



Maritime Spatial Planning Country Information

Greece

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Background Information

Basic facts on Marine Waters



— Territorial Sea

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;
- Agreed continental shelf delimitation with Italy;
- An agreement on the delimitation of maritime zones between Greece and Albania has been signed but has not yet entered into force.
- Greece has not yet proclaimed an exclusive economic zone (EEZ).

In addition to these characteristics, Greece has a very lush 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

The main responsibility for (Maritime) Spatial Planning 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. Implementation tasks are delegated hierarchically to the General Secretariat of Spatial Planning and Urban Environment/ Directorate General of Spatial Planning / Directorate of Spatial Planning, which 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 sectoral 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)¹.

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.

Planning at national level

- There is currently no legally binding national MSP plan in Greece. MSP issues are addressed in Special Frameworks for Spatial Planning² covering specific sectors. Sectoral plans have been elaborated so far for aquaculture, tourism (under modification) and industry, which include spatial planning guidelines for the land-based, coastal and marine segments of each sector. Additionally, the Special Framework for Renewable Energy sets the strategic guidelines for offshore wind parks.

National MSP authority

- Directorate of Spatial Planning of the Ministry of Environment and Energy.

Planning at regional level

- The modification of all regional spatial plans is underway; an MSP approach will be taken in the general outline. Only 1 out of 13 regions in Greece 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.

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

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

¹ The National Spatial Planning Council is a consultation body with stakeholders which is renewed every 3 years. Its objective is mainly to provide advice on spatial planning issues.

² Former "Special Frameworks for Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development", for the National Spatial Planning structure in brief, please check page 12 of Kyvelou, S.S.; Gourgiotis, A. Landscape as Connecting Link of Nature and Culture: Spatial Planning Policy Implications in Greece. Urban Sci. 2019, 3, 81.

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.

The Special Frameworks for Spatial Planning 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.

All of the 11 coastal and insular regions of the country have developed Spatial Plans at a regional level – 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, Thessalia, 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.

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). 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.

There is an ongoing procedure for the organization of aquaculture management zones named 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.

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

There are many ancient, byzantine and war wrecks in Greek waters. Some are under archaeological protection laws; others are under archaeological research.

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 force⁴, 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 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.

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 Law 4150/2013 (GG 102/A/2013)

Maritime Spatial Plans

Existing Maritime Spatial Plans

Greece has not yet produced or officially adopted a national MS plan. However, Greece has elaborated sectorial Special Frameworks for Spatial Planning for aquaculture, tourism, industry and renewable energy which include provisions for the coastal and marine segments of each sector.

Pilot plans or projects

- The Ministry of the Environment and Energy is partner in the Project MSP-MED that launched on the 1st March 2020 and will last run for 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) will be coordinating the project. 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 plan for a specific insular area are some of the key expected deliverables of the THAL-CHOR 2 project.
- The [THAL-CHOR project](#) (2014-2015) aimed at developing a methodology for MSP and then using this methodology for pilot application. The islands of Lesbos 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 cross-border cooperation were also part of the project’s objectives.
- In the framework of [SUPREME Project](#)⁵ (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 area⁶ 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).

⁵ The Ministry of the Environment and Energy is one of SUPREME Project partners (<http://www.msp-supreme.eu>)

⁶ For more information see the project page on the msp platform website : <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. The next UfM [Regional Stakeholders' Conference on the Blue Economy](#) will be held on 10 and 11 March 2020 at the Palau de Pedralbes in Barcelona (Spain). The UfM Regional Stakeholders' Conference on the Blue Economy is considered a key step towards the UfM Ministerial Conference on the Blue Economy in 2020, scheduled for 2 July in Malta. The Stakeholder Conference is 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.

Due to the Covid -19 crisis, both the 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 on July 2020 have been cancelled.



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 impacts⁷.

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.



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"⁸. 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.

⁷ 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>

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 plans⁸ taking into account the coastal waters of the aquaculture activities of the areas concerned.

According to the national legislation in force⁹, 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 port¹⁰.



Stakeholder Involvement

There is no formal process for stakeholder involvement yet, since there is no draft MSP. Stakeholders were only involved in the preparation of the MSP Law (4546/2018).



Co-existence of uses

Even if there are no Maritime Spatial Plans yet, co-existence of uses occurs in several cases e.g. fisheries-tourism¹¹ (fishing tourism), aquaculture and diving tourism etc.) In the framework of the H2020 MUSES project, Multi-Use in Mykonos island was analysed as case-study¹².



Trans-boundary cooperation

Greece has been involved in several trans-boundary MSP projects ([ADRIPLAN](#), [SUPREME](#)) and is now involved in the [THAL-CHOR2](#) project. Greece is also 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.



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

⁸ More information on the plans : <http://wfdver.ypeka.gr/en/management-plans-en/approved-management-plans-en/>

⁹ Law 4150/2013 (GG 102/A/2013)

¹⁰ Defined in Law 2971/2001 (GG 285/A/2001)

¹¹ 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.

¹² 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.

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 Lesbos 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 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.

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 MSFD. 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.

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 Convention¹³ (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 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.

Finally, Greece is a party to 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.

¹³ Originally the Action Plan for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Sustainable Development of the Coastal Areas of the Mediterranean

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