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THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BERN CONVENTION
IN THE HELLENIC REPUBLIC

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1 DECEMBER 2015

The preparation of the Report

Parties consulted

GREEK GOVERNMENT

Ministry of Energy and Environment: Biodiversity and Protected Areas Department

- Dr Charalambos Ververis
- Dr Christos Chrysomallis

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS AND EXPERTS

- WWF
- Hellenic Ornithological Society
- Archelon
- MEDASSET
- Professor George Kyriakou (Athens University)
- Society for the Protection of Prespa
- Dr George Politis



Protection of Habitats and Species in Greece

A short chronology

- 1938: first national park (Mount Olympus)
- 1968: Forest Code on forestry protection and hunting
- 1970s: Ramsar protection for wetlands
- 1981: Greece joins the European Union
- 1983: harmonisation of the Bern Convention (Law 1335/1983)
- 1985: Birds Directive implemented
- 1986: detailed environmental licensing legislation introduced
- 1998: Habitats Directive implemented after CJEU infringement proceedings
- 2009: environmental liability Directive 2004/35/EC implemented after CJEU infringement proceedings
- 2011: Biodiversity Law provided basic protection to all Natura2000 sites
- 2014: Biodiversity Action Plan

Key implementation Issues

What has been achieved

- Birds and Habitat Directives
- Separate Ministry of Environment
- Forest protection
- Natura2000 network and Natura2000 Commission
- Management bodies for protected areas
- Active civil society (numerous NGOs, broad right to bring court action)
- Data collection (monitoring system in 2016)
- Strategic Plan (no implementation timetable or budget)
- Greece supports the retention of current directives as framework for the protection of biodiversity

Obstacles

Key reasons for failures to achieve full implementation

- lack of administrative co-ordination and planning
- co-ordination with stakeholders
- lack of funds allocated to environmental protection
- The financial crisis in Greece has added further pressure to curtail environmental protection in order to encourage commercial and tourist developments
- Cuts in the environmental inspectorate mechanism
- Lack of funds has also led to a failure to resolve infrastructure issues (in particular those related to waste management) which have effects on protected areas
- Management plans: still needs individual Presidential Decree for each site
- Natura Site Management Bodies: underfunding and lack of support

The role of the Commission

Current commission infringement cases against Greece

- 2007/2384 – Directive 92/43/EEC – protection of Lake Koroneia
- 2011/2156 - Directive 92/43/EEC – deterioration of Natura2000 site of Kyparissia and inadequate protection of *caretta caretta* species
- 2012/2230 – Directive 2011/92/EC (ex. 85/337/EEC) – landfill project at Megalopoli
- 2013/4154 - Directive 92/43/EEC – preventing unlawful use of poison baits
- 2013/4208 - Directive 92/43/EEC – Inadequate protection of Natura 2000 sites in Lesvos
- 2014/2260 - Directive 92/43/EEC – Designation of Special Areas of Conservation in Greece
- 2014/4073 Directive 92/43/EEC and Directive 2011/92/EC – Planning of windfarm projects in Greece (effect on neighbouring Natura areas)

Recent Achievements for environmental protection in Greece

Moving Forward

RECENTLY ACHIEVED

- Biodiversity Law
- Wetlands characterisation
- Fishing
- Data collection (*Infringement proceedings now closed*)
- National monitoring scheme
- Prioritised Action Framework
- Poisoned bait education and control

ON THE “TO DO” LIST

- Hunting
- Waste management
- Reduction in the illegal use of poison baits
- Appropriate control of illegal building and use of coastal areas
- Enforcement of shellfish regulations
- More protected sea areas

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