



Maritime Spatial Planning Country Profile

Greece

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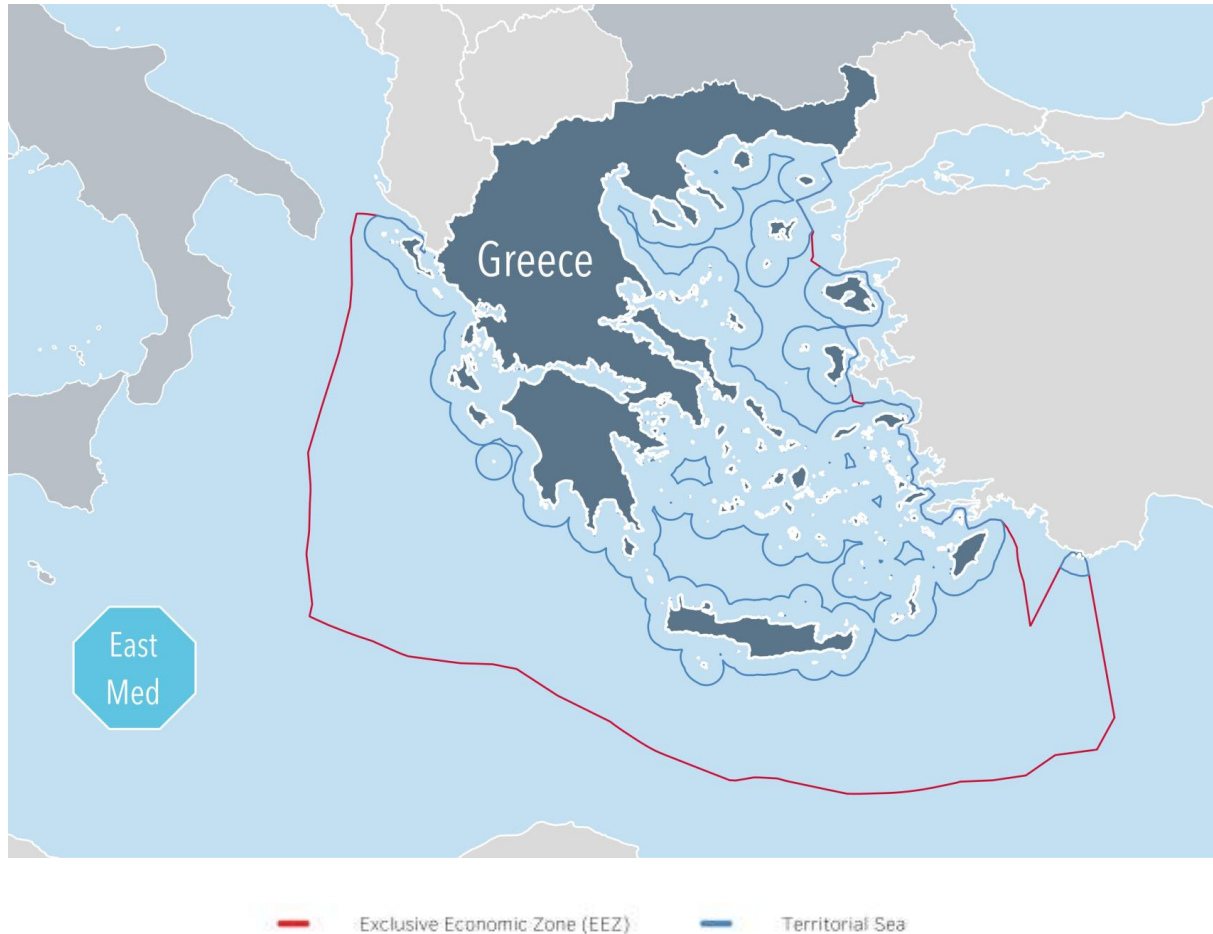
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Background Information

Basic facts on Marine Waters



This map was compiled from different international sources such as EMODnet, EEA or Marine Regions. Information obtained from these sources was cross-checked with data from national sources. While compilation was carried out by the European MSP Platform, validation and quality assurance remain the responsibility of the primary data sources.

Greece's territorial sea extends up to six nautical miles from the baselines. The maritime borders between Greece and Turkey are defined as follows:

- The agreement between Italy and Turkey signed in Ankara on January 4, 1932, and the procès-verbal that is an integral part of the above agreement, signed in Ankara on December 28, 1932, defines the maritime borders of the southern-eastern part of the Aegean Sea and eastern Mediterranean. Greece, as a successor of Italy's rights and obligations, since 1947, acquired full sovereignty over the Dodecanese islands.
- The Lausanne Peace Treaty signed in 1923, and the Athens Protocol of 1926, set the maritime borders in Thrace, a region of the Balkan Peninsula (to a point 3 n.m. from the estuary of the Evros River).
- From that point to the Northern part of the Dodecanese, wherever the territorial waters of the two countries meet, the maritime boundaries shall follow the median line between the coastline of the Asiatic coast and the Greek islands in the area. These maritime boundaries are in conformity with conventional and customary international law.

Main characteristics of Greek waters can be summarised as follows:

- Territorial sea (6 nm zone): approximately 92,095 km²; In January 2021, a new law initiated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was created following negotiations with Italy and Albania which extends Greece's territorial waters to 12 nautical miles, in the Ionian Sea.
- As a result of a bilateral agreement signed in Athens on 9 June 2020, Greece and Italy delimited their maritime zones, including their future exclusive economic zones (EEZ) on the basis of a former bilateral agreement (24 May 1977) concerning delimitation of their continental shelves. In principle, the 2020 agreement reconfirmed the 1977 agreement, however it added the fact that both countries recognise the relevant provisions of UNCLOS, signed five

years later, on 10 December 1982. By agreeing to limit -but not cancel- the effect of Strofades and the Diapontioi Islands and to swap some plots, Italy and Greece applied the principle of equidistance in a way that would not cause complications with the delimitation of exclusive economic zones with neighbouring states, i.e., Albania, Libya and Malta.

- With a bilateral agreement signed in Cairo on 6 August 2020, Egypt and Greece partially delimited their exclusive economic zones (EEZ) without having signed a previous continental shelf agreement. In the preamble of the 2020 agreement, both parties declared that they adhere to the UNCLOS and emphasise the importance, for both parties, of delimiting their exclusive economic zone. Article 2 stated that where natural resources extend to the exclusive economic zones of both parties, the two countries would cooperate to reach an agreement on how these resources would be managed. On 29 January 2021, following UNCLOS, the Hellenic Republic provided a list of geographical coordinates defining the line of delimitation of the EEZ between Greece and the Arab Republic of Egypt, accompanied by an illustrative map. All relevant materials can be found on the website of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea at: www.un.org/Depts/los.
- An agreement on the delimitation of maritime zones between Greece and Albania has been signed but has not yet entered into force.

In addition to these characteristics, Greece has a very rich marine environment, consisting of thousands of islands and islets, the depths of its waters and the great biological diversity they contain.

Maritime Spatial Plan (MSP) authorities and legislation

General

Planning at national, regional and sub-regional level

Law 4546 (GG 101/A/12-June-2018) transposed the Directive 2014/89/EU into the Greek legal system and Law 4759/2020 (GG 245/A/9-12-2020) amending the previous one through Chapter 2

Currently, there is no legally binding national MS Plan in Greece. However, MSP related issues are addressed in “Special Frameworks for Spatial Planning”¹ (terrestrial spatial plans, TS Plans) covering specific economic sectors. Sectoral plans have been elaborated so far for aquaculture (2011, to be revised), tourism (under finalisation) and industry (2009, to be revised), which include spatial planning guidelines for the land-based, coastal and marine segments of each sector. Furthermore, the Special Framework for Renewable Energy Sources (2008, new study under finalisation) sets the strategic guidelines for offshore wind parks.

National MSP authority

- Ministry of Environment and Energy/General Secretariat of Spatial Planning and Urban Environment/ Directorate of Spatial Planning.
- Whilst the Ministry of Environment and Energy is the Competent Authority for the implementation of MSP, to achieve the objectives of Maritime Spatial Planning, the Ministry cooperates with the Ministry of Maritime Affairs & Insular Policy which is responsible for the “National Strategy of Maritime Policy”. The Law 4770/2021 initiated by the Ministry of Maritime Affairs & Insular Policy has been in force since January 2021. Chapter 1 of the law entitled “*Integrated Maritime Policy for the Insular Territory*”, refers in particular to the definition of the framework for the elaboration and specification of the guidelines for the Integrated Maritime Policy in Greece’s insular territory.

Planning at regional level

- The modification of “Regional Frameworks for spatial planning” (terrestrial spatial plans, TS Plans) is either finalised or underway; an MSP approach will be taken in the general outline since only one of Greece’s 13 regions is not coastal or insular. Moreover, the region of Attica (which encompasses both coastal and insular areas) falls under the Metropolitan Planning and the metropolitan plan was issued in 2014 (Law 4277/2014, GG A’ 156). The “New Regulatory Plan for Athens” sets up the regulatory provisions for the planning and development for the Region of Attica on one hand, and the Athens metropolitan area on the other.

¹ For Greece’s National Spatial Planning structure in brief, please see Annex 1.

- Maritime Spatial Plans functions are included in the regional level of spatial planning which is strategic and are thus renamed as “Maritime Spatial Frameworks” (after Law 4685/2020). They can be elaborated on sub-regional, regional, or interregional level.

Regional MSP authority

There are no regional MSP authorities, even though law 4546/2018 previews the elaboration of Maritime Spatial Plans at the regional planning level.

Details

The main responsibility for Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) at the national and regional levels lies with the **Ministry of Environment and Energy** in accordance with Law 4546 (GG 101/A/12-June-2018) transposing the Directive 2014/89/EU into the Greek legal system and Law 4759/2020 (GG 245/A/9-12-2020) amending the previous one through Chapter 2. Implementation tasks are delegated hierarchically to the Minister of Environment and Energy (General Secretariat of Spatial Planning and Urban Environment/ Directorate General of Spatial Planning/Directorate of Spatial Planning) that has the jurisdiction for terrestrial and maritime spatial planning at national, sectoral, regional and sub-regional level. According to the provisions of Law 4546/2018, Maritime Spatial Planning will be subject to consultation with sectorial ministries, regional authorities and the public. It is also subject to the opinion/advice from the National Spatial Planning Council (as reinstated with the article 4, Law 4447/2016 and article 4, Law 4759/2020)².

Within the same Ministry of Environment and Energy, the **Special Secretariat of Waters**, is responsible for the development and implementation of all programs related to the protection and management of water resources of Greece (including the quality of bathing waters) and the coordination of all competent authorities dealing with the aquatic environment. The implementation of the Directive 2000/60/EC and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive as well as related specific Directives fall within the scope of the activities of the Secretariat. The General Secretariat of Environment has jurisdiction over environment and biodiversity issues, waste management, climate change and licensing.

When elaborating spatial plans, the Ministry of Environment and Energy works in close cooperation with Ministries dealing with specific MSP related topics:

- **Ministry of Foreign Affairs** (<https://www.mfa.gr/en/index.html>) that holds the jurisdiction for the maritime affairs in the framework of international relations. Apart from the delimitation of the EEZ with neighbouring states, this ministry cooperates with other governmental authorities in order to support Greek mariners in case of shipwrecks, repatriation etc.
- **Ministry of National Defence** (www.mod.mil.gr/mod/en/), head of the Hellenic Navy Hydrographic Service (HNHS), responsible for mapping the Hellenic territorial waters and adjacent seas, coast and marine space. HNHS, within the framework of its responsibilities, maintains and constantly updates geospatial data bases with all relevant information of the above marine space. The HNHS is continuously conducting hydrographic and oceanographic surveys, coastal topography surveys and sea level measurements.
- **Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Insular Policy** (www.yen.gr) is the head of: a) General Secretariat of the Ministry, with jurisdiction for search and rescue (SaR), safety of navigation, protection of the marine environment, response to marine pollution incidents, provision of emergency maritime radio communication services, Greek fleet issues; b) General Secretariat for Ports, Port Policy and Maritime Investments, with jurisdiction for ports and marine investments; and c) General Secretariat for the Aegean and Insular Policy, with jurisdiction for all the Greek islands. It is also the supervising Ministry of the Hellenic Coast Guard, responsible for enforcing the rule of law on sea, ships, ports and coastal areas and surveillance of sea borders.
- **Ministry of Rural Development and Food** (<http://www.minagric.gr/index.php/en/>) with jurisdiction for both fisheries and aquaculture. It is the head of the Directorate General of Sustainable Fisheries which consists of 3 Directorates: a) Fisheries Policy & Fishery Recourses, b) Aquaculture & Products utilization and c) Fishing activities & Product’s Control.
- **Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport** (www.yme.gr), which includes the Directorate of Port Infrastructure, responsible for the country's port construction.
- **Ministry of Tourism** (<http://www.mintour.gov.gr/en/>) is the head of: a) the Directorate for Spatial Planning and Infrastructure, responsible for determining major projects with regards to their impact on the tourism sector, as well as for the approval of the siting of tourist harbours including marinas; and b) the Special Authority for the Promotion and Licensing of Tourism Investments, responsible for the licensing process of public and private works related to the coastal and marine space.

² The National Spatial Planning Council is a consultation body with stakeholders whose mandate is renewed every 3 years. Its objective is mainly to provide advice on spatial planning issues.

The “Special Frameworks for Spatial Planning” (TS Plans) affect both coastal management and marine issues (depending on their focus). The existing Special Frameworks for Spatial Planning for aquaculture, tourism, industry and renewable energy have a direct spatial planning involvement in coastal and sea areas.

Spatial Plans were developed at a regional level for the 12 coastal and insular regions in the country – except for the region of Attica where the plan was developed at the metropolitan level. In 2013, the Ministry authorised studies for the evaluation of the existing regional spatial plans and launched their revision. The revised regional spatial plans of Crete, Epirus, Thessaly, North Aegean, Eastern Mediterranean-Thrace, Ionian Islands and Sterea Ellada have already been enacted and established.

Beyond the legislation transposing the MSP Directive, there are several other sectoral legislative acts, strategic documents and spatial planning frameworks that are relevant in the view of MSP implementation, including those dealing with: environmental aspects, marine protected areas, protection of the marine environment, Special Port Police Regulations, spatial planning and sustainable development, renewable energy sources, tourism, aquaculture, shipping, underwater cultural heritage, anchorage of ships etc.

Work in progress

- The Inter-Ministerial Committee’s tasks such as the set up for the elaboration and the implementation of MSP, in accordance with the Memorandum between Ministry of Environment & Energy and Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Insular Policy are still in progress.
- In parallel, work is in progress for the specifications of the “National Spatial Planning Strategy for Marine Space” and the specifications for the preparation of “Maritime Spatial Frameworks”.
- The first formulation of the “National Spatial Planning Strategy for Marine Space” and a “Maritime Spatial Framework” for a specific insular area are foreseen in the context of the transboundary project THAL-CHOR 2.
- At present, the competent MSP authority estimates that the draft version of the “National Spatial Planning Strategy for Marine Space” will be completed and will be submitted for public consultation. Once the draft final version of the “National Spatial Planning Strategy for the Marine Space” has been completed and comments have been received from the National Spatial Planning Council and the co-competent Ministries, the final version of the “National Spatial Planning Strategy for the Marine Space” will be submitted to the Council of Ministers for approval followed by an announcement in the Greek Parliament.

Overview of MSP-related uses and issues

Greece is an archipelagic area divided by a peninsula in two parts: the Aegean and the Ionian Sea. This means that there is a great variety of uses and activities all over the Greek seas and that many uses and activities exist in great density. Indicatively but not exhaustively, you can find in the Greek seas:

Marine and coastal protected areas

Greek waters are home to a number of protected areas, including Natura 2000 marine areas, National Marine Parks (Alonissos Northern Sporades, Zakynthos, ...), and National Parks that encompass coastal areas and transitional waters (such as the National Park of Evros Delta, National Park Eastern Macedonia and Thrace). More on Greek MPAs can be found in the PHAROS4MPAs report.

The Greek maritime space also includes species such as Posidonia fields, a species of aquatic plant endemic to the Mediterranean Sea. In total, there are 14 river basin areas with established management plans (<http://wfdver.ypeka.gr/el/management-plans-gr/approved-management-plans-gr/>).

Fisheries and aquaculture

In 2017, Greece had 14,987 active fishing vessels registered, representing 17.3% of the fishing fleet operations in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. The landings of the Greek fishing fleet in 2017 was 49 308 tonnes. Greece, Turkey, Tunisia and Italy represent around 63 percent of the total reported number of fishing vessels in those two areas.

In Greece, fishing is an important activity in ecological, economic, social and cultural terms and yields the largest share (23%) of the total European small-scale fisheries (SSF). 35.4% of the Greek annual fish production is from SSF. Despite their limited contribution to the Greek GDP (about 4%), SSF provides 19,396 full-time jobs, highlighting Greece as the third country in the European Union (EU) in terms of employment in the industry. Most of these jobs are located in remote and small-island territories, with usually no alternative livelihood opportunities and income sources. SSF make up 95% of the Greek fleet, but they are only allowed a small portion of fishing opportunities as they reach only 16.6% of the total consumers, thereby

acquiring a tiny fraction of the profits. SSF is particularly important for remote communities, such as the small Aegean islands, where SSF activities are essential for the survival of coastal communities and their cultural identity. Fishing income is increasingly shrinking, and this is exacerbated due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Kyvelou & Ierapetritis, 2021).

There is also an ongoing procedure for the organisation of zones allocated to aquaculture (AZA), named POAY in Greek that is Areas of Organised Aquaculture Development³. Greece is one of the most important world producers, according to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), in 2017 Greek aquaculture production reached 125 421 tonnes.

The issue of sustainable aquaculture in the Mediterranean is addressed by major strategic documents developed over the last few years, such as the Strategy for the sustainable development of Mediterranean and Black Sea aquaculture (FAO, 2018); the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, Naples Ministerial Declaration (UNEP/MAP, 2019), and the 2nd Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Blue Economy (Union for the Mediterranean, 2021) among others. The development of a sustainable aquaculture sector in the Mediterranean is high on the agenda of the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR), the BLUEMED Initiative and the WestMed Initiative. The creation of the new European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF) for the programming period 2021-2027 also proves the willingness to move towards sustainable aquaculture in the EU and, particularly, in the Eastern Mediterranean sea-basin.

Coastal and sea tourism

Coastal tourism is very developed in Greece. Many activities related to boating are developed; there are 19 marinas and thousands of yachting anchorages, which can be explained by the archipelagic form of the country. Many cities like Piraeus, Heraklion, Corfu or Katakolo, are home ports for many cruise ships in the Aegean, the Eastern and the Western Mediterranean and the Levantine Sea. Greece also has many sea bathing areas with 519 beaches and 15 marinas having been awarded the blue flag award in 2019. Those areas are privileged sites for sea sports like surfing (Paros is a world-famous kitesurfing site).

Underwater cultural heritage

Greece, counting more than 10,000 archaeological sites and ancient monuments as well as a further few thousand monuments of modern times, located both on the terrestrial and the marine space, is considered as a pioneer with regard to the protection of cultural heritage. The country has had a strong and longstanding legal framework for antiquities' conservation, dating back to 1834 and incorporating provisions for both terrestrial and underwater cultural heritage (UCH). In the turn of the 20th century, important legislative decisions as to the protection and preservation of CH and UCH were taken such as 1) Law 3028/2002 *"For the Protection of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage in general"* integrating all partial legislative actions into one law, to be maintained through time; and addressing the protection of CH (including UCH). Particularly for UCH, Articles 1 and 2 of the Law refer to the ancient archaeological sites, located at the seabed or the bottom of lakes or rivers. The same articles state that *"cultural objects within the boundaries of the Greek territory, including territorial waters, as well as in other maritime areas, where Greece has jurisdiction under the international law of the sea, are subject to legislative protection"*. Furthermore, in accordance with Articles 2d and 16, protected historical marine sites may be declared as areas where historical naval battles took place; while in Article 20, it is stated that contemporary newer shipwrecks may also be considered as monuments; 2) In 2003 shipwrecks were recognised as cultural goods and as monuments, provided that they have been lying in the Greek seas for more than 50 years. This enhances protection of shipwrecks as UCH, despite the UNESCO Convention, which declares shipwrecks as monuments only when they have been underwater for more than 100 years; 3) In 2005, the establishment of diving parks for recreational diving, dive training, scientific research, etc. is previewed by law. This has resulted in an increase to diving areas all over the Greek coastline, in contrast to the previous regime, where diving was permitted for 620 out of the 10,000 miles of this coastline; 4) In 2013, the access to Maritime Archaeological Sites was permitted⁴. As a result it is possible to realise cultural development projects, programmes, and related services within Maritime Archaeological Sites.

Taking into consideration the cultural wealth of the Greek state as well as its position in the global tourism market, cultural and tourism policies in Greece are of strategic importance (Koutsis and Stratigea, 2019) and are pursued at the national level through the Ministries of Culture and Tourism, respectively. Both industries also depend on other authorities such as the Ministry of Shipping and Insular Policy, which is responsible for the surveillance of the seas and insular policies, the Ministry of Environment and Energy, being, among others, the Maritime Spatial Planning authority and the Ministry of Agricultural Development and Food, responsible for the design of sectorial policies with territorial impact on both land and sea (e.g., coastal fisheries).

The latest trend towards a place-based approach in MSP in Greece is of great importance to MCH/UCH, being in abundance on coastal and sea space. Place-based MSP may ensure a better allocation and regulation of maritime activities that may directly or indirectly affect UCH and provide solutions for its incorporation on future Maritime Spatial Plans, taking into account relevant trade-offs, the apparently high economic value of UCH and its constructive and peaceful co-existence with maritime tourism.

³ These zones are precisely defined areas for aquaculture, studied and approved under a specific legislative procedure and are managed by a special authority formed for its specific area.

⁴ See Greek law 4179/2013

Maritime shipping

There are major Mediterranean ports in Greece. Piraeus for example, which is the main port of Athens, is predominantly for major shipping activity. Many ports have adopted Port Master Plans that establish policies and guidelines to direct the future development of the port and manage its operations. According to the national legislation in force⁵, the terminal operators of the 57 most important Greek ports are obliged to develop a Master Plan for the ports under their jurisdiction. The Master Plans are approved by the Committee for Port Planning and Development (ESAL) chaired by the General Secretariat of Ports, Port Policy and Maritime Investments of the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Insular Policy.

Coastal industries

They mainly concern activities such as cement industries, desalination infrastructure, industrial aquaculture coastal installations etc.

Oil and gas

The Hellenic Parliament recently ratified four concessions allowing the extraction of hydrocarbons in the Ionian Sea and in the west of Crete. Also, off-shore oil platforms are being developed in Kavala – Thasos and will produce oil for decades. Greece also has national petroleum refineries.

⁵ Law 4150/2013 (GG 102/A/2013)

Maritime Spatial Plans

Existing Maritime Spatial Plans

Greece has not yet produced or officially adopted, national or regional (including sub-regional or interregional) MS plan. However, Greece has elaborated sectoral Special Frameworks for Spatial Planning (TS Plans) for aquaculture, tourism, industry and renewable energy which include provisions for the coastal and marine segments of each sector.

Pilot plans or projects

- In the context of cross-border cooperation that will support the establishment of coherent and coordinated maritime spatial plans, by sharing best practices and approaches and in order to avoid different kinds of conflicts, the Ministry of Environment and Energy participates in the transnational project MSP-MED “*Towards the operational implementation of MSP in our common Mediterranean Sea*” that was launched on the 1st of March 2020 and will last 24 months. It is a cross border Mediterranean MSP Project that will support national MSP implementation processes and promote the collaboration among a number of Mediterranean countries. Corila (Italy) is coordinating the project. For more info see <https://mspmed.eu>
- The Ministry of the Environment and Energy is partner in the project [THAL-CHOR 2](#) (ΘΑΛ-ΧΩΡ 2) (2018-2021) funded in the framework of Interreg V-A “Greece-Cyprus 2014-2020”. The first phase of the formulation of a National Spatial Planning Strategy for marine space and a maritime spatial framework for a specific insular area are some of the key expected deliverables of the THAL-CHOR 2 project.
- The previous [THAL-CHOR project](#) (2014-2015) developed an MSP methodology and then used this methodology for pilot application. The islands of Lesvos and Rhodes have been selected as areas to implement the project and to develop [a pilot plan](#). Resolution of spatial conflicts between different uses of the sea, better coordination between stakeholders and strengthening of cross-border cooperation were also among the project’s objectives.
- In the framework of the [SUPREME Project](#)⁶ (2017-2018), pilot maritime spatial plans were proposed in 2018. The SUPREME Project aimed at helping member states to implement the European directive through the development of MSP projects for several pilot areas. The fourth pilot area⁷ of the SUPREME Project concerned the inner Ionian Sea and the Corinthian Gulf (an inlet in the Ionian Sea, separating the Peloponnese from western mainland Greece). The elaboration of a [pilot plan](#) has made it possible to define both strategic and planning objectives in various fields such as marine habitat conservation, underwater cultural heritage, living resource exploitation, maritime transport, tourism and leisure.
- [The ECOAST Project](#) (2016-2018) - New methodologies for an ecosystem approach to spatial and temporal management of fisheries and aquaculture in coastal areas. This project was funded by the Cooperation in Fisheries, Aquaculture and Sea food Processing (COFASP). ECOAST aimed to identify, develop and test new methodologies for spatial and temporal management of fisheries and aquaculture in coastal areas. The overall approach assessed the impact of fisheries and aquaculture on coastal ecosystems, as well as synergies and conflicts between human activities.
- The [ADRIPLAN project](#) (2013-2015) funded by EC DG MARE developed recommendations and proposed MSP exercises for transboundary maritime spatial planning in the Adriatic and Ionian seas. In particular, the project identified two Focus Areas (see figures in the next paragraphs) for which MSP exercises were developed:
 - MSP exercise in ADRIPLAN Focus area 1 – Northern Adriatic.
 - MSP exercise in ADRIPLAN Focus area 2 – Southern Adriatic and Northern Ionian.The main ADRIPLAN deliverables included downscaling and application of the developed methodology in the two project Focus Areas, ADRIPLAN Data Portal, and MSP tools (conflict score and cumulative impacts tools).

⁶ The Ministry of the Environment and Energy was partner of the SUPREME Project (<http://www.msp-supreme.eu>)

⁷ For more information see the project page on the European MSP platform website : [https://www.msp-platform.eu/practices/addressing-
msp-implementation-case-study-areas-inner-ionic-sea-corinthian-gulf](https://www.msp-platform.eu/practices/addressing-msp-implementation-case-study-areas-inner-ionic-sea-corinthian-gulf)

Aspects of the MSP process

Sustainable development and growth in the maritime sector

Greece is part of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), which has been supporting or leading numerous regional and national initiatives for the Blue Economy for over a decade, including the ongoing [MedCoast4BG](#) project. Due to the Covid-19 crisis, both the UfM [Regional Stakeholders' Conference on the Blue Economy](#), which was scheduled to take place on 10 and 11 March 2020 and the UfM Ministerial Conference on Blue Economy due to take place in Malta in July 2020 have been cancelled. The Stakeholder Conference was intended to provide an opportunity to consult with a wide range of relevant stakeholders on the priority themes identified by countries to shape the common post-2020 Blue Economy agenda; promote dialogue and exchange of experiences on common areas of work; take stock of progress on activities at the regional level; and maintain a highly participatory approach ensuring the involvement of stakeholders in the pooling of capacities, mandates and resources.



Ecosystem-based approach (EBA)

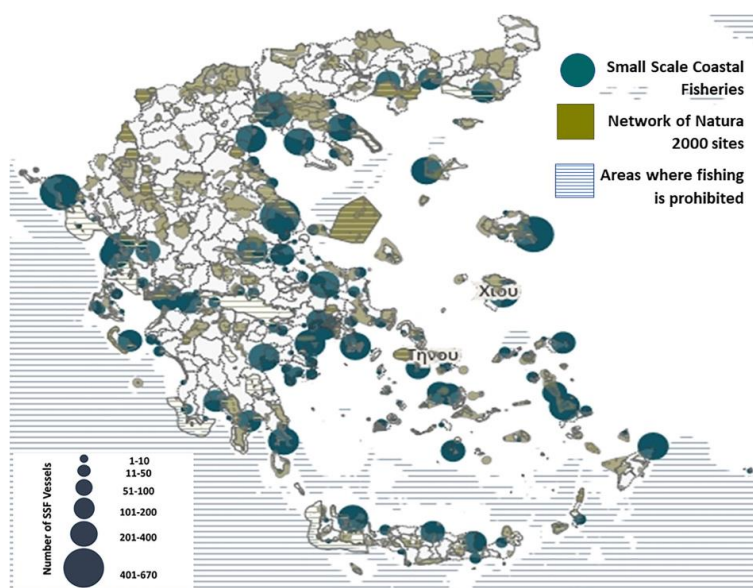
The Management Body of The National Marine Park of Alonissos Northern Sporades in Greece participated in the [AMARE project](#) (ended in November 2019) an Interreg Mediterranean program. It aimed at developing pilot actions coordinated strategies in selected Marine Protected Areas and sharing methodologies and geospatial tools. This National Marine Park was created in 1992 and covers approximately 2.3150 km². The project highlighted the link between specific human activities and their impacts⁸.

Greece is also a partner of the recently completed [PHAROS4MPAs](#) project (2017-2020) which aimed at enhancing management effectiveness and networking for Mediterranean MPAs, in order to contribute to the conservation of marine biodiversity and natural ecosystems, taking into account the complex ensemble of human activities developed within the Blue Growth perspective and their interaction with protected areas and marine ecosystems.

In 2017-2019 Greece was part of the [PANACeA Project](#); The objective of PANACeA was to streamline networking and management efforts in Mediterranean Protected Areas (PAs) as a mechanism to enhance nature conservation and protection in the region. The project aims to ensure synergies between relevant Mediterranean stakeholders –including managers, policymakers, socio-economic actors, civil society and the scientific community – and to increase the visibility and impacts of their projects' results towards common identified strategical targets.

In summary, to date, three MPAs with respective spatial management plans were established in Greece: the Zakyntos Marine Park in the Ionian sea, established for the protection of the marine turtle *Caretta-caretta*, the Alonissos Marine Park in the Aegean Sea for the conservation of the Mediterranean monk seal *Monachus monachus*, and the most recent MPA for the island of Gyros and its surrounding marine area (PHAROS4MPAs, 2019). The MPAs include explicit zoning of specific maritime activities indicating various protection levels according to the expected biodiversity conservation objectives. In 2018, the country has also enlarged the designation of its marine Natura 2000 sites (Figure 1). However, as also happens for quite a lot of Natura 2000 sites all over Europe (Vassilopoulou et al., 2020), the Greek sites remain “paper parks” (WWF, 2017). It is thus essential for the designation of MPAs in the European seas to establish efficient conservation planning principles which are also rooted in the MSP process.

Figure 1. Small-scale coastal fishing areas and the Network of Natura 2000 sites in Greece. Source: Kyvelou & Ierapetritis, 2021, based on data from the WWF Web Mapping Application “OIKOSKOPIO.GR”, 2020.



⁸ For more information see the final brochure of the project : <https://ufmsecretariat.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Brochure-for-CBD-COP-side-event-on-EBM-in-the-Med.pdf>



Resilience of climate change impacts

The Ministry of Environment and Energy adopted a National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (NCCAS) in 2016, to “*the country’s resilience against climate change impacts*”. This policy sets out a series of key objectives:

- Establish and enhance the decision-making procedure regarding adaptation issues;
- Link adaptation with the promotion of a sustainable growth model through the implementation of regional/local action plans;
- Promote adaptation actions and policies in all sectors of the Greek economy, with emphasis on the most vulnerable ones;
- Create a monitoring evaluation and update mechanism for adaptation actions and policies; and
- Build adaptation capacity and raise public awareness.

Different tools are used in order to implement the adaptation policy such as scientific research and documentation for a good understanding of climate change, stakeholder awareness to highlight the everyday life impacts of climate change and the benefit of coordinated effort, deliberation and dialogue with economic and social actors and local communities, and finally, indicators and tools to be able to follow up the adaptation strategy.

Moreover, in 2009, the Climate Change Impact Study Committee (CCISC) had already been set up by the Bank of Greece in order to provide climate research and projections for the implementation of national policies. A 2011 report on the CCISC highlighted the wealth of Greece’s resources but also the risks to the country’s natural and human environment. The study also estimated the damage due to climate change per million euros for each Greek geographical region and in different fields (agriculture, fisheries, water supply, ...). The document referred to the risks linked to sea-level rise that are going to affect many sectors such as economy, tourism, land use and transportation. Also, it highlights that 58% of the Aegean coastline is highly vulnerable according to the projected developments.



Land-sea interactions

Greece established 14 river basin management plans⁹ taking into account the coastal waters of the aquaculture activities of the areas concerned.

According to the national legislation in force¹⁰, the terminal operators of the 57 most important Greek ports are obliged to develop a Master Plan for the ports under their jurisdiction. A Port Master Plan is a strategic document which intends to establish policies and guidelines to direct the future development of the port and manage its operations, considering the land-sea dimension of port¹¹.

As already mentioned, in 2020, the initial Greek MSP Law 4546/2018 was amended by Law 4759/2020, which introduced two major changes directly impacting land-sea interaction.

- The first one regards the geographical scope of MSP in Greece. Whilst initially, the MSP geographical scope included all marine areas as well as the coastal zones (both terrestrial and marine), in 2020, the geographical scope of MSP was limited to the marine parts of the country only (see Art.2 of L.4546/2018 as amended by L.4759/2020). In other words, the terrestrial part of the coastal zone was excluded from the scope of the MSP law. To further emphasise that, through Art. 24 of L.4759/2020 (replacing Art.8 of L.4546), MSP is not connected to TSP, and MS Plans shall only interact with other (neighbouring) MS Plans, and not with TS Plans (Terrestrial Spatial Plans), which are exclusively responsible for setting rules for coastal/land developments and for land activities that have a significant impact on the sea (e.g., tourism) and are given the authority on whether or not they are binding towards MS Plans (maritime spatial frameworks).
- The second one concerns the scale of MS Plans, that is their classification as Regional Frameworks. This, combined with the fact that their denomination is “Maritime Spatial Frameworks” (MSFs, L.4685/2020) leads to the hypothesis that no regulatory force nor binding character will be given to MSFs. They are only to provide strategic planning guidelines, and can also be subjected to amendments, whenever this is indicated by a “Special Framework for Spatial Planning” (for aquaculture, industry, RES etc.) which is usually associated with investments that are centrally approved by the government.

To conclude, although LSI is often mentioned in Greek MSP legislative documents, consideration of LSI in MSP may be easily and completely disregarded, given the opposing and contradicting legislative provisions that were recently introduced by L.4759/2020 (Papageorgiou & Kyvelou, 2021). By choosing to dichotomise the land from the sea and, by association, MS Plans

⁹ More information on the plans : <http://wfdver.ypeka.gr/en/management-plans-en/approved-management-plans-en/>

¹⁰ Law 4150/2013 (GG 102/A/2013)

¹¹ Defined in Law 2971/2001 (GG 285/A/2001)

from TS Plans, what is also placed at risk, is sustainable and integrated management of the Greek coastal zone (ICM), which is a highly vulnerable and valuable space, under great pressure (Beriatos and Papageorgiou, 2010).



Stakeholder Involvement

There is no formal process for stakeholder involvement yet, since there is neither a National Strategy for the marine Space nor a draft MS Plan yet. Maritime stakeholders were only involved in the preparation of the MSP Law (4546/2018). Stakeholders' involvement in MSP processes is foreseen to be enabled through the National Council of Spatial Planning, as this was re-defined by L.4759/2020.



Co-existence of uses

Even if there is neither a National Strategy for the marine space nor Maritime Spatial Plans (Frameworks) yet, to eventually promote the multi-use concept, co-existence of uses occurs in some cases e.g., fisheries-tourism^{12 13} (fishing tourism) close to or within MPAs, aquaculture and diving tourism¹⁴ etc. Furthermore, in the framework of the H2020 MUSES project, Multi-Use in Mykonos island was analysed as a case-study¹⁵. During the Summit organised by the International Union for Conservation of Nature held in Marseille on September 2021, entitled "Mediterranean: A Model Sea by 2030", Greece's Prime Minister announced that the MSP in Greece will be implemented under the National Recovery and Resilience Plan "Greece 2.0". To facilitate Greece in implementing the MSP Directive and also in the framework of the European Green Deal (EGD), emphasis should be given to the inclusion of Multi-use in the National Strategy for the marine space and as a principle of the draft MS Plan(s), which is also consistent with cooperative schemes financed by the Recovery and Resilience Plan "Greece 2.0".



Trans-boundary cooperation

Greece has been involved in several trans-boundary MSP projects ([ADRIPLAN](#), [SUPREME](#)) and is now involved in the [THAL-CHOR2](#) and in the [MSP-MED](#) project. Greece is also a member of the Union for the Mediterranean ([Ufm](#)) and a contracting party to the Barcelona Convention.

Greece also participated in the workshop "[Managing transboundary impacts in priority areas](#)" in the framework of the PANACeA Project, which gathered countries of the east and west Mediterranean. The country was also involved through several Multi-use case-studies in the [Multi-use MED Webinar](#), a joint event of the European MSP Platform and the cross-border cooperation MSP-MED Project, held on 10 May 2021.

It is also noteworthy that in 2023 Greece will assume the Presidency for the implementation of the Action Plan of the French initiative "Mediterranean, an exemplary sea until 2030", with the aim of achieving sustainable development in the Mediterranean.



Use of best available data

[TOOLS4MSP](#), a geo-platform created within the [ADRIPLAN project](#), compiles MSP-relevant data in the Adriatic and Ionian sea (including Greece) as well as at the regional level. It is intended for partners, stakeholders and the general public to search and share knowledge, data, and information related to MSP. It offers tools to analyse data (e.g. conflicts, cumulative impacts) and continues to be updated with new data.

Within the context of the [THAL-CHOR project](#), the web-GIS services were used to map relevant maritime uses in the overall project areas: (i) the EEZ of Cyprus, including a detailed focus on the coastal and marine area of Limassol, where a pilot marine spatial plan was developed; (ii) the Aegean Sea (Regions of North and South Aegean Sea and Region of Crete), including two detailed views on Lesvos and Rhodes islands, where pilot marine spatial plans were developed. The web-GIS services were also used to analyse and dynamically visualise conflicting interactions and derive density activity maps and/or

¹² See also Kyvelou, S.S.I.; Ierapetritis, D.G. Fisheries Sustainability through Soft Multi-Use Maritime Spatial Planning and Local Development Co-Management: Potentials and Challenges in Greece. *Sustainability* 2020, 12, 2026.

¹³ See also Kyvelou SSI and Ierapetritis DG (2021) Fostering Spatial Efficiency in the Marine Space, in a Socially Sustainable Way: Lessons Learnt From a Soft Multi-Use Assessment in the Mediterranean. *Front. Mar. Sci.* 8:613721. doi: 10.3389/fmars.2021.613721

¹⁴ See the AQUAWINGS pilot Project, carried out in the framework of the H2020 UNITED Project (<https://www.h2020united.eu>)

¹⁵ See Depellegrin, D.; Venier, C.; Kyriazi, Z.; Vassilopoulou, V.; Castellani, C.; Ramieri, E.; Bocci, M.; Fernandez, J.; Barbanti, A. Exploring Multi-Use potentials in the Euro-Mediterranean sea space. *Sci. Total Environ.* 2019, 653, 612–629.

conflicts maps. Moreover, during the project, the web-GIS services were made available via the THAL-CHOR website upon request by the users to share results and support stakeholders' engagement.

Moreover, on the basis of the strategic objectives of the MSP Directive, the data required for the **monitoring of Maritime Spatial Frameworks** are recorded. The geospatial information data parameters have been classified in 9 thematic categories¹⁶, taking into account the 2016 MSP Study, by the Assistance Mechanism for the Implementation of Maritime Spatial Planning and the country's specific features and priorities.

In addition, a dataset will be available through a Geoportal which is in progress, as an undertaken task of the transboundary project "Cross-Border Cooperation for Maritime Spatial Planning implementation" with acronym: THAL-CHOR 2, (funded by the INTERREG V- A Greece-Cyprus Program 2014-2020). The main goal of the geoportal/web GIS is the dissemination of quality spatial data (and their metadata) related to MSP.

Coherence with other processes

Marine Strategy Framework Directive

For Greece, the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention) plays an important role in achieving goals required by the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD 2008/56/EC). These marine strategies comprise different steps to be developed and implemented over six-year cycles. The latest step required that Member States set up their programme of measures and report to the Commission on it by 31 March 2016. In the case of Greece, the Commission could not assess whether its measures were appropriate to reach GES given that the country reported them too late for the Commission to include them in this assessment exercise. Thus, a priority action for Greece is to ensure timely reporting of the different elements under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive so that Greece can be part of future Commission assessments.

The recent Law 4759/2020 amended the former Law 3983/2011 (issued in compliance to the Directive 2008/56/EC) by adding to the features of determining the sea regions and subregions and growth characteristics (hydrological, oceanographic and biogeographic features). Consequently, the abovementioned characteristics will be taken into account for the designation of the maritime subregions.

Integrated Coastal Zone Management

As early as 1992, Greece was involved in Coastal Area Management Programmes (CAMPs) with the PAP/RAC, participating in projects to implement ICZM. [The CAMP "The Island of Rhodes"](#) (situated in eastern Mediterranean) took place in 1992-1999. The Action Plan for the implementation of the [ICZM Protocol](#) 2012-2019 was adopted by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention¹⁷ (including Greece) at the Conference of the Parties (COP) held in Paris from 8 to 10 February 2012. However, the protocol is not yet officially ratified by Greece. [The Priority Action Program/Regional Activity Centre \(PAP/RAC\)](#) assists states in the implementation of the Protocols to the Barcelona Convention, included the ICZM Protocol.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

In accordance with the initial MSP law (4546/2018) Maritime Spatial Plans are subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment process and they are approved together with the Strategic Environmental Impact Assessments by a single decision of the Minister of Environment and Energy.

Cooperation with third countries

Greece is cooperating with third countries through regional organizations such as the Union for the Mediterranean ([UfM](#)). It is also involved in the [European Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian region \(EUSAIR\)](#), involving both EU and non-EU countries of the Adriatic and Ionian region. In both cases, MSP is considered a relevant tool/process for the sustainable management of the marine space. Greece is also a member of the Barcelona Convention, also called the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean, a regional convention adopted in 1976. The Barcelona Convention is implemented through the [Mediterranean Action Plan \(MAP\)](#), under the aegis of the UN-Environment.

Greece is currently developing bilateral agreements following the UNCLOS with third countries (e.g., Egypt, Libya etc.) targeting the delimitation of Exclusive Economic Zones.

¹⁶ The 9 Thematic categories are:

1. Administrative boundaries 2. Social / Economic / Demographic data 3. Geomorphological characteristics 4. Physical/ Chemical / Biological characteristics 5. Energy / Mineral resources 6. Activities/ Uses 7. Infrastructure/ Facilities 8. Dangers/ Protection 9. Spatial Policy

¹⁷ Originally, the Action Plan for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Sustainable Development of the Coastal Areas of the Mediterranean

Annex 1. Structure of Spatial Planning System in Greece

Visionary strategy of non-binding character	National Strategy for Spatial Planning	Indicative directions of spatial organisation; medium- and long-term territorial development goals; coordination of policies with territorial impact; includes the national strategy for the marine space.	National level ↓
	Special Spatial Planning Frameworks	Strategic directions for the spatial structure of the housing network, economic sectors/industries of national importance, land policy, protection of cultural and natural landscape, and development and organisation of areas with special value (spatial, environmental, development, etc.).	
Visionary strategic plan of binding or non-binding character	Regional Spatial Planning Frameworks	Directions (and, if necessary, regulations) for integrated territorial development on the regional level; especially for the Attica region, the new Athens–Attica Regulatory Framework (Law 4277/2014) is already in place.	Regional level ↓
	Maritime Spatial Planning Frameworks	Directions of spatial development and organisation for the allocation of existing and new emerging maritime activities and uses (based on the subdivisions of marine space defined by the National spatial strategy of marine space, the latter being part of the National Spatial Planning Strategy).	
Spatial and regional plans (guiding and occasionally regulatory plans)	Local Spatial Plans	Defined at the level of one or more municipal units (within one or more local authorities), the model of spatial organisation and development, land uses, building rules and restrictions, and any other measures or spatial restrictions.	Local level ↓
	Special Urban Plans	Defined in areas regardless of administrative boundaries, in order to set land uses, general terms and restrictions, and any other measure or rule, to act as a host for projects and programmes of strategic importance (and needs for special regulations).	
	Implementation of Urban Plans	Specification of rules and regulations of local and special plans (e.g., in terms of uses and building rules); accurate definition of multi-use areas, public utilities, and buildable spaces; exact allocation of infrastructure networks.	
Urban plans of regulatory character			

Source: Gourgiotis, A.; Kyvelou, S.S.; Lainas, I. Industrial Location in Greece: Fostering Green Transition and Synergies between Industrial and Spatial Planning Policies. *Land* 2021, 10, 271. <https://doi.org/10.3390/land10030271>, page 7 and own amendments.

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