



MEDAC meeting

WG3/GL3

20th June 2024 – Athens/Online



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MEDITERRANEAN
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AN OCEAN OF POTENTIAL

GREECE'S
COMMITMENTS

Greece commitment(s) – 01/a

BAN BOTTOM TRAWLING IN ALL MARINE PROTECTED AREAS BY 2030, STARTING FROM MARINE NATIONAL PARKS BY 2026.

This is the single most effective measure for the preservation of marine biodiversity, the restoration of marine ecosystems and the promotion of sustainable fishing practices.

Bottom trawling is, according to the EU Regulations, allowed in the Mediterranean Sea in depths between 50 and 1000 meters and to a distance from the coastline greater than 1,5 nautical miles. However, patrolling the implementation is quite challenging due to the complexity of the geography of the Greek seas and the very large coastline.

Bottom trawling is the single greatest threat to marine habitats as it directly damages the sea bottom creating significant disturbance to the marine food chain and affecting thus all marine species, i.e. the marine ecosystems. The Mediterranean seabed can take many years to recover from the effects of trawling. In particular, the nature of the Greek ecological zones of the benthos is particularly sensitive and cannot recover, with the result that the destruction is often irreversible. Furthermore, according to the most recent studies, bottom trawling is also a significant source of GHG emissions comparable in quantity to those of aviation.

Greece commitment(s) – 01/b

BAN BOTTOM TRAWLING IN ALL MARINE PROTECTED AREAS BY 2030, STARTING FROM MARINE NATIONAL PARKS BY 2026.

Banning bottom trawling in the MPAs will significantly increase the protection of many vulnerable species such as Posidonia and corals as well as many benthic ecosystems and vulnerable habitats. It will also facilitate the meaningful enforcement of existing bans and restrictions since there will be less fragmentation of protected areas. It can allow damaged habitats to regenerate, supporting overall ecosystem health, increasing carbon storage and having significant spillover effects to the adjacent areas as similar actions undertaken by other countries such as the UK have shown. It will thus ensure the long-term sustainability of fish stocks, which will contribute in the long-term to maintaining the viability of local communities, especially areas that depend on fishing.

Greece commitment(s) – 01/c

BAN BOTTOM TRAWLING IN ALL MARINE PROTECTED AREAS BY 2030, STARTING FROM MARINE NATIONAL PARKS BY 2026.

The transition from the cessation of fishing with trawlers (247 boats according to the official records) should be fair. Compensation mechanisms could help affected communities. A fee on the offshore wind farms could also be used to that effect. Balancing employment, food quality and tourism concerns is vital during this transition.

IMPLEMENTING BODY/BENEFICIARY:

Coastguard, NECCA, Ministry of Rural Development and Food

OOA AREA OF ACTION: Sustainable fisheries/MPAs

AREA: East Mediterranean Sea | DURATION: 7 years (2024-2030)

BUDGET: statutory measure and, from 2026, up to 30 million € from funds from the ETS revenues, the Ministry of Rural Development and Food and from the development of offshore wind farms (compensation measures)

Greece commitment(s) – 02/a

ENLARGEMENT OF THE MARINE PROTECTED AREAS' NETWORK OF GREECE TO MEET THE 30% TARGET BY 2024

Marine protected areas (MPAs) in Greece currently occupy an area of 22,796 km² and cover 18.3% of the country's marine waters. According to par. 1 of Art. 174 of Law 5037/2023, MPAs have to expand to 30% of Greek territorial waters by 2030.

To meet this target, Greece will establish in 2024 two additional marine national parks (as per point a, par. 2 of Art. 19 of Law 1650/1986) covering 32% of National waters

A) THE IONIAN MARINE NATIONAL PARK (from north of Kefallonia to south of Antikythira) with a total area of over 14,000 km² (including the existing Natura 2000 areas of 3,668.86 km²). The park covers over 11% of Greek territorial waters, the Ionian segment of the Hellenic trench being its core (a net increase of Greek MPAs of more than 8%) building on 13 existing Natura 2000 areas (GR222003, GR222004, GR222005, GR222007, GR2210001, GR2210002, GR2210004, GR2550010, GR2330008, GR2540009, GR2540003, GR3000008 and GR3000019).

ENLARGEMENT OF THE MARINE PROTECTED AREAS' NETWORK OF GREECE TO MEET THE 30% TARGET BY 2024

B) THE AEGEAN MARINE NATIONAL PARK with a total area of over 8,000 km² (including the existing Natura 2000 areas of 545 km²). The park covers 6.61% of Greek territorial waters, (a net increase of Greek MPAs of over 6%). The core of the marine park is the small rocky islets, almost all of them being already designated as Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBAs) and the surrounding marine environment. It builds on 13 existing Natura 2000 areas (GR3000011, GR4210011, GR4220007, GR4220030, GR4220023, GR4210009, GR4210022, GR4210007, GR4210032, GR4210023, GR4220022, GR4220036 and GR4210021)



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