



We join forces for the Marine Protected Areas of Greece

The Observatory **weseayou** presents the **first report!**

The Observatory **weseayou** is the first monitoring mechanism for the implementation of Greece's commitments for the protection of marine environment.

This report outlines (a) Greece's progress on the implementation of the **Commitments announced by the Greek Government during the 9th Our Ocean Conference** (April 2024) and (b) Greece's compliance with key EU law obligations concerning Marine Protected Areas (MPAs).

For the monitoring of the implementation progress, every commitment and legal obligation is broken down into individual steps based on the procedures set out in the relevant legislation. The assessment of the progress, as reflected in specific percentages, is based on the monitoring of these steps.

WHERE WE ARE

GREECE'S COMMITMENTS

Greece announced **21 commitments** for the protection of the marine environment at the 9th Our Ocean Conference (OOC9), which was organized and hosted by Greece in Athens in April 2024.

The Observatory **weseayou** monitors and assesses the implementation progress of the **8 Commitments on Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)**.

PROGRESS

15%

GREECE'S OBLIGATIONS UNDER EU LAW

Greece has important obligations in relation to marine protected areas and maritime spatial planning under EU law.

Establishment of conservation measures for Natura 2000 sites

PROGRESS

10%

Establishment of maritime spatial planning

PROGRESS

5%

ASSESSMENT OF GREECE'S COMMITMENTS

01 BAN BOTTOM TRAWLING IN MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

Banning bottom trawling within marine protected areas is a key tool for the protection of marine biodiversity, as the bottom-towed fishing gear destroys important seabed ecosystems.

No official procedure has started for the implementation of this commitment.

DEADLINE
2026 & 2030

PROGRESS

0%

02 ENLARGEMENT OF THE MARINE PROTECTED AREAS NETWORK

With this commitment, Greece announced **the establishment of two new national marine parks** in the Ionian and in the Aegean with the aim to enlarge the marine protected areas network in Greece to 32% of national waters (from 18.3% which is today).

The time limit for the implementation of this commitment (2024) has elapsed, but the procedure for the establishment of the two national marine parks has started and is advancing in accordance with national legislation. At present, the carrying out of the two Special Environmental Studies has been assigned to consultants and their drafting is in progress. However, extremely worrying is the launch of the process for the granting of hydrocarbon exploration and exploitation concessions in two new areas adjacent to the new national marine park in the Ionian.

DEADLINE
2024

PROGRESS

20%

03 ESTABLISHMENT OF A NATIONAL MONITORING AND SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM

The **monitoring and surveillance of marine protected areas (MPAs)** are key elements for their effective management.

This commitment is based on the implementation of a project, funded by the Recovery and Resilience Plan, for the supply of monitoring equipment and the development of an integrated monitoring system. This project is currently in the process of bid evaluation and selection. Furthermore, MPA monitoring is expected to be supported through a mapping platform developed and run by the international non-profit organisation Global Fishing Watch which monitors fishing activity in near real time. To this end, the Greek government has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with this organisation and A.C. Laskaridis Foundation which is in the process of being implemented.

DEADLINE
2025

PROGRESS

15%

04 MARINE HABITAT MAPPING

The **mapping of marine habitats in all marine protected areas** is a key tool for the adoption of appropriate conservation and restoration measures and the establishment of maritime spatial planning.

No official procedure has started for the implementation of this commitment.

DEADLINE
2027

PROGRESS

0%

05 ACTION FOR THE IDENTIFICATION OF MARINE HABITATS, MIGRATORY ROUTES, AND FORAGING AREAS OF SEA TURTLES

This commitment concerns the identification of the marine habitats, migratory routes and foraging areas of the sea turtles *Caretta caretta* and *Chelodion mydas* by the supply and installation of 200 satellite tags (in addition to the already existing) to sea turtles and the development of a digital decision support system.

No official procedure has started for the implementation of this commitment.

DEADLINE
-
(48 months duration)

PROGRESS

0%

NEXT COMMITMENTS



<p>06 MANAGEMENT AND SPATIAL PLANNING OF THE GREEK MARINE PROTECTED AREAS</p> <p>This commitment is related to Greece's obligations under EU law for the establishment of conservation measures in Natura 2000 sites. In particular, it is related to the ongoing project, coordinated by the Ministry of Environment, for drafting Special Environmental Studies and the enacting of the presidential decrees and management plans for these areas.</p> <p>As stated below, the fulfillment of these obligations is facing significant delays.</p>	<p>DEADLINE 2025</p> <p>PROGRESS 10%</p>
<p>07 RESTORATION OF 30% OF SPECIFIC MARINE HABITAT TYPES BY 2030</p> <p>The establishment of restoration measures for marine habitats in Natura 2000 sites is a significant obligation under EU law (directive 92/43/EEC) while relevant provisions exist also in the national legislation. Furthermore, the new Regulation of the European Union (EU) 2024/1991 on nature restoration adopted in June 2024 includes specific objectives and obligations for the establishment of restoration measures.</p> <p>No official procedure has started for the implementation of this commitment.</p>	<p>DEADLINE 2030</p> <p>PROGRESS 0%</p>
<p>08 MONITORING AND EARLY WARNING SYSTEM FOR PASSING BY SHIPS</p> <p>This commitment aims at the protection of the endangered sperm whales and the tackling of a significant threat for these species: their killing and injury from collision with passing by ships (SAvE Whales).</p> <p>In June 2024 a memorandum of understanding was signed between the Ministry of Environment and Energy, the Natural Environment and Climate Change, the Ocean Care organization and The Green Tank. The required surveys started in summer of 2024 and will continue in 2025.</p>	<p>DEADLINE 2028</p> <p>PROGRESS 15%</p>

ASSESSMENT OF GREECE’S KEY OBLIGATIONS UNDER EU LAW

<p>ESTABLISHMENT OF CONSERVATION MEASURES FOR NATURA 2000 SITES</p> <p>Directives 92/43/EEC on the conservation of habitats and wild fauna and flora and 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds form the cornerstones of nature protection policy in the EU and a key element of the European Biodiversity Strategy and the 30X30 target for protected areas. Greece has designated 446 sites as part of the European ecological Natura 2000 network, 174 of which are marine or marine partially protected areas.</p> <p>Greece was convicted in December 2020 by the Court of Justice of the European Union of non-compliance with Directive 92/43/EEC for failing to establish conservation objectives and conservation measures for Natura 2000 sites (Special Areas of Conservation) within the set deadline (by 2012). As a response, in 2019 the Ministry of Environment launched a project for carrying out Special Environmental Studies and enacting presidential decrees and management plans for all Natura 2000 sites in Greece. However, the project is still ongoing and is facing significant delays. Public consultations have been held for most of the Special Environmental Studies, but only five studies (out of the 23 in total) have been formally approved.</p>	<p>DEADLINE 2012 & 2024</p> <p>PROGRESS 10%</p>
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ESTABLISHMENT OF MARINE SPATIAL PLANNING (DIRECTIVE 2014/89/ EU)

Directive 2014/89/EU requires member states (including Greece) to establish integrated, cross-sectoral maritime spatial plans (MSP) by March 2021.

Greece has failed to establish maritime spatial plans as required by this Directive. In December 2023, the European Commission referred Greece to the Court of Justice of the EU and in February 2025 the Court convicted Greece for non-compliance with the Directive. A public consultation on the draft National Spatial Strategy for marine space was held at the beginning of 2022, but the Strategy has not been formally approved yet. The procedure for the establishment of maritime spatial plans is at an early stage.

DEADLINE
2021

PROGRESS

5%

ABOUT US

The Observatory weseayou is a joint initiative of **WWF Greece**, **Greenpeace** and **VouliWatch**, with the support of the environmental organisations: **Blue Marine Foundation**, **Cyclades Preservation Fund**, **the Hellenic Society for the Protection of Nature**, **the Hellenic Ornithological Society**, **iSea**, **MEDASSET**, **Thalassa Foundation/Aenaos Thalassa**.

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