



Information on the "Urban Green Spaces" White Paper

Background

On the initiative of the Urban Development Directorate-General of the former Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Development, interdepartmental cooperation on the topic of urban green spaces was launched in 2013. The overarching goal was to place the issue of green spaces in urban development on the political agenda and to trigger discussion processes. By merging the Environment and Building portfolios to form the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB), the Federal Government took an important step towards linking the areas of environmental protection and nature conservation with that of urban development.

In June 2015, Federal Minister Dr. Barbara Hendricks presented the "Urban Green Spaces" Green Paper, which contains a survey of the functions of public green spaces and urban green infrastructures. The Green Paper gave rise to an integrated and long-term process as well as to a broad dialogue on the future value of green spaces and open spaces in our cities. On the basis of the Green Paper, a White Paper on Urban Green Spaces was drafted.

The White Paper process

The White Paper was drawn up under the auspices of the BMUB. The Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development (BBSR), in collaboration with the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN), the Federal Environment Agency (UBA) and the Julius Kühn Institute - Federal Research Centre for Cultivated Plants (JKI), was in charge of the technical aspects. In addition to the federal ministries, Länder and municipalities, associations, foundations, as well as representatives from the private sector and civil society were also involved in the drafting of the White Paper. The public was invited to contribute to an online dialogue. The White Paper was presented on 8 May, 2017, in Essen, at the 2nd "Urban Green Spaces" Federal Congress, whose motto was "For a Future Worth Living".

Objective and Content of the White Paper

In its White Paper, the Federal Government proposes recommendations for action and concrete measures for the next few years through which it will, within its areas of competence, support municipalities and other actors in strengthening urban green infrastructures. The Federal Government will thus make a key contribution to improving quality of life, environmental justice and climate resilience within cities.

The White Paper defines ten fields of action with concrete measures for protecting and enhancing urban green and open spaces. The objective is to achieve better legal integration of urban green infrastructures, introduce targeted support measures, develop guidelines and tools, carry out pilot and research projects, and improve communication on the subject. The White Paper does not claim to be exhaustive, but is rather seen as a building block of a longer-term initiative for high-quality urban green spaces.



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The White Paper's 10 fields of action

Field of action n° 1: Integrated planning for urban greenery

In order to preserve or create urban green spaces with their diverse functions, integrated and networked planning processes are required. For this reason, the Federal Government will strengthen the importance of public greenery in planning law and practice.

Field of action n° 2: Enhancement and multifunctional design of green spaces

Urban green spaces are under growing pressure as a result of increasing competition over use of land. The Federal Government will strengthen urban green infrastructures through urban development assistance and other funding programmes and work with municipalities to develop green standards.

Field of action n° 3: Strengthening climate protection and reducing climate impacts through urban greenery

Public green spaces serve a variety of functions in the context of climate-friendly urban development. This is why the Federal Government will highlight the importance of urban greenery for the climate, flood protection and protection against heavy rainfall.

Field of action n° 4: Developing urban greenery in a socially viable way that also promotes health

Public green and open spaces are of great importance for daily recreation, social encounters and neighbourhood identity. The Federal Government will support municipalities in the area of environmental justice and strengthen urban gardens.

Field of action n° 5: Green buildings

Buildings represent a considerable potential for the networking of urban greenery. The Federal Government will work to ensure that more greenery is planted on and around buildings in cities and municipalities, through the use of roof surfaces as open spaces and the development of community gardens, for example.

Field of action n° 6: Properly plan, create and maintain a variety of green areas

Dealing with plants using the necessary expertise is the prerequisite for high-quality urban green spaces. The Federal Government, as a partner of municipalities, will provide various recommendations for the sustainable management of green areas and the promotion of biodiversity.

Field of action n° 7: Attracting stakeholders and involving society

Urban greenery is everybody's business and must be treated as a joint task. The Federal Government therefore strives to support the networking, motivation and information of stakeholders.

Field of action n° 8: Strengthening and networking research

The complexity of the subject area makes transdisciplinary research, interagency cooperation and scientific exchange necessary. A new "Urban Green Spaces" research cluster will therefore be added to the "Innovation Platform for the City of the Future". Research projects and pilot projects are planned.

Field of action n° 9: Enhance the exemplary role of the Federal Government

The Federal Government will lead the way with its own properties and support the goals of integrated urban and green development. To this end, federally-owned green spaces are to be enhanced, also with the aim of strengthening biodiversity.

Field of action n° 10: Outreach work and education

Public awareness of the importance of urban greenery must be raised. This is why the Federal Government will continue to promote environmental education, with the aim of anchoring this task in all fields of political action.



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