

## "Avenues, not borders": the idea behind the Polish-German trans-border avenue and how it was done

### « Des allées, pas des frontières » : l'allée transfrontalière germano-polonaise, de l'idée à la concrétisation

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Planting of the first cross-border avenue on the German-Polish border was celebrated with a party on 16 April 2014 at 16:00 clock at the border crossing between Ladenthin (Germany) and Warnik (Poland), in the Northern section of the border, near the city of Szczecin (Stettin). The planting celebrated both avenue conservation and the border that divides us no more. It is useful to know that this border was established only in 1945, in the aftermath of World War II.

BUND Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania (Schwerin) and the Foundation for Sustainable Development (Fundacja EkoRozwoju – FER, Wrocław) had been cooperating since the beginning of this decade on avenue conservation projects. A high point of the joint Roads for Nature LIFE project was planting of the trans-border avenue, under the slogan "Avenues, not borders" (Ger. *Alleen statt Grenzen* – Pol. *Aleje zamiast granic*). Green Federation "GAJA" from Szczecin also participated, as a regional partner of the project.

Just as the "Deutsche Alleenstraße" (German Avenue Route), which was inaugurated in 1993 and runs from Ruegen island to Lake Constance, has contributed to overcoming the inner German division, so too the project "Avenues instead of Borders" was to be an expression of the European unification process. With this project we have pointed out that we must preserve a common cultural, historical and ecological heritage. That means maintaining our existing avenues and planting new ones. In addition, this project was an expression of active German-Polish cooperation.

The trees were planted between Ladenthin in German Land of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania (Mecklenburg-Vorpommern) and Warnik in Polish region of Western Pomerania (Zachodniopomorskie) along a road that had only been developed in recent years with the help of European funding. We chose this road, as there were only a few trees on the German side, and no trees at all on the Polish side. With our planting, we aimed to fill the gaps and close the avenue, so this part can be enjoyed as a complete avenue that connects two countries.

2013 we started to plan for the joint planting. We had consultations between the Polish and German environmental associations and the environmental and road authorities on the Polish and German sides, with the local mayors and the responsible road services. All participants on both the German and the Polish side showed great interest in the project and promised their support. One challenge was to make sure that trees planted on both sides of the border looked the same. We analysed planting specifications from both countries to assure a common approach.

The planting was accompanied on 16 April by a cross-border festival, which contributed to a better understanding and raised public awareness regarding the protection of road-side trees. With this festival, we hoped to initiate further joint actions. Regional-level officials and a consul of Germany in Poland participated, rich media coverage in both countries followed.

The planting was financed by the LIFE project.



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Katharina Dujesiefken finished her studies at the University of Rostock in 1986 with a degree in agriculture. She became the head of a department for livestock farming in a state-owned agricultural farm. After training in business administration, marketing, law and English, followed by a residency in England, she worked as a speaker for Friends of the Earth Germany (BUND), national association Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, and since 2003 has been the leader of the BUND-Project "Tree and Avenue protection". During this time she qualified as an FLL (Forschungsgesellschaft Landschaftsentwicklung Landschaftsbau e.V.)-certified tree inspector and took part in training for tree maintenance at Justus-von-Liebig-School Hannover. She participates in different FLL working groups concerning tree inspection and maintenance as well as in trees and road safety working groups at FGSV (Forschungsgesellschaft für Straßen- und Verkehrswesen e. V.).

À l'issue de sa formation en agriculture à l'université de Rostock en 1986, Katharina Dujesiefken a dirigé un service de production animale dans une ferme d'État. Après une formation en Business administration, marketing, droit et anglais, suivie par un séjour en Angleterre, Katharina a travaillé comme porte-parole pour les Amis de la Terre Allemagne (BUND), section du Mecklembourg-Poméranie occidentale. Depuis 2003, elle dirige le programme "Protection des arbres et des allées" du BUND. Elle possède un certificat d'expertise en arboriculture de la FLL (Forschungsgesellschaft Landschaftsentwicklung Landschaftsbau e.V.) et a suivi une formation à la gestion des arbres à la Justus-von-Liebig-Schule à Hannover. Elle participe à différents groupes de travail sur l'expertise et la gestion des arbres dans le cadre de la FLL ou sur les arbres et la sécurité routière dans le cadre de la FGSV (Forschungsgesellschaft für Straßen- und Verkehrswesen e. V.).



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Piotr Tyszko-Chmielowiec, Ph.D. is conservationist and arborist, initiator and leader of the “Roads for Nature” avenue conservation programme at Foundation for Sustainable Development in Wrocław. Founder and Director of Tree Institute, a training and consulting institution, operator of the Certified Tree Inspector course. Forester by education, graduate of Warsaw Agricultural University (M.S.) and Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Virginia, USA (Ph.D.).

Piotr Tyszko-Chmielowiec est ingénieur forestier, titulaire d'une maîtrise de l'université d'Agriculture de Varsovie et d'un doctorat de l'université Virginia Tech à Blacksburg, Virginie (USA). Environnementaliste et expert en arboriculture, Piotr est à l'origine du programme de protection des allées dénommé « Roads for Nature », qu'il dirige à la Fundacja EkoRozwoju (Fondation pour le développement durable) à Wrocław. Piotr est également le fondateur et directeur du Tree Institute, un organisme de formation et de conseil qui dispense des cours pour la certification des experts en arboriculture.