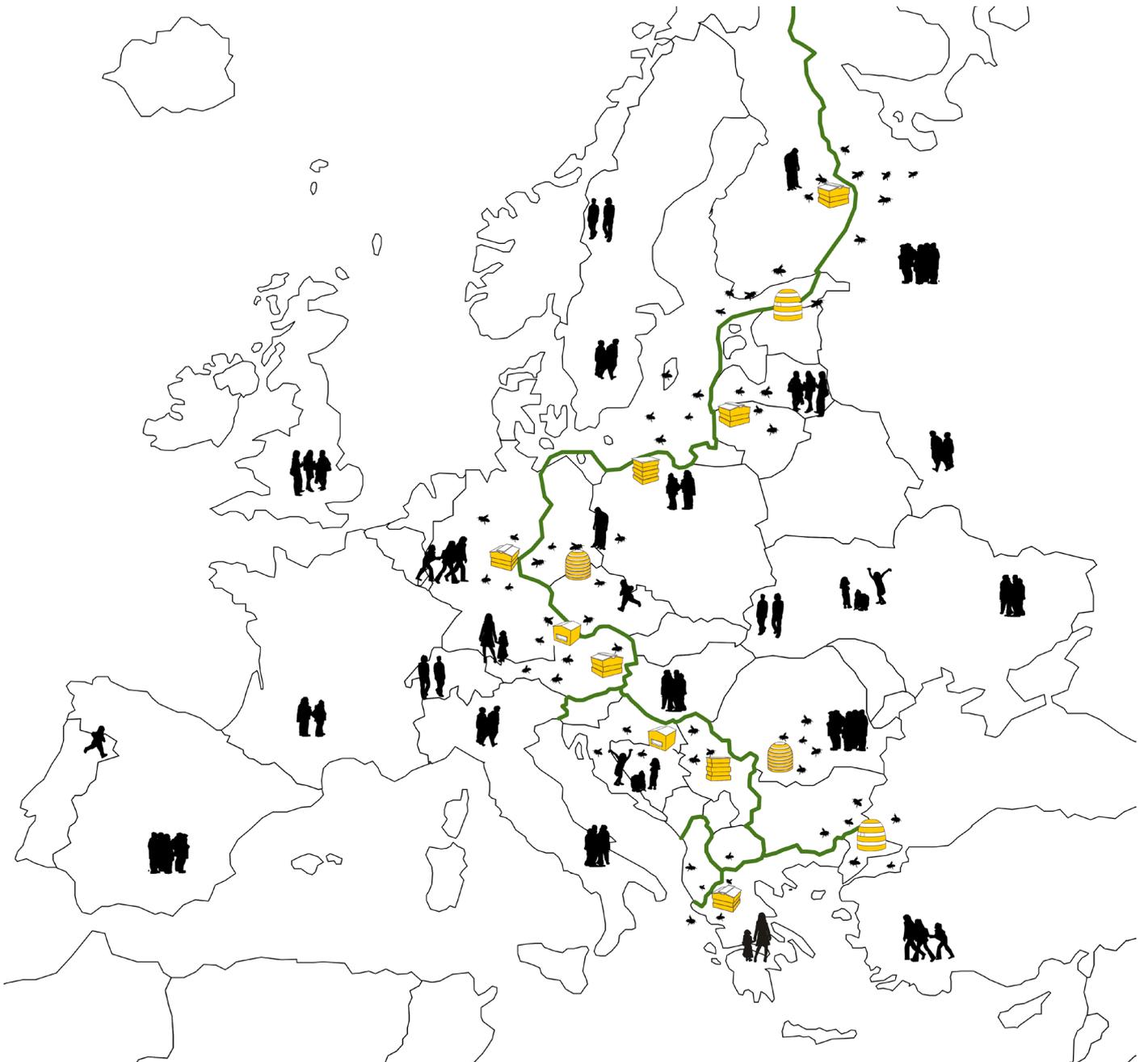


# bee free

a contribution to discovering the neighbours in a united europe



# the vision

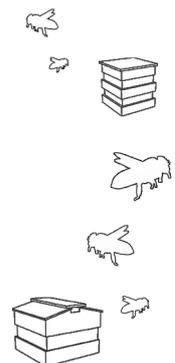


The objective of the bee free project is to permanently transform the former Iron Curtain death zone into a connected landscape corridor that is unique, and provides ecological and sociocultural benefits on a regional scale.

Twentieth-century Europe was characterized by a divided continent, east and west. The nearly 12,500-kilometer demarcation line curtailed the freedom of movement and exchanges between Eastern and Western European countries. Today its resultant Green Belt provides diverse regional landscapes and unique natural spaces for the once-constrained populations.

The year 2014 will mark the 25th anniversary of the fall of the Iron Curtain. Despite the nearly quarter century of its absence, the wall's former border is still solidly anchored in many people's minds. This lingering mental division inhibits the region's ability to multilaterally address the challenges facing contemporary Europe: ageing population, youth unemployment, lack of direct experiences due to the virtualisation of communication.

bee free bridges these complexities using the very simple idea that free-swarming bee colonies, operating as cross-border super-organisms, can serve as examples for multicultural cooperation. The cultivated product, honey, becomes the essence of the integrating landscape and the cultural exchange program.



# along the line

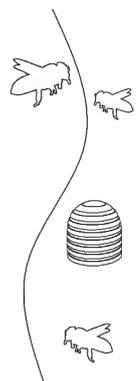


After the erection of the Iron Curtain, Europe seemed irrevocably divided. For over 40 years, hostile border installations minimized possibilities for cross-border sociological, economical and environmental exchanges. Even after the removal of regional barricades, many sections were still strictly controlled as the external borders of the Schengen area. In 2008, Schengen border was shifted to the east. For the first time, the former no-man's land was regularly and freely crossed, creating a new kind of border experience in Central Europe – a new space for encounters is currently developing, old European regions are consolidating themselves.

Through the long years of human absence, the once strictly-guarded border region became an efficient protection zone for landscape and nature. The Nature Conservation Sector claims the preservation of these areas, unique in Europe. Various conservation measures with varying degrees of restriction mark the present Green Belt. The creation of cross-border preservation areas requires critical regional networking and local participation.

25 years after the fall of the Iron Curtain, strong attention is required to keep the overcoming of the European division in balance. The idea of a corridor, exclusively reserved to nature, conflicts with the intention of bridging the gap between East and West.

bee free shall be seen as an instruction manual to raise awareness among the broad public and follows the premise of the biosphere reserve, according to which economic, social and ecologic sustainability concepts should be realised with the support of local populations.



# the phenomenon

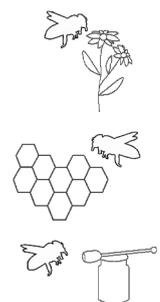


Despite its ability to overcome major, Europe is facing a crisis of purpose today. Numerous social difficulties – youth unemployment, social inequalities, looming environmental disasters, lack of co-determination, deficits in direct communication – give a bleak outlook for the future. In this strained environment, bee free considers itself as an impulse, a small contribution for more social and cultural interaction in a united Europe.

bee free chooses a deliberately simple approach. Only a detailed observation shows its complexity on the whole, like a palimpsest. The approach is playful. Different levels of interaction and control will be provided throughout the project.

bee free promotes investigation and reflection on Europe's eventful history and common future. The swarming of people to the Green Belt creates new links and opens up new perspectives on nature, on history and on one's personal horizons of experience.

The consequences of the demarcation line – with its changing depth and enormous length – offer many potential starting points: honey from the landscapes, subjective impressions and verified data create a colourful and touching picture for a broad public – even far away from the border. The comprehensive change in connotation of the former border regions opens new possibilities for building bridges in Europe.



## a swarm of collecting bees



Along the Green Belt, the backbone of the European biotope system, landscapes of historic, sociologic and/or ecologic significance are selectively explored and sampled. Local contacts are established with simple tools and at a personal level. The principle of the honey bee – crossing the border from East to West and vice-versa – is a central point of the programme. It is considered as a substantial contribution to the understanding of heterogeneity and diversity.

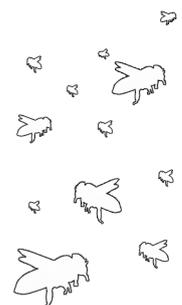
The representation of diversity will be considered more important than the quantity. The travels along the border generate a kaleidoscope of impressions, histories and evolutions, giving on the whole a colourful and ambivalent access to European history.

Following the principle of the honey bees, the excursions focus on the local populations and in particular on the beekeepers with their direct, exemplary relation to the former intra-European demarcation line. Like in a bee dance, even the most incidental encounters can be seen as a source of information. The aim of the project is to interweave the single coincidences to a comprehensive picture.

### **travel grants**

Travel grants give young Europeans the opportunity to explore the former border regions. A journey in this unique natural space, this intra-European scarf, mark of Europe's eventful history.

A reconnaissance flight, in which personal experiences and observations on historic, social and ecologic issues are collected. The essence of all this is represented by the honey. Each honey jar explains its origins, tells a story and concentrates landscapes from both sides of the man-made borders. Personal anecdotes of the travellers and their local encounters provide a direct access to Europe's eventful history.



# the beehive



## **the collection**

In the same way as bees gather pollen and nectar, the collected products and experiences need to be brought together in the beehive. bee free enables an immediate juxtaposition of different stories, regions and impressions, showing differences as well as parallels, possible synergies as well as contradictions.

## **the exhibition**

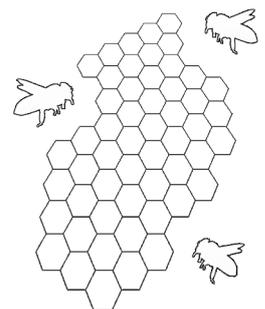
The representation of diversity will be considered more important than the quantity. bee free aims to collect all landscapes along the former Iron Curtain, millions of kilometres flown across the borders, as the ideal sum of the trans-European biodiversity in countless jars of honey. Honey becomes the symbolic carrier of the border stories. By rearranging what used to be divided, the collection shows new relations: a new semiotic space is created.

Visitors are free to taste and buy the honey corresponding to a specific story. During the degustation they will discover the sense of ‚terroir‘ and make associations with a precise region. Complementary short films, aesthetically salient pollen analyses or impressions of the collected landscapes offer visitors an opportunity to experience the complexity of the green corridor. Dialogues, narrative interviews, as well as the option of buying honey as a part of the artwork provide guidance for further development and shall be deemed as first steps for the establishment of a brand.

## **interaction**

An anthology film will be created with the help of the travellers – a portrait of the past and present diversity of Europe, a journey into the world of swarms and landscapes that will tell about the perception of the former border area 25 years after the fall of the Iron Curtain. The playful occupation with the cultural phenomenon „bee“ allows the communication of serious historic, sociologic and ecologic issues to the broad public.

An interactive website will be initiated to encourage cooperation and exchanges. This is where information is gathered, where travellers and locals can start networking, where experience and knowledge are shared. The platform enables cross-border cooperations. Anyone can become part of bee free without any hindrances.



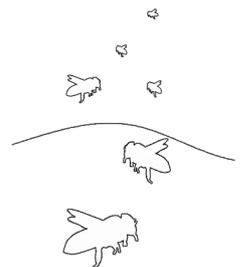
# the perspective



As a product of the landscape, honey is linked to small regional structures. The participatory approach offers a springboard for the creation of new supra-regional connections and supports a more comprehensive change of connotation. Produced, used and enjoyed from Finland through Turkey, honey can become the symbol for lasting peace in Europe. The former death corridor can be turned into a positive marketing reason with bee free as brand and moderation.

Regions can reconnect through a linked range of regional products and services. They can develop a common communication strategy, for instance with a shared range of honey from the border region. ‚Storytelling in progress‘ stimulates the emotional attachment of consumers, dialogues are initiated. New transnational cooperatives are established along the European migration corridor with the shared goal of preserving this memorial of European history and promoting values from the nature conservation sector.

bee free aims to provide impetus for local development. The goal and purpose of the project is to preserve the existing natural habitat and to re-link both sides of the former demarcation line with a transeuropean corridor function. One of the challenges bee free is faced with is to use this unique potential to reconnect the neighbouring regions and strengthen their sense of identity. Additional pilot projects can be started in historically, sociologically or naturally unique regions of the Green Belt. The common history of the ribbon will be used as the basis for the emancipation of the regions, which have been suffering for many years the territorial sovereignty of the hinterland. The change in connotation is pursued at all levels.



# the programme



## timetable

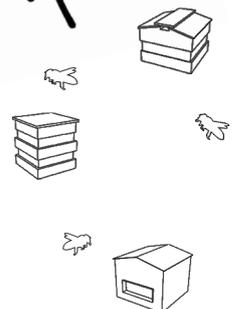
2014 marks the 25th anniversary of the fall of The Iron Curtain. 100 years ago it was the beginning of World War I. Young Europeans didn't experience the years of division and grew up in a united Europe. Yet, one can still notice the consequences of the division. The 25th anniversary seems to be a very suitable moment for the collection of impressions in the border area. The exhibition and video-documentation will capture the historical tendencies and present them to the broad public in the following year.

The goal is to continue the collection of border impressions after the anniversary year. The evolution of the cultural regions along the Green Belt will be documented and made accessible to the public in further exhibitions.

## first steps

travel grants / principle of the honey bee  
materials (honey, jars, distribution, etc)  
anthology film  
website / online platform  
evaluation of the research  
development of exhibition concept  
exhibitions

Be part of bee free



# bee free e.V.

a contribution to discovering the neighbours in a united europe

endresstrasse 18 . a-1230 vienna

info@bee-free.eu . www.bee-free.eu

**bee free e.V.** is a European organisation headquartered in Vienna, Austria. bee free assumes the central project management, organisation and communication.

project initiators

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## **bauchplan ).(**

munich . vienna, germany . austria

www.bauchplan.net

## **Yuji Oshima**

vienna, austria

photos

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**bauchplan ).(, Helga R. Heilmann,  
Klaus Leidorf**

funding partners

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**bm:ukk**, Austrian Federal Ministry for Education,  
the Arts and Culture

Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky Stipend 2008

(l)ost links - an exploration of the border regions in Central Europe that investigates and documents the border-landscapes of Austria and its neighbours.

## **Akademie der Künste Berlin**

Young Academy Scholarship 2010

Scholarship received by Tobias Baldauf from bauchplan ).( in the category building art. It allows continuing intereuropean exchange and research along the former European demarcation line.

cooperation partners

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## **Centre for the Future**

slavonice, czech republic

www.centreforthefuture.org

Centre for the Future is the project workshop. It's the place where the honey is collected, organised and processed.

## **BEEgroup**

### **Universität Würzburg**

würzburg, germany

www.bienenforschung.biozentrum.uni-wuerzburg.de

BEEgroup supports bee free with their specialized knowledge in bee research. Their project HOBOS – abbreviation for HONEY Bees Online Studies , an interactive teaching concept promoting scientific research and based on a specially conceived beehive equipped with sensors and measuring devices – has won multiple awards.

## **Honigreise**

munich . dresden, germany

honigreise@gmail.com

A research project carried out by Marlen Hößelbarth and Felix Lüdecke in the Green Belt region. As a contribution to bee free, they travelled around the border triangle between Bavaria, Saxony and Bohemia in summer 2011, portrayed local beehives, collected anecdotes from local beekeepers and gathered honey from local landscapes. The resulting collection of sketches, photographs, honey and stories can be seen as a first test for bee free.