



Διάσκεψη των Ηνωμένων Εθνών για τους Ωκεανούς

Λισσαβώνα, Πορτογαλία, 27 Ιουνίου – 1 Ιουλίου 2022

Interactive Dialogue: “Managing, protecting restoring and conserving marine and coastal ecosystems”

28 Ιουνίου, 3μμ-6μμ

- Greece is a country historically, culturally, economically and socially linked to the Mediterranean Sea. Unfortunately, environmental threats and pressures are already at an alarming level in the Mediterranean due to climate change and increasing economic activities in sectors such as tourism, fishing, shipping, agriculture etc.
- To deal with these issues, we have just completed the first National Maritime Spatial Planning Strategy for sustainable development.
- Furthermore, we are in the process of drafting Special Environmental Studies (SES) and Management Plans for all Natura 2000 sites.
- The marine Natura 2000 sites in Greece currently cover 19,6% of its territorial waters. In line with the European Biodiversity Strategy, we are planning to increase this to 30% by 2030 and at least one third will be set under strict protection.
- 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 protection and habitats, we have already put into force National Action Plans for Cetaceans, for *Caretta caretta*, for *Monachus monachus*, as well as for priority habitat type as the *Coastal dunes*.
- Addressing invasive alien species is also a priority and we are currently preparing a list of all invasive species in the country and all the appropriate measures to control them.

- Regarding overfishing we have committed to declare 10% of our seas as no-take reserves by 2030, meaning that fishing will not be permitted there.
- At the same time, we are preparing an action plan for sustainable aquaculture.
- Regarding marine pollution we are committed to halving marine plastic litter and reducing the disposal of microplastics by 30% until 2030.
- We work with the relevant Ministry of Tourism to promote sustainable tourism, especially in vulnerable local communities, like our smaller islands.
- We are also trying to convert our islands to innovation labs for green circular economy, energy autonomy, digital innovation and eco-mobility. Several projects are currently running, like the GR-eco Islands initiative (Chalki), “Smart and Sustainable island” initiative.
- We support all private sector initiatives, like “fish for litter” and “adopt a beach”.
- Finally, we recognize the importance of international cooperation and actively support the transformation of the Mediterranean to a model sea by 2030 through the Mediterranean Action Plan of United Nations Environment Program (UNEP/MAP) of the Barcelona Convention and the PAMEX (Plan d'Action Méditerranée Exemplaire) initiative of the French Government.
- With the commitment to protecting 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 our planet.