.03.2019 – 14.04.2021.
- Coordinator: Explorers S. A.
- Beneficiaries: 42 NGOs.
- Budget: 70.205,50 RON. (FDSC)
- Objectives:
 - Analysis of the current law within the 5 aforementioned states
 - Promoting a legal framework for the Romanian caves
 - Creating a platform where speleologists can receive legal assistance
 - Organisational development of 42 caving associations



Green Belt potential objectives:

- To Identify:
 - GIS database of all administrative limits , ecosystems , natural sights , cultural and anthropic landmarks
- To Conserve:
 - Identifying areas that necessitate strict protection (applying EU strategy for biodiversity with 10% strict protection on the border)
 - Extending the national network of protected areas (new reserves in all areas)
 - Extending the Nature2000 network (dryland border area in Timiș County)
- To Rebuild:
 - Depolluting the wetlands and watercourses (Balta Nera Reserve)
 - Depolluting mining waste areas (tailing dams and other contaminated sites)
 - Restoration of degraded habitats (waterfronts, floodplains, rocky areas, forestland, caves)



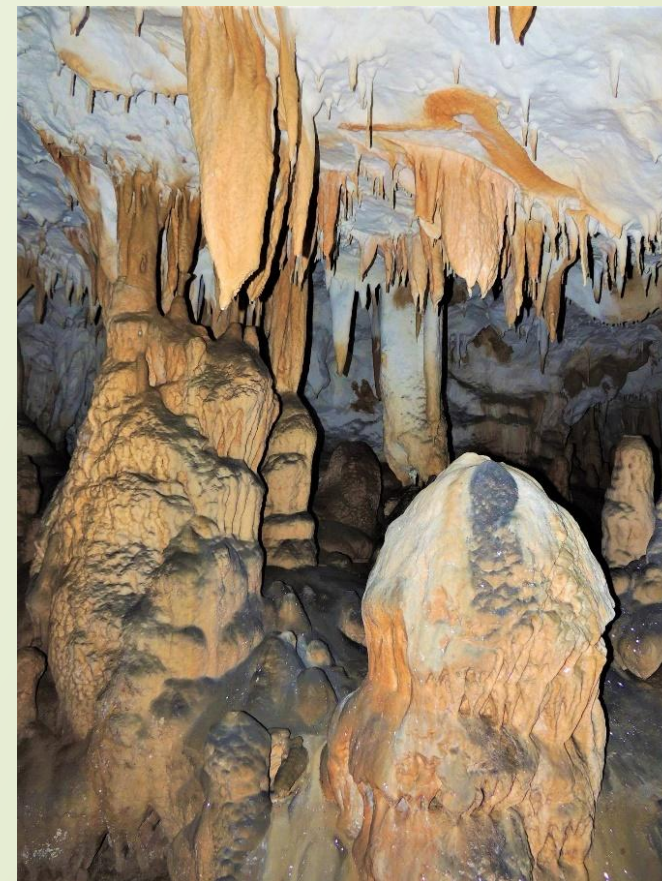
Green Belt potential objectives:

- Raising awareness:
 - Information campaign for all the local authorities of the three counties.
 - Producing and distributing appealing information materials: maps, atlases, photography albums, guides.
- Communication:
 - A website that would be dedicated to the Romanian/Serbian Green Belt
 - Communication campaign for the young people of school age in local communities
- Marketing:
 - Celebrating Green Belt Day
 - Organising cross-border events on topics of science, culture and conservation
 - Development of cross-border sector-level collaborations
 - Distributing information and promotion materials through the Local Information Centres



Green Belt potential objectives:

- Ecosystem services:
 - Qualitative assessment of groundwater and surfacewater
 - Qualitative and quantitative assessment of landscape
- Sustainable development:
 - Organising tourist landmarks (caves, waterfalls, themed trails)
 - Training local guides in various areas (nature, culture, caving, etc.)





Thank you!

Explorers Caving Association

www.exploratorii.org