



Διάσκεψη των Ηνωμένων Εθνών για τους Ωκεανούς (UN Ocean Conference)

Λισσαβώνα, Πορτογαλία, 27 Ιουνίου – 1 Ιουλίου 2022

Σημεία εθνικής παρέμβασης στην Ολομέλεια

- Greece, is a country with an extended coastline of 18.000 kilometers, including small island and islets. We are a nation with long tradition of seamanship and a steadfast commitment to protecting the seas and the marine environment as a whole.
- Environmental pressures in the Mediterranean are already at an alarming level because of climate change and the increasing economic activities in sectors such as tourism, fishing, shipping, agriculture etc., but we have already taken bold and concrete measures to this direction.
- We proposed the establishment of a European research centre for alternative marine fuels and technologies for the decarbonisation of the maritime transport sector.
- On a cross-sectoral level, bearing in mind that the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) is the comprehensive and only framework within which all activities in the seas must be carried out, we have finalized our first National Maritime Spatial Planning Strategy to be enacted in the following weeks.
- We have committed to the establishment of protected marine zones over 30% of the Greek seas, while currently the marine Natura 2000 sites cover approximately 19% of the Greek territorial waters.
- By the end of the year, a project for the mapping of habitats in marine protected areas of the NATURA 2000 network will be launched. We are also in the process of compiling Special Environmental Studies and Management Plans for all Natura 2000 sites.
- We also commit to the prohibition of fishing over 10% of Greek seas by 2030 in order to reduce overfishing. In this direction the Ministry of Environment and Energy has an on-going project in order to identify the areas that should be set as NO-TAKE RESERVES. And this is only the start.

- Lately, we have set a special protection status, of forbidding the construction of new roads and other artificial surfaces in six emblematic mountainous areas throughout the Greek territory. This initiative, named “Untrodden Mountains” also involves coastal areas at the base of these mountains.
- Furthermore, we are setting the same status for 1.000 unspoiled beaches, based on the criteria of biodiversity and special landscape features, in order to protect the most sensitive and vulnerable ecosystems.
- Regarding important species and habitats protection, National Action Plans have been concluded for *Caretta caretta* and for *Monachus monachus*. Another important priority for us is addressing invasive alien species.
- Combating marine pollution is a high priority for our Government. We are committed to halving marine plastic litter and reducing the disposal of microplastics by 30% by 2030.
- Based on the targets set at the national level and in line with the overall objectives of the EU’s waste policy, Greece is committed to reduce the consumption of the most environmentally damaging single use plastic products, in particular single-use plastic beverage and food containers, at least by 30% by 2024, and at least by 60% by 2026 compared to 2022, and to promote more sustainable materials and alternatives.
- We put special emphasis on reducing the environmental footprint of tourism, through a national strategy for sustainable tourism, which will focus on biodiversity issues, especially in vulnerable local communities, like our smaller islands.
- We actively support the transformation of the Mediterranean to a model sea by 2030 through the important longstanding work and efforts of the Mediterranean Action Plan of United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP/MAP) of the Barcelona Convention.
- Greece has also been supporting the PAMEx (Plan d'Action Méditerranée Exemplaire) “The Mediterranean: a model sea by 2030” inspiring initiative of the French Government since its launching, which was followed by the Athens Declaration of the EU MED 9 Summit in Athens in September 2021.
- Particular emphasis is also given on converting our islands to innovation labs for green economy, energy autonomy, digital innovation and eco-mobility. Several projects are currently running, for example:

- the GR-eco Islands initiative (with Chalki the first island to join);
 - the Astypalea “Smart and Sustainable island” initiative;
 - Antikythera (now becoming a state-of-the art observatory for climate change in the Mediterranean); and
 - Tilos, a small remote Greek island, becoming a pioneer in circular economy and recycling, through the innovative program “Just Go Zero Tilos” serving as an example of integrated waste management for all small islands.
- Our country also favors and supports all private sector initiatives in tackling this multi-dimensional challenge, like “fish for litter”¹ and “adopt a beach”².
 - Time is limited. We need to move towards a new blue economy model, in which development will not compromise the protection of our marine ecosystems.
 - With a steadfast commitment to protecting the seas and the marine environment, Greece in consultation with the United States of America will organize the 9th International Conference “Our Ocean Conference” in 2024, aiming at addressing impacts of climate change, overfishing and marine pollution for the benefit of the planet.

¹ An initiative motivating fishermen to recycle marine litter, make new products from plastic litter collected from seas and use sustainable fishing techniques.

² An initiative of private companies aiming at cleaning marine litter and protecting the ecosystem of beaches against waste pollution.