

Wilderness in Germany

Part I: National strategy, scientific background and actual challenges

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Agenda

- 
- Introduction: The German National Strategy on Biodiversity (NBS)
 - Wilderness targets of the NBS
 - Challenges and implementation
 - Definition and quality criteria
 - Legal protection
 - Scientific research projects
 - Political initiative: Offensive for nature-conservation 2020
 - National Natural Heritage
 - Example North Rhine Westphalia
 - Communication and public relation work (➔ part II)
 - BfN-Tasks
 - Outlook

National Strategy on Biodiversity (NBS)

➤ Decision of the German Federal Government (7 November 2007):

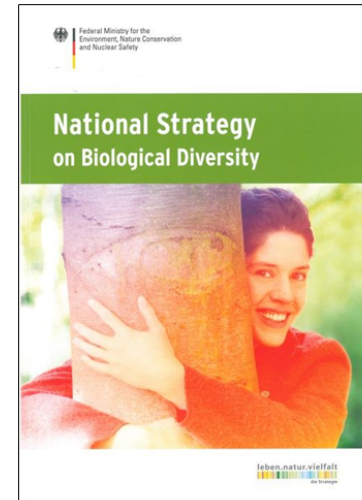
- agreed on by all ministries
- after a comprehensive communication process (NGOs, scientists, administrations / governments of the German states)

➤ 28 concrete visions:

- all issues related to biodiversity
- ca. 330 targets
- often very concrete
- target years (immediately – 2010 – 2015, 2020 up to max. 2050)

➤ Fields of action:

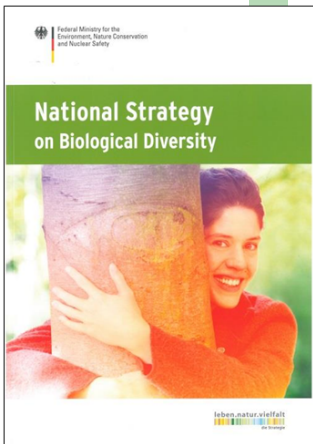
- ca. 430 concrete measures
- clear responsibilities (governmental and non-governmental actors)
- report once every four years based on a set of 19 indicators



Source:

http://biologischevielfalt.bfn.de/fileadmin/NBS/documents/Veroeffentlichungen/BMU_Natio_Strategie_en_bf.pdf

Wilderness in the German NBS



Our vision for the future:

- Germany again boasts fascinating areas of wilderness* (e.g. in national parks), which are left to develop naturally and undisturbed.

Our aims are:

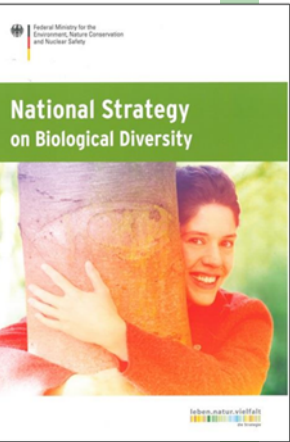
- By the year 2020, Mother Nature is again able to develop according to her own laws throughout at least **2 % of Germany's national territory**, for example in **post-mining landscapes**, in former **military exercise zones**, on **watercourses**, along **coastlines**, in **peatlands** and in the **high altitude mountains**.
- A large proportion of wilderness areas are **large** areas.
- Integration of small and large wild(erness) areas into habitat connectivity

* wilderness areas *or* wild areas

Wilderness in the German NBS

Further aims in the NBS concerning wilderness:

- By 2020, forests with natural forest development account for 5 % of the wooded area.
- Ensure natural development on 10 % of public-owned forest land by 2020
- Specific wilderness targets for coasts and seas, watercourses, peatlands as well as high altitude mountains



Challenges

Reservation/opposition towards wilderness

- land owners (also state land owners)
- foresters, wood-industry

Federal system in Germany

- responsibility of federal states
- intensive, sensitive communication and discussion between national and regional administrations

Responsibility of other than nature conservation administrations, e.g.

- Forestry (often ministry of agriculture)
- Ministry of transport/traffic infrastructure

Financial aspects

Communication

- choosing the right ways and means of information (output)
- correct evaluation of input (e. g. from opponents)



How to reach the wilderness aims

We try to reach the 2 % - aim of the German NBS by ...

- **policy work:** winning supporters, preparing basic decisions, papers, ...
- **administrative work:** finding/discussion of definitions and criteria for wilderness areas i. S. of NBS; organizing workshops, ...
- **scientific work:** natural potential (what could we have?), status quo (what do we have?), wilderness species, ...
- **PR-work:** communication of wilderness aims, options, backgrounds and processes by www, print media, conferences, ...
- **cooperation:** with NGOs /administrations on different levels ...
- **project funding:** National program biodiversity, large scale nature conservation projects ...
- **National Natural Heritage.**



How to reach the wilderness targets

Note the special German federal situation:

16 federal states with own administrations and own laws; federal states are responsible for the regional and local nature conservation (by the German constitution)!



Definition of wilderness areas*

Wilderness areas in the sense of the NBS*:

*Wilderness areas in the sense of the [German] NBS are sufficiently **large**, (predominantly) **non-fragmented** areas **free of intrusive or extractive human activity**. They serve to **permanently** provide for the ecological functioning of **natural processes** without human interference.*

Relatively general definition:

→ **Quality criteria requested**

* definition for the 2 % - target of the NSBSD, developed during an expert workshop in 2012 (Finck et al. 2013, Natur und Landschaft 88 (H. 8): 342-346)

Quality criteria for wilderness areas I

Foundation: Taking notice both of

- international processes and discussions (IUCN criterium 1b, wild Europe initiative/definition) as well as
- German national possibilities and limitations

Current process in Germany:

- report of EUROPARC Germany
- workshops „Wilderness Dialouge“ (2014, 2015), island of Vilm
- developing criteria and standards by BMUB and BfN, based on the IUCN report (2015 - 2016)
- discussion with nature administrations of German federal states (Oct 2016)
- final discussion with the ministries of the German federal states February 2017, minor changes
- publication in 2017 (in preparation)



Quality criteria for wilderness areas II

Central criteria are (selection out of 15):

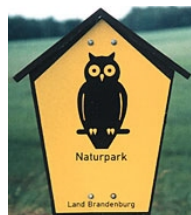
- legal protection targets: wilderness, natural processes
- public ownership
- size: forest at least 1.000 ha; fens, coasts, mountains 500 ha
- disturbances / compactness
- management / wildlife management
- settlements / infrastructure / fragmentation

- **but not:** naturalness!



Legal protection

- There is no category of protected areas after the German law, which is directly matching the IUCN category 1b (wilderness areas)
- Protection of wilderness can be done either by using the existing categories (German Nature Conservation Act):
 - National Park (§ 24)
 - National Nature Monument (no example by now) (§24)
 - Biosphere Reserve (core zones) (§ 25)
 - Nature reserve (§ 23)
- ... or by other legal instruments (e.g. forest law)



Scientific projects

Scientific projects supported by BfN/BMUB (selection):

- R+D-project* to identify German natural potential for wilderness areas to fulfill the 2 % target (2012-2015)
- R+D-project to find potential wilderness areas especially in active und former military grounds (2015-2017)
- R+D-project to identify typical wilderness-species (2015-2017)
- R+D-project on the role of natural disturbances in wilderness areas (2015-2017)
- R+D-project to fulfill core-zone-obligations in biosphere reserves (2013-2016)
- R+D-project to identify opportunities for nature parks to establish wilderness areas (2016-2018)
- R+D-project to analyze requirements for protection and administration of wilderness areas (2016)
- National-Program-Project to accompany wilderness development on areas of the German Federal Environmental Foundation (~70,000 ha) (2014-2019)

* R+D = Research and Development



Search areas

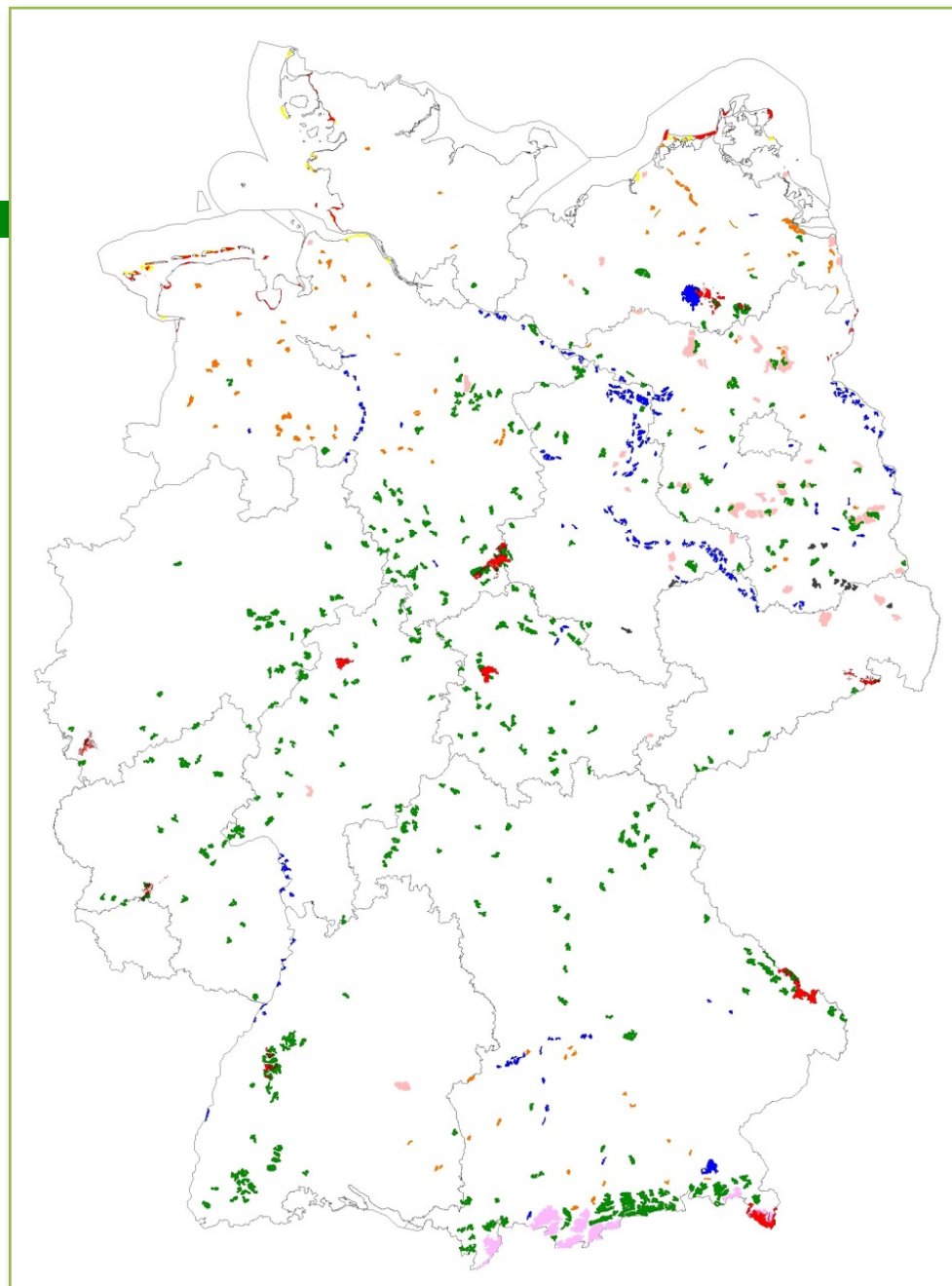
Search areas for wilderness areas in Germany*

Legende

Typ

-  Flood plains
-  Coastal areas
-  Fens
-  Forest
-  High mountain areas
-  Former mining areas
-  Former military training gr.
-  Core areas of National Parks

* added: core zones of National Parks;
source: R+D-project to find german natural
potential for wilderness areas to fulfill the 2
% target (2012-2015)



Wilderness areas in Germany

Where do we stand now?

Search-area: 1,256,196 ha (3,5 % of German territory)

NBS-target: 714,000 ha (2 % of German territory)

Status quo: 210,000 - 225,000 ha (0,6 % of German territory)*

- 16 National parks
- Large nature reserves (e.g. Königsbrucker Heide: more than 4,000 ha)
- Former military training grounds / mining areas owned by the German Federal state

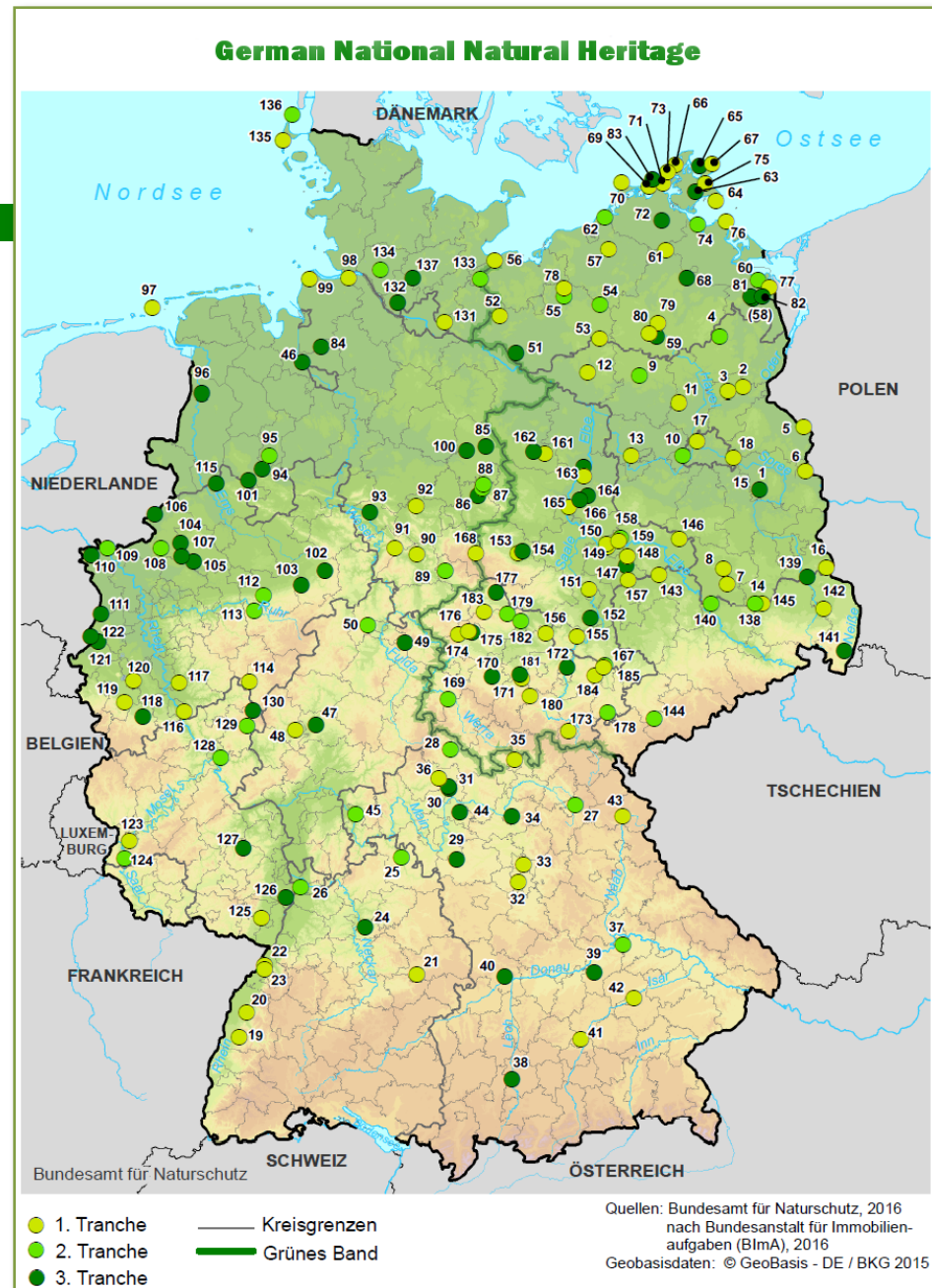
Perspective, e.g.:

- State owned forest
- Flood plains
- National Natural Heritage

* estimated; existing and secured areas

National Natural Heritage

- Coalition agreement of the German Federal Government 2005: 80,000 – 120,000 ha
- 2009: 25,000 ha
- 2013: 30,000 ha
- ➔: **156,000 ha**
- **Development of natural forests**
- **Protection of threatened open habitats and wetlands**
- German environmental foundation (45 %)
- BfN/State forest (20 %)
- Federal States (20 %)
- NGOs/foundations (15 %)



Policy work

Campaign Nature-Conservation 2020¹

Wilderness is one of 10 fields of action with two measures:

- Initiative of state and federal ministries² for more wilderness
- Communication for more wilderness

Subsequently:

- Decision to improve national and regional collaboration (Nov 2015)
- Trendsetting workshop of representatives of state and federal ministries² (Feb 2016, Feb 2017)
- Expert discussion: BfN and nature conservation authorities of the federal states (Oct 2016)

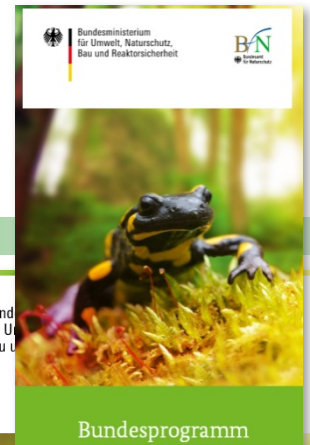
¹ published by the National Ministry for Nature Conservation (BMUB)

² for nature conservation



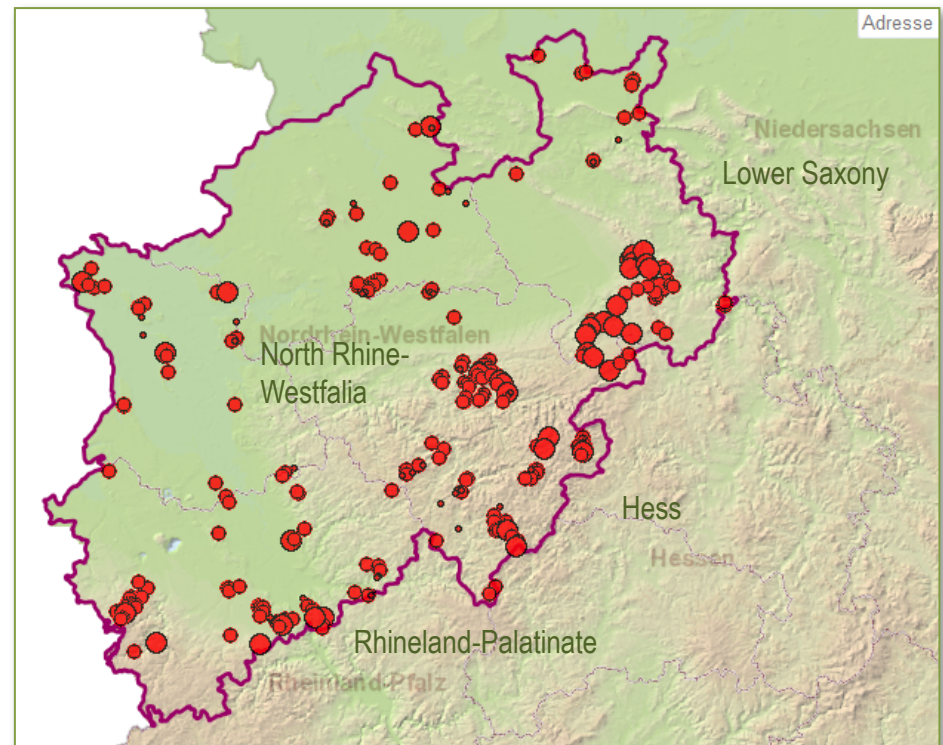
➤ E.g. National Program on Biological Biodiversity

- Established 1 January 2011
- Long term perspective
- Budget:
 - 2011-2015: 15 Mio €
 - 2016 : 18 Mio €
 - 2017: 20 Mio €
- Focus on four main issues:
 - Species, for which Germany has a special responsibility
 - Protecting / restoring ecosystem services
 - Hotspots of biological diversity in Germany
 - Additional measures with importance for the implementation of the strategy (NBS)



Nature Conservation Act North Rhine-Westfalia

- establ. November 2016
- new regulation: § 40 Wilderness developing areas
- based on the 5 % NBS-target on natural forest development
- 112 sites have been established by law
- total of 12,750 ha (3.4 – 3,975 ha)
- protected as Nature reserve



Communication for wilderness in Germany

Publications (2 % - target):

- BfN-Skript Nr. 404 (*Wilderness in Dialogue 2014*)
- Natur und Landschaft 09/10 2015 (*focus: wilderness*)
- BfN-Skript Nr. 422 (*R+D-project „potentials for 2 % target“*)
- International publication (*in preparation*)
- ...

Funding of NGO project „Wilderness Communication“ (2015-2017):

- Internet: www.wildnis-in-deutschland.de →
Presentation II
- print products, workshops, ...



BfN: Tasks and responsibilities

- **Advice and provision:** scientific guidance for political decision-making processes, esp. German Ministry of Environment but also for Federal states
- **Knowledge transfer and financial support:** e.g. scientific research, funding of nature conservation projects (e.g. research, model projects)
- **Cooperation:** national and international partners; GO and NGO
- **Information:** press and public relations work, workshops e.g. at the International Nature Conservation Academy

Outlook: chances and challenges

- Wilderness is a broadly accepted nature conservation strategy (public, politicians, NGOs)

- good progress
objective

- contribution
of the Na

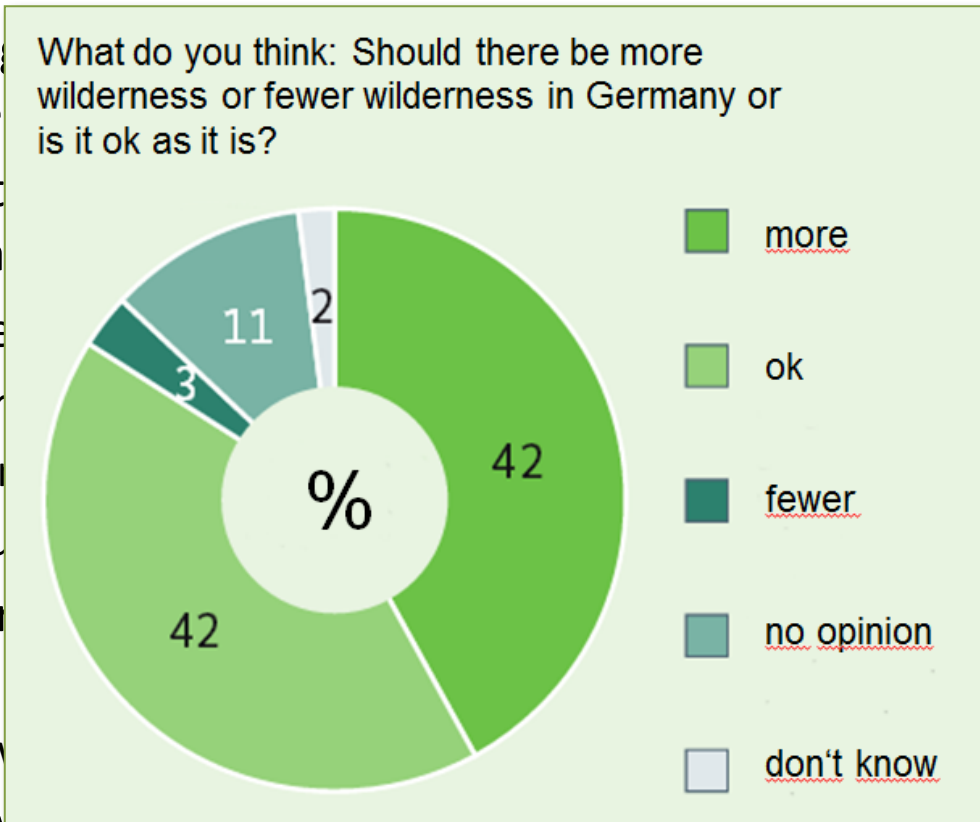
- still a rele

- need for
- provision
- use of fu

- serious ch
- wood

- expand

- proceed with further aspects (e.g. quality criteria, Natura 2000 and wilderness,...)



Source: representative Study BfN (2015)

Wilderness

appropriate areas

areas

current situation:

wilderness areas

forest and

Natura 2000 and

Thank you for your attention!



Königsbrücker Heide
(Saxony)