

INTERREG IVB Baltic Sea Region Programme Project

## The Baltic Green Belt Project

(2009–2012)

**The aim of this project** is to facilitate the preservation of biological diversity in the Baltic Sea Region by establishing the Baltic Green Belt as a permanent network of co-operation. In geographic terms, the Baltic Green Belt runs along the boundary of the Iron Curtain that was set up by the Soviet Union. For this reason the environment here remains largely untouched and unique. The plan of activities related to the Baltic Green Belt includes attempting to improve the ecological situation in the coastal zone, both in the sea and on land. This will help to promote the sustainability of social and economic aspects of the process, and it will also help to ensure economic welfare for local residents.

The project includes NGOs, government institutions, representatives of business and scientific institutions – 15 partners and seven associate partners in all, all of them representing countries which surround the Baltic Sea. **The Lauku ceļotājs, Latvian rural tourism association is one of the partners, and its task in this project is to organise a pilot project in co-operation with the Slītere National Park.**

The aim of the pilot project is to preserve natural territories that are of a high level of ecological value in the coastal zone that was part of the Iron Curtain along the Baltic Sea. Organisers of the project will study what the Soviet military left behind in the region, considering ways in which that heritage can be put to use for tourism purposes and to ensure the sustainability of the territory's social and economic aspects.

**These are the main activities for the pilot project and the results that are to be achieved:**

- **To study areas of high ecological value in the coastal zone along the Baltic Sea, as well as military objects therein, also register the objects left behind by the Soviet military, collect information about them, and consider the way in which they affect local residents and the environment.** A database with all of the information that is collected about the military objects and valuable natural territories has been established - [http://www.celotajs.lv/cont/wrth/military\\_en.html](http://www.celotajs.lv/cont/wrth/military_en.html)
- **To study military objects as tourism resources and to make recommendations on how they can be used sustainably in the context of Natura 2000 and other protected territories.** Recommendations will be made as to the management of such facilities, based on where they are located, how accessible they are, how attractive they are to tourists both as military objects and elements of the environment, the investments that will be necessary, the ecological sensitivity of the relevant region, etc. There have been developed draft guidelines of the military heritage object usage in 2010 - [http://www.celotajs.lv/cont/prof/proj/GreenBelt/GreenBelt\\_en.html](http://www.celotajs.lv/cont/prof/proj/GreenBelt/GreenBelt_en.html)
- **To involve local governments, landowners and owners of former military objects in the discussion about how such objects can be used for tourism and how all of these entities can work together.** The results of the discussion have been used to achieve project goals and to manage tourist destinations, thus moving toward sustainable development of tourism.
- **To introduce competitive and sustainable tourism products and services.** Routes for hikers, bicyclists and/or drivers will be established in the Baltic States, and these will include information about former military objects and protected environmental territories. A map of those military objects that are available in Latvia will be published and made available for tourists in the end of 2010. All of the tourism services and products also are presented on the Internet – [www.celotajs.lv](http://www.celotajs.lv) section "Worth seeing".
- **An international conference on nature tourism** will be held on March 22-23, 2011 to disseminate information about the project and its results in Latvia, the Baltic States and Europe.



LAUKU CEĻOTĀJS

Lead partner:

**University of Kiel**  
Institute of Geography  
GERMANY

[m.schultz@geographie.uni-kiel.de](mailto:m.schultz@geographie.uni-kiel.de)

**Pilot project in Latvia:**  
**LLTA „Lauku Ceļotājs”**

Kalnācma iela 40, Rīga, LV-1046

Tālrunis: +371 67617600; Fakss: +371 67830041

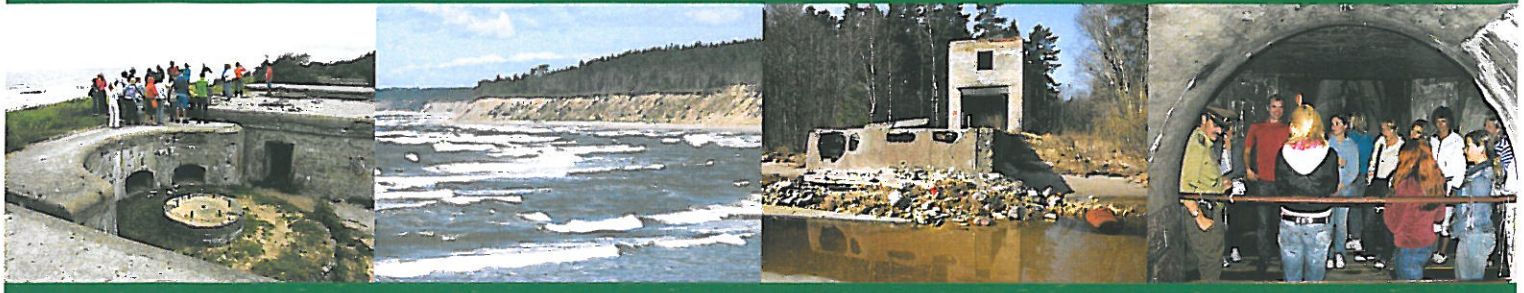
e-mail: [asnate@celotajs.lv](mailto:asnate@celotajs.lv)

[www.celotajs.lv](http://www.celotajs.lv)

Part-financed through the  
European Union (ERDF and ENPI)



[www.balticgreenbelt.net](http://www.balticgreenbelt.net)



## The European Green Belt



The Baltic Green Belt project will be based on the principles of the European Green Belt, and be a part of it.

The European Green Belt is overseen by a co-ordinator from the World Conservation Union. The initiative creates the backbone of an ecological network which spans some of the most important habitats for biodiversity in Europe, covering nearly all of the continent's bio-geographical regions. The Green Belt spans 23 countries, running for some 8,500 kilometres from the northern tip of Europe, passing through Central Europe along the borders of Slovenia, Croatia and Hungary, and then continuing toward the Black Sea, the Aegean Sea, the Ionian Sea and the Adriatic Sea along the borders of Albania, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Montenegro and Turkey. A total of 3,272 conservation areas were analysed within a 25-kilometre buffer zone on either side of the Green Belt. The Green Belt connects national parks, nature parks, biosphere reserves, protected areas which cross national boundaries, as well as non-protected areas along or across borders. The Green Belt also supports regional developmental initiatives in the area of environmental conservation.

The Green Belt has developed into a formidable marketing instrument for protected and non-protected areas in border regions, as well as for people who try to find strategic synergies with important economic goals in areas such as tourism.

<http://europeangreenbelt.org>

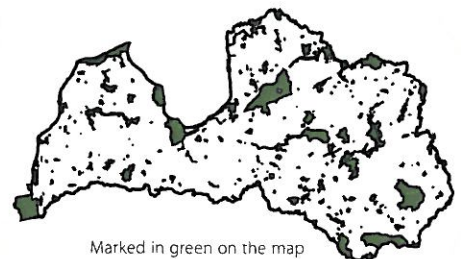


## Natura 2000



Natura 2000 is a project involving all of the European Union's member states. Its aim is to identify a network of protected natural territories. In Latvia's case, the system was based on existing protected territories, but 122 new ones were added, as well. The primary goal in establishing the network of Natura 2000 territories has been to protect rare and endangered plants and animals, as well as their habitats and biotopes. Natura 2000 territories have been identified in all 27 EU member states, and they cover approximately 20% of the EU's total territory.

Information about Natura 2000 territories can be found at [www.daba.gov.lv](http://www.daba.gov.lv), which is the homepage of the Environmental Protection Board, and on the Internet page of the Latvian Environmental Ministry at [www.vidm.gov.lv](http://www.vidm.gov.lv). Information is also available from regional environmental boards and the administrators of Natura 2000 territories. The [www.celotajs.lv](http://www.celotajs.lv) site has a section on Natura 2000 which includes up-to-date tourist information about some 150 territories in all.



Marked in green on the map are "Natura 2000" territories.  
Source: Environmental Protection Board  
[www.daba.gov.lv](http://www.daba.gov.lv)



LAUKU CEĻOTĀJS

**LLTA "Lauku ceļotājs"**

Kalnciema Str. 40

Rīga LV-1064

Telephone +371-6761-7600

Fax +371-6783-0041

[asnate@celotajs.lv](mailto:asnate@celotajs.lv)

[www.celotajs.lv](http://www.celotajs.lv)