

## Aron Callens in Salzburg



**Home university, department of trainee:** HoGent university of Applied Sciences and Arts

**Studies of trainee:** agro- and biotechnology, greenery management faculty

**Internship period:** March – June 2020

**Topic of the internship:** Urban protected areas

**Supervisor of the SURE:** Prof. Dr. Jürgen Breuste

**Local supervisor during the internship:** Prof. Dr. Jürgen Breuste

**Institution of the internship:** Paris Lodron Universität Salzburg

**Content of the internship:** Urban protected areas

Globally, urbanization is increasing at an immense pace. As a result, more and more protected areas are being swallowed up by cities and the effect that urbanization has on these areas is increasing.

The aim of my internship was to develop a good method for identifying these urban protected areas. In this way that I tried to provide a basis for further research into the influence of an urban environment on nature in protected areas. One of the most important factors in this process was determining which parameters are most suitable for such research. Urban protected areas consist of two things: the urban section and the protected area section. The outcome for the urban parameter was focused on the physical environment and not on legal boundaries, which is a crucial factor for this research. The determination of the parameter protected area is based on the Natura-2000 network. Since this network has been around for a long time and collects data in a uniform manner, this was the best choice. The distance between the urban environment and the protected area is also an important parameter. A radius of 10 km was decided on the basis of a literature study.

As a case study I tested this method on a national scale in Belgium. A first step has been taken towards the development of a refined method in which trial and error will take up a large part of the search for the correct method. This internship taught me to work in an international context and

further fueled my interest in urban ecology. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I was only able to physically participate in the internship for two weeks, so I completed the assignment from Belgium. This resulted in a unique experience that demonstrates that collaboration can also be done remotely.