



Natura 2000 Seminars

Mediterranean Biogeographical Region



Under the auspices of:



Mediterranean Seminar

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Kick-off Seminar Report



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1 Introduction

This document presents the main outcomes from the Mediterranean Kick-off Seminar. The Mediterranean Kick-off Seminar was the first meeting bringing together a wide range of Natura 2000 practitioners and experts from the Mediterranean region to discuss issues of common concern and interest in relation to the conservation and management of habitats selected for priority consideration as part of the Natura 2000 Biogeographical Process.

The Seminar, hosted by the Axios, Loudios and Aliakmonas Delta Management Authority, in close cooperation with the Greek Ministry for the Environment, Energy and Climate Change and the European Commission took place at the Makedonia Palace Hotel in Thessaloniki from 26 to 28 May 2014. The Seminar was attended by 77 delegates. With the exception of Malta, all EU Member States in the Mediterranean region participated, along with representatives from Denmark and Romania.

The Kick-off Seminar was opened by **Professor Panayotis Dimopoulos** who read a statement provided by **Ms Nantia Giannakopoulou**, Secretary General of the Hellenic Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change. **Emeritus Professor Themistoklis Kouimtzis, A.U.TH.**, welcomed the participants on behalf of the Axios, Loudios and Aliakmonas Management Authority, of which he is the President. This was followed by addresses from **Mr François Kremer**, Policy Coordinator Natura 2000 at the European Commission. He expressed sincere gratitude to the Axios, Loudias and Aliakmonas Management Authority and to the Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change for their support and assistance under the auspices of Greece's EU Presidency. **Ms Stella Vareltzidou**, Scientific Coordinator of the Axios, Loudias and Aliakmonas Management Authority introduced the field excursion.

Together, the introductory speeches provided a summary overview of the wider context of the Natura 2000 Biogeographical Process, and some its implementation challenges at national and site level.

1.1 Context of the Kick-off Seminar

The Natura 2000 Biogeographical Process is a practical process for Natura 2000 practitioners and experts to work together in achieving the EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy¹ targets. The first target of this strategy focuses on Natura 2000 and reaching favourable conservation status for the habitats and species listed in the Birds and Habitats Directives' annexes. Natura 2000 is a key instrument for nature conservation in Europe. It consists of 27.000 sites, and sets conservation targets and measures for over 200 habitats and over 2000 species of community importance. To achieve better conservation of these habitats and species, a coherent network of sites has been created. However, Natura 2000 is not only a network of sites: it is first and foremost a network of people working together.

¹ <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/comm2006/2020.htm>

To support the targets of the EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy and implement the Nature Directives, the Natura 2000 Biogeographical Process was launched in 2011. As its title implies, this Mediterranean Kick-off Seminar is just a beginning of a hopefully long list of successful actions at biogeographical level. The Natura 2000 Platform² is an important online tool that supports this Process and all practitioners involved are encouraged to use it for their benefit. In addition to facilitating the main events, such as this seminar, the Natura 2000 Biogeographical Process also supports the organisation of follow-up activities. Furthermore, different EU funding mechanisms (for example, LIFE and INTERREG) are available to (co-)finance selected projects in the area of nature conservation.

In the process leading up to this meeting, twenty-three Mediterranean habitats have been selected for priority consideration. They provide scope for collaboration and for the development of future action. As part of this Process, the Kick-off Seminar aims at identifying common issues and solutions and opportunities for joint actions to address these issues. These joint actions will capitalise on the vast number of good practice examples about successful management approaches, also including those showing the multiple benefits of protected areas, and ways to engage constructively with diverse stakeholders. The knowledge and information exchanges between experts from the region will provide valuable contributions for site managers to set adequate and realistic conservation targets.

This Kick-off Seminar brings together experts from the Mediterranean region to discuss and interpret information, share practical experience and knowledge at biogeographical level. An interesting component of the programme is the Knowledge Market which presents over twenty projects and initiatives from around the Mediterranean. The relevance of a Mediterranean Biogeographical Process can be summarised as follows:

- Mediterranean conservation practitioners face many common issues.
- The development and implementation of integrated approaches is a difficult task.
- There is an urgent need for improvement to achieve favourable conservation status.
- The implemented approaches need more focus and should be more result oriented.
- The exchange of experience and learning from each other can play a decisive role.

The work carried out by the Axios, Loudios and Aliakmonas Management Authority provides some useful insights in the challenges and achievements of nature conservation in the Mediterranean.

1.2 Introduction to the field visits

The National Park consists of the delta of four rivers and the Alyki Kitrous Lagoon. According to historical sources, the ancient Macedonian city of Pella, now situated far inland, was once a coastal city. Due to sedimentation of the river loads over the centuries the coast advanced and formed extensive marshlands and lakes. In the early 20th century, in an attempt to combat malaria

² http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/platform/index_en.htm

and to provide for the needs of one million people returning to Greece from Asia Minor, large areas of the marshland and Loudias Lake were drained and converted to agricultural land. In the 1960s, embankments were erected from Kallochori to Thessaloniki.

The National Park stretches from Thessaloniki down to the Olympus mountain range. The many challenges in management of this intensively used area makes it an excellent example for this Seminar: participants will see during the excursion the proximity to the large city of Thessaloniki and other urban areas, the intensive use of the agricultural areas in and around the national park, and the specific and significant threats posed to biodiversity. One important threat identified was illegal garbage disposal: although it is rampant across the national park, by including it as a priority in the National Park management plan, some significant progress has been made over the last years in reducing its occurrence and impacts. Illegal building inside the national park and its designated protected sites (including Natura 2000 sites) is also a difficult development to control and to fight successfully, but also here progress is being made. An overarching objective of the management plan is to reverse the negative attitude of many stakeholders towards nature protection, which many regard as a curb on economic development. Continued investment in communication and awareness raising campaigns are essential to demonstrate the benefits derived from designating the area as a national park, including the economic gains the park brings. The results of such campaigns have been significant, reducing opposition from 90% to 25% in ten years: however, there is still some way to go towards reaching the goal of full support for the national park.

The area is protected for its importance for biodiversity, in particular birds - seven species of heron breed here, as well as various terns and gulls. In winter the lagoons are home to up to 20,000 wildfowl. The area covered by the National Park contains various RAMSAR and Natura 2000 sites. A key challenge for the management authority is to restore, and maintain in favourable conservation status, the habitats and species populations. The area is especially important for Mediterranean halophyllous scrub, as it represents more than 15% of the entire Greek area for this habitat type. An important factor in “selling” the natural resources protection is the ecosystem services provided by the natural habitats, in particular, clean fresh and salt water. The area inside and around the National Park produces 70% of Greece’s rice, and the Gulf of Thessaloniki yields 80% of national mussel production. The provision of other ecosystem services, such as flood control and climate regulation, requires further study before it can be quantified. The National Park’s proximity to the city of Thessaloniki, with over one million people in the metropolitan area, results in numerous threats, such as urban sprawl, illegal dumping, disturbance and pollution, as well as significant opportunities, such as environmental education and awareness raising, and fund raising for conservation and management.

The Axios, Loudias and Aliakmonas Management Authority is one of the 28 management authorities created in 2002 operating under the Hellenic Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change and financed through the EU funded Operational Programme for Macedonia and Thrace. Its Board of Directors consists of 9 members representing different stakeholder groups (central, regional and local government, farmers, NGOs and scientists). The Authority has a staff of 18.

The operational context is quite complex as the delta is a dynamic system with many stakeholders. The management challenges include: a still pervasive negative attitude towards nature conservation, weak implementation of legislation, important knowledge gaps, and other urgent threats to address. In addition, the official mandate of the management authority to address all these challenges does not include power to take legal action.

However, the management authority is making significant progress, mainly thanks to an integrated management approach. This approach focuses on an inclusive attitude towards stakeholder involvement through the use of participatory approaches and the use of the Conservation Measures Partnership³ “Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation” to guide the planning steps. This resulted in 2009 in the development of a Strategic Plan and vision focused on extension of protected areas throughout the National Park. Also, it identifies several priority activities, including:

- A garbage strategy, including clean up and communication of results;
- Patrolling to inform the competent authorities about illegal activities;
- Development and implementation of a plan for monitoring biodiversity;
- Development of a communication plan;
- Improvement of the infrastructure for visitors.

Several results and achievements include the termination of a number of illegal building activities, an increased acceptance of the management authority on the part of critical stakeholder groups, and greater public appreciation for the cleaner areas of the National park where the garbage strategy has had an effect.

³ <http://www.conservationmeasures.org/>

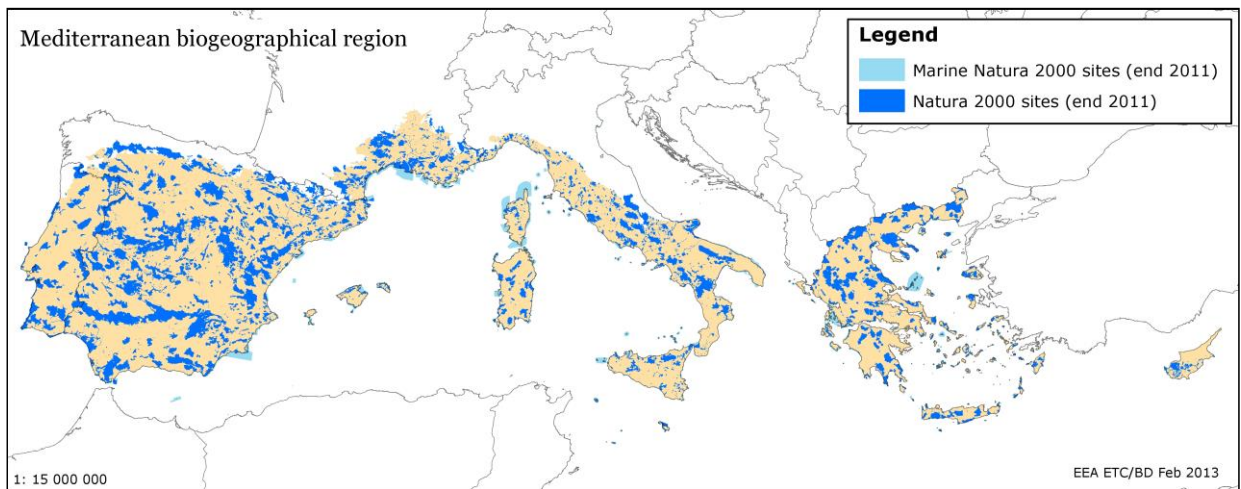
1.3 Habitats selected in the Mediterranean Biogeographical Process

The habitat types selected for priority consideration are presented in ascending order of their Natura 2000 code as introduced in Annex I of the EC Habitats Directive. The colour codes refer to the habitat groups to which they belong: coastal (yellow), grassland (light green), forest (dark green), and freshwater and wetlands (blue).

Table 1: Selected habitats in the four habitat groups

CODE	HABITAT NAME
1120	Posidonia beds (<i>Posidonium oceanicae</i>)
1110	Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time
1150	Coastal lagoons
1170	Reefs
1310	<i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonising mud and sand
1410	Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>)
1420	Mediterranean and thermo-Atlantic halophilous scrubs (<i>Sarcocornetea fruticosi</i>)
2110	Embryonic shifting dunes
2230	<i>Malcolmietalia</i> dune grasslands
2250	Coastal dunes with <i>Juniperus spp.</i>
5330	Thermo-Mediterranean and pre-desert scrub
6210	Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites)
6220	Pseudo-steppe with grasses and annuals of the Thero-Brachypodietea
6310	Dehesas with evergreen <i>Quercus spp.</i>
9260	<i>Castanea sativa</i> woods
9320	<i>Olea</i> and <i>Ceratonia</i> forests
9330	<i>Quercus suber</i> forests
9340	<i>Quercus ilex</i> and <i>Quercus rotundifolia</i> forests
9540	Mediterranean pine forests with endemic Mesogean pines
3170	Mediterranean temporary ponds
3290	Intermittently flowing Mediterranean rivers of the <i>Paspalo-Agrostidion</i>
92D0	Southern riparian galleries and thickets (<i>Nerio-Tamaricetea</i> and <i>Securinegion tinctoriae</i>)
92A0	<i>Salix alba</i> and <i>Populus alba</i> galleries

Map 1: Natura 2000 sites across the Mediterranean region



Note that the map shows the situation before Croatia joined the EU. The map shows all Mediterranean terrestrial sites and marine Mediterranean sites, except sites in Northern Adriatic. Marine sites in the Spanish and Portuguese Marine Atlantic are not shown either.

1.4 The Mediterranean Seminar Document

The Mediterranean Seminar Document was produced to serve the discussion and planning of the Seminar for the Mediterranean region. As a primary source of background information, the document:

- Identifies key issues in relation to establishing FCS for the four habitat groups and the habitat types and species within them;
- Outlines potential solutions to those issues;
- Identifies possible actions for consideration and the forms of concrete actions that could be envisaged as part of follow-up to the Seminar.

Table 2: Chairpersons and facilitators of the four habitat groups

<i>HABITAT GROUP</i>	<i>Lead MS / CHAIR</i>	<i>Seminar support by the contractor</i>
Lead Coordinator: Neil McIntosh (ECNC)		
Coastal	Ms Zrinka Jakl , Association for Nature, Environment and Sustainable Development Sunce, Croatia	Bernie Fleming (Fleming Ecology)
Freshwater & wetlands	Ms Stella Vareltzidou ,	Mark Snethlage (ECNC)

	Management Authority of Axios - Loudias - Aliakmon Delta, Greece	
Grasslands	Dr Panayiotis Dimopoulos, University of Patras - Department of Environmental and Natural Resources Management, Greece	Hans van Gossum (ARCADIS)
Forests	Mr Constantinos Papisavvas, Cyprus Forest Association, Cyprus	Johan Lammerant (ARCADIS)

In addition, a number of species had already been identified in the Background Document⁴ for discussion.

⁴ Available for consultation on the Natura 2000 Platform

2 Results of the habitat working groups

The information presented in this section is a summary of the discussions and conclusions of the four habitat working groups, as presented at the plenary closing session of the kick-off seminar and refined subsequently during follow-up consultations.

2.1 Mediterranean coastal habitats

2.1.1 Selected habitats

The coastal habitats selected for discussion at the seminar are listed below with their current conservation status.

NATURA 2000 CODE	NAME	STATUS
1110	Sandbanks	XX
1120	Posidonia beds	U1
1170	Reefs	U1
1150	Coastal lagoons	U2
1310	Salicornia and other annuals ...	U2
1410	Mediterranean salt meadows	XX
1420	Mediterranean and thermo-Atlantic scrub	XX
2110	Embryonic shifting dunes	U2
2230	Malcolmietalia dune grasslands	U1
2250	Dunes with Juniperus	U1

The broad range of habitats and specific examples were endorsed by the group as deserving priority consideration. However, it was decided that complex habitats, especially Reefs, would benefit from further sub-division and better definition – to allow the development and implementation of conservation objectives. In addition, it was noted that Vents (1180) are poorly understood with information on distribution only now becoming available. In terms of species, the association between particular habitats and key species will benefit from investigation – for example, Reefs and *Cystoseira*, Sandbanks and marine turtles and Caves with monk seals.

2.1.2 Issues, pressures and threats

Discussion during the seminar allowed for greater elaboration upon the main issues and threats that were identified prior to the event. Some were common to several habitats, others, less so: however, as could be expected, there was some separation between marine and coastal features. The coastal features in particular, generated an enormous number of issues suggesting a complex environment that coastal managers have to take into account. That said, in terms of pressures, there were several, more or less common, themes – the impact of pollution in aquatic/marine systems, the need to engage with the public and a range of other sectors, the need to fill the gaps in knowledge and skills, the need to address a complex legislative landscape and the need to ensure competent authorities have the skills and resources they need to carry out their jobs.

HABITAT	PRESSURES
Sandbanks (1110)	Eutrophication, Pollution
Posidonia beds (1120)	Illegal trawl fishing, Unregulated anchoring, Eutrophication, Pollution
Reefs (1170)	Unregulated anchoring, Eutrophication, Sea urchin barrens
Coastal lagoons (1150)	Declining water quality, Artificial freshwater input, Erosion (natural and man-induced), Inadequate management of water flows, Urbanisation, Inappropriate agriculture and aquaculture, Unsustainable recreation, Invasive alien species
Salicornia and other annuals (1310)	Land reclamation, Urbanisation, Artificial freshwater input, Unsustainable water management, Overgrazing, Garbage
Mediterranean salt meadows (1410)	
Mediterranean and thermo-Atlantic scrub (1420)	
Embryonic shifting dunes (2110)	Unsustainable recreational activities, Lack of sediment within system, Land reclamation, Sand removal, Garbage, Coastal defence, Invasive species, Beach cleaning
Malcolmietalia dunes (2230)	
Dunes with Juniperus (2250)	Overgrazing, Unsustainable agriculture, , illegal logging, Fire, Garbage, Invasive alien species, Sediment removed from system
Consistent themes	Insufficient law enforcement, Lack of public awareness, Lack of monitoring, Climate change, WFD requirements, Lack of integrated management, Need for better people management on fragile sites, Consistent implementation of legislation by competent authorities, Competing priorities of competent authorities who also often lack knowledge, skills and resources

2.1.3 Management requirements, measures and solutions

The proposed solutions strongly reflected the pressures and threats identified above. The number of measures needed or desired is perhaps a predictable response for a range of habitats in poor conservation status; the variety of measures also reflects a complex modern world with many ‘actors’ involved.

Some measures continue to stand out though, for example, the need to find mechanisms which enable the sharing of experience between managers, disciplines, sectors and states. Similarly, there is a clear need to engage and educate local communities to improve behaviours, as well as to show the (ecosystem) services that Natura 2000 can provide, whilst also effectively planning to avoid conflicts in the first place. In all such approaches, the principles of integrated coastal zone management must be applied. Finally, the need remains to think and act imaginatively, beyond traditional ‘boundaries’ and legislation, to seek synergies between sectors, sites and states to restore favourable conservation status to key habitats.

Key measures are listed below:

HABITAT	MEASURES
Sandbanks (1110)	Sharing experiences on SEA and NIA
<i>Posidonia</i> beds (1120)	Sharing knowledge on managing habitats and eliminating threats
Reefs (1170)	<p>Communicate current efforts being taken on EU level to build stronger synergies among closely related directives, strategies e.g. WFD, Marine Strategy etc.</p> <p>Develop large-scale <i>Posidonia</i> monitoring via aerial/satellite imagery</p> <p>Promote best practice management e.g. no anchoring zones, permanent mooring installations, no-dredging zones, assessment of alternatives</p> <p>Promote awareness-raising and community involvement in planning/monitoring etc.</p> <p>Promote and encourage better involvement of other sectors in Natura 2000 management</p> <p>Promote benefits of Natura 2000 in local communities</p> <p>Promote benefits of management plans</p> <p>Promote successful labelling schemes to give added value to products from Natura 2000 sites</p> <p>Lobby for mandatory requirements for management plans etc.</p> <p>Promote ICZM</p>
Coastal lagoons (1150)	<p>Explore the establishment and management of multi-functional landscapes/zones/wetlands around lagoons to provide biodiversity and other ecosystem services (e.g. green filters)</p> <p>Design of flow management structures</p> <p>Explore the carrying capacity of sites to better manage public pressure</p> <p>Implement best practice for aqua/agriculture</p> <p>Secure LIFE funding for co-ordinated management of Mediterranean lagoons</p>
<i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals (1310)	<p>Manage livestock and public access</p> <p>Raise public awareness</p>
Mediterranean salt meadows (1410)	
Mediterranean and thermo-Atlantic scrub. (1420)	

Embryonic shifting dunes (2110)	Manage public access e.g. by beach zoning/management plan, access points
	Raise public awareness
<i>Malcolmietalia</i> dune grasslands (2230)	Management of sediment cell
	Encourage dune development techniques e.g. beach cleaning, sediment traps
Dunes with <i>Juniperus</i> (2250)	As for 2110 & 2230 plus:
	Habitat restoration from <i>Pinus</i> invasion
	Monitoring of extent, trends and types of invasive species to inform sustainable management techniques

2.1.4 Identified opportunities for cooperative action: recommendations and commitments

The following actions, outputs and mechanisms were suggested at the Seminar. As can be seen, not all were able to be quantified, nor could lead bodies always be identified, but they are valuable to record. Some actions simply rely on active participation as part of informal networks. Others require the active collaboration of a range of partners, some of which were present at the Seminar. Consequently, the development of the actions is open to being adapted and refined over time.

ACTION	OUTPUTS / MECHANISMS	WHO	WHEN
Training (option to be paid by participants)	Training on <i>Posidonia</i> management for administration representatives from various sectors and countries – could be organized by the Greek Hellenic Institute for Marine Research		
Conferences, workshops	Workshop on experiences and possibilities of sea grasses restoration, could be organised by Gibraltar	Department of Environment (Gibraltar)	To be confirmed
Guidelines with management examples/case studies	Establish links with existing work, explore existing guidelines (MedPAN, RAC/SPA, other), examples from Life and other projects; promote them, if needed adapt and/or update them, strengthen their influence and number of reached users by promoting them on Natura 2000 platform, EC web site, recognition, etc.		
Study visits			
Note: All of these events and tools would be most effective if they dealt with only one habitat, or one habitat and very closely related priority species (e.g. sand banks – turtles, caves-monk seals)			
Raise awareness among the scientific and	Increase awareness about Natura 2000, provide information about the process of biogeographical seminars on management of Natura 2000, identify experts and relevant		

ACTION	OUTPUTS / MECHANISMS	WHO	WHEN
conservation communities	<p>contacts at the following planned events:</p> <p>Coordination for the implementation of marine strategy monitoring, June 2014, Madrid</p> <p>Conference on Posidonia and coraligenous communities (research, monitoring), October 2014, Slovenia</p>		
Management of multi-functional wetlands around coastal lagoons	<p>Establish LIFE project (or similar) to explore the establishment of multi-functional wetlands around Natura 2000 coastal lagoons supporting agricultural, recreational and biodiversity assets/functions e.g. green filters, agricultural, reservoirs, provision of freshwater/saline areas, sediment management.</p> <p>Issues to include funding, knowledge, best practice, partners, and network of experts and stakeholders.</p>	<p>To be decided but perhaps by a partnership of Greek Management Authorities.</p> <p>Initial tasks required include establishment of core group of ‘activists’ to scope, develop and lead the project via the Forum and then via a face-to-face workshop in the next few months.</p> <p>Projects could be combined into one</p>	<p>Workshop(s) to be held before winter 2014 to lead to project proposals according to LIFE/INTERREG etc. timetables.</p> <p>Would require contractor support to establish. Alternatives could explore support via Barcelona Convention (RACSPA)</p>
Secure sustainable management and FCS of Greek coastal lagoons	<p>Establish LIFE project designed to explore and identify best practice for the management of northern Greek coastal lagoons and associated sand dune habitats and bird populations to inform lagoon management across the whole of the region.</p>	<p>To be decided but perhaps by a partnership of Greek Management Authorities.</p> <p>Initial tasks required include establishment of core group of ‘activists’ to scope, develop and lead the project via the Forum and then via a face-to-face workshop in the next few months.</p> <p>Projects could be combined into one</p>	<p>Workshop(s) to be held before winter 2014 to lead to project proposals according to LIFE/INTERREG etc. timetables.</p> <p>Would require contractor support to establish. Alternatives could explore support via Barcelona Convention (RACSPA)</p>
Share information on green filters	<p>Upload examples onto Communication Platform</p>		
Share information on management of the public on fragile sites	<p>Upload examples of signs, leaflets etc. to Communication Platform</p> <p>Exploit other communication tools e.g. LinkedIn and Sand Dune and Shingle Network to collate information</p>	<p>All, Contractor</p>	<p>Immediately and ongoing</p>
Improve design of dams/slucices	<p>Promote collaboration between engineers and biologists to improve design</p>	<p>This could possibly form a component of the proposed LIFE project to secure the management of Greek coastal</p>	<p>To be decided</p>

ACTION	OUTPUTS / MECHANISMS	WHO	WHEN
		lagoons	

2.2 Mediterranean forest habitats

2.2.1 Selected habitats

The forest habitat group consists of the following habitat types: *Castanea sativa* woods (9260), *Olea* and *Ceratonia* forests (9320), *Quercus suber* forests (9330), *Quercus ilex* and *Quercus rotundifolia* forests (9340) and Mediterranean pine forests with endemic Mesogean pines (9540). It was proposed to add Tilio – Acerion (9180) as a selected habitat, due to its high biodiversity values (all characteristic of refuge areas).

2.2.2 Introductory case study presentations

Miguel Bugalho presented the case, “Promoting sustainable management of cork oak woodlands using forest certification and payment for ecosystem services”. He provided a clear insight into the distribution of cork oak woodlands in the Mediterranean region, its conservation values and main threats. Secondly sustainable management practices in cork oak woodlands were described. The importance of maintaining/restoring water bodies (for water supply to cork oak forests and for biodiversity values), appropriate grazing management and shrub management for example rotational clearing, was emphasized. The concept of High Conservation Value Forests was described, as well as the six different types of HCV forests. HCV4 type forests are particularly important for preserving ecosystem services such as water basin protection, prevention of soil erosion, fire prevention or carbon storage (with regard to the latter, within cork oak plantations carbon storage is the goal rather than carbon sequestration; carbon storage is realised by slowly growing trees while carbon sequestration can be realised by fast growing tree species). Miguel also referred to the WebGis tool: HABEaS: Hotspot Areas for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (see www.habeas-med.org). A number of Portuguese cork oak woodlands were mapped as HCV4 areas as well as biodiversity hotspot areas according to the HABEaS method. For one of them a project on Payment for Ecosystem Services has been elaborated, the “Green Heart of Cork” project (GhoC), supported by WWF, Coca Cola and an association of land owners who wanted to get their forests FSC labeled. Coca Cola rewarded the land owners for their efforts to preserve the watershed function of the cork oak forests.

This is an excellent example about how private businesses, land owners and NGOs can cooperate in achieving FCS in Natura 2000 sites.

Sophie Bourlon presented the case “Actions to maintain and restore the Luberon forests’ biodiversity: focus on islands network for retention of old-growth features and ancient forests”. The concept of forest islands network is a new biodiversity conservation tool applied in France. The first phase consists of ancient forest mapping and mapping of forests of high biodiversity. Scientists have demonstrated that forest’s ancientness has an influence on the biodiversity (no matter what method of management is used). The high biodiversity forests are classified according to their importance for retention of old-growth features on the field, for example ancient solitary trees, and according to the naturalness degree

assessment WWF tool⁵. The second phase is the implementation of the island network. This happens by establishing ecological corridors at three scales: 1°/ large scale (mountain range); surface from 10 to more than 100 ha, 2°/ forest scale; conservation of so-called “senescence islands”; surface from 1 to 10 ha, and 3°/ plot scale; trees of ecological interest; at least 5 trees per ha. This requires positive contact with land owners. The Forest French Mediterranean Natura 2000 contract for trees of ecological interest and senescence islands conservation is applied as one tool to implement this concept. Other supporting tools are a high performance GIS database, the creation of new reserves and taking care of awareness creation and educational activities.

This excellent case study has now resulted in a (currently) bilateral exchange of information, experience and knowledge on management practices for ancient forest between sites in France and Spain.

2.2.3 Pressures and problems

The main issues causing problems regarding achieving FCS for the selected forest habitat groups were discussed and ranked according to importance (listed below from most important to least importance – relative ranking):

- Change of land use, for example urbanisation, conversion to agriculture, developments of infrastructure.
- Wildfire.
- Lack of management.
- Climate change (increased temperatures, lower precipitation).
- Land abandonment.
- Access to financing.
- Fragmentation; conflicting policies affecting forests for example development leading to fragmentation of forests within N2000 (external influence).
- Diseases.
- Too intensive management (maximising production of timber, cork, fruits) for example short rotation coppice, inappropriate debarking.
- Erosion.
- Excessive load by ungulates.
- Genetic pollution.
- Disturbance (outdoor sports activities, leisure, vehicles, camping,).
- Invasive Alien Species.

⁵ the dedicated page with all the elements in French and English (field sheet) : <http://www.foretsanciennes.fr/evaluer/methode/les-outils/>

- the practical guidebook (in French) to present and implement the tool : <http://www.foretsanciennes.fr/wp-content/uploads/Rossi-Vallauri-2013.pdf>

- the report on ancient med forests in France (in French) that has used the evaluation tool : <http://www.foretsanciennes.fr/protger-mieux/france/>

2.2.4 Management and solutions

- Appropriate management for example longer rotation periods, abandonment of coppice management.
- Appropriate cork extraction; it's difficult to identify generally applicable rules of thumb regarding the appropriate period for debarking as this is very dependent on the local climate conditions (temperature, precipitation).
- In extensive forests, horizontal heterogeneity should be favoured, maintaining or generating mosaics of forest-bush-grassland.
- Conversion of the pure chestnut forests into mixed high stand forests will lead to more natural forests that are better resistant against any disease or natural threat.
- Addressing the threat of diseases through methods such as applying a less aggressive strand of the fungus, properly removing the infected trees and the infected parts and vaccination of seedlings.
- Defragmentation is an important tool to restore Mediterranean forest habitats; identify extensive forest fragments and other zones that are well located to fulfil a connectivity function.
- Leaving appropriate quantities of dead wood in the forest.
- Wildfire prevention by reducing forest densities. Grown up shrubs causing closed canopy in forest stands should also be avoided.
- Protection of water masses such as ponds that are located within the forests or in the surroundings preserves biodiversity by protecting insects, birds and amphibians.
- Reducing high densities of *Quercus ilex* forests can improve their resistance to climate change. Reducing densities can increase the soil water availability for the remaining trees which improves their resistance to drought.
- Communication and information activities can increase the acceptance of local communities of measures aiming to reduce human disturbance, in particular, the exclusion of vehicles from the forest habitats.
- Seed collection and establishment of seed banks.

2.2.5 Gaps

The following shortcomings – mainly knowledge gaps – were identified:

- Lack of indicators for evaluation of conservation status (uniform approach by MS).
- Common understanding of favourable conservation reference values such as which indicator species can be used or the amount of dead wood, lack of a common methodology or a common standard. Also worth mentioning is the existence of a WWF tool on forest naturalness degree.
- Lack of Climate Change projections and lack of knowledge on impacts on Mediterranean forests.
- Lack of knowledge on innovative stakeholder involvement approaches, a lack of awareness amongst stakeholders and a lack of suitable communication material.
- Lack of knowledge in best restoration techniques for example seed germination and production of seedlings.

- Lack of adequate, up-to-date mapping, spatial database dealing with continuous changes in the field, a lack of up-to-date standard data forms and a lack of spatial database for biodiversity elements.
- Lack of knowledge sharing on fire prevention management in N2000, firefighting and restoration (after wildfires) in N2000; focus on prevention..
- Lack of knowledge on regeneration ability of forest species under different management conditions.
- Reasons behind the high mortality of old cork oaks are unknown.
- Lack of insight into ecosystem services provided by forests in N2000 for different user groups (this might be a basis for attracting extra funding).
- Lack of knowledge regarding innovative financing of nature restoration in N2000 (public-private, private).
- Lack of technical guide on sustainable forest management or lack of knowledge transfer between MS.
- Advisory services in sustainable forestry.
- Role of non-indigenous forest tree species in N2000 forest management (what is negative and positive?).
- Lack of knowledge regarding effectiveness of N2000 network (correctly designated areas, correct species).
- Understanding conflicts between policies at different levels.
- Lack of studies and data between forest certification and N2000 requirements.

2.2.6 Identified opportunities for cooperative action: recommendations and commitments

ACTION	OUTPUTS / MECHANISMS	WHO	WHEN
Share and collect good practices on sustainable forestry for selected forest habitat types (e.g. CP); interesting cases to be translated and circulated	Feed ex-post evaluation reports on LIFE+ forestry projects on CP (LIFE+ monitoring team) + link to LIFE+ website Translation: summaries in English preferred! Links to other information sources to be made e.g. WWF France on 'naturalness' and 'ancient forests', European Forest Institute (EFI, Finland based); FAO	Every actor to feed the CP with best practices	Continuously
Establishment of a network of Mediterranean region N2000 experts (instrument is the CP, where own niche can be created); can also deal with exchanging students; cover identified knowledge gaps; promote communication between	Prepare ToR of the group Call for interest on the CP To be discussed in LIFE+ Platform in Cyprus Development and launch of network (use organisation database in CP) Maintenance of network	Volunteering individual(s)/ organisation(s)	To be discussed on LIFE+ Platform meeting in September in Cyprus

ACTION	OUTPUTS / MECHANISMS	WHO	WHEN
science and other stakeholders			
Proposal on twinning projects between N2000 sites in different MS in one biogeographic region ('twinning' page could be introduced in CP); principle is mutual challenges, characteristics, mutual visits, etc	<p>Elaborate principles of twinning</p> <p>Establish specific place on CP where 'twinning principles' can be presented, where a call for interest can be launched, etc.</p> <p>Developing pilot projects</p> <p>Feasibility study on co-funding in the future</p>	Natura 2000 site managers	Not specified
Building a portal on N2000 forest spatial information (specific information related to forest management e.g. high conservation spots, old forests, ecosystem services, ability for seed regeneration,)	<p>Develop concept, purposes, etc.</p> <p>Identify and build on existing initiatives; one of these initiatives is FISE (Forest Information System Europe, see http://forest.jrc.ec.europa.eu/), an information portal regarding European forests to be launched by JRC by the end of 2014; Natura 2000 forests might receive particular attention on this portal.</p> <p>INSPIRE compliance!</p> <p>Investigate application for funding (preparatory project under LIFE+ Communication; could be part of LIFE+ Integrated project?; INTERREG for Mediterranean)</p>		
Elaboration of guidance material with regard to innovative financing mechanisms such as corporates funding (refer to case study ppt), PES	<p>Develop tool to identify promising opportunities (combination of biodiversity hotspots, ecosystem services, businesses)</p> <p>Investigate suitability of integration in idea on spatial mapping</p> <p>Collect case studies / best practices</p> <p>Develop cooperation mechanisms between providers and beneficiaries of ecosystem services and related to nature restoration</p> <p>Prepare guidance document – transversal action for all habitats/ all biogeographic regions</p> <p>Promote innovative financing – increase awareness amongst stakeholders (public auth., NGOs, businesses,)</p> <p>Link to EU Business & Biodiversity Platform / Natural Capital Financing Facility</p> <p>Organise ad hoc meeting</p>	Not specified	Not specified
Explore feasibility of label rewarding active	Collect information on existing systems in EU MS, in particular Mediterranean MS, and investigate	Any interested authority/MS/	Not specified

ACTION	OUTPUTS / MECHANISMS	WHO	WHEN
involvement and good practice in N2000 management (e.g. pilot project)	benefits of such systems for rewarded actors, for N2000, Propose 'ToR' for proposed labeling system	NGO	
Research project on adaptation capacities of Mediterranean tree species with regard to climate change (experiment orchards to test translocation, etc.), contributing to FCS in N2000 forest sites	Develop research idea Investigate possibility to establish experimental orchards (if they exist already, project idea will be left) Launch idea on CP and other fora	Research institutes	Not specified

2.3 Mediterranean freshwater and wetland habitats

2.3.1 Selected habitats

The fresh water and wetland habitats selected for priority consideration in this process are:

- 3170 - Mediterranean temporary ponds
- 3290 - Intermittently flowing Mediterranean rivers of the Paspalo-Agrostidion
- 92D0 - Southern riparian galleries and thickets (Nerio-Tamaricetea and Securinegion tinctoriae)
- 92A0 - *Salix alba* and *Populus alba* galleries

It was noted that this selection resulting from the consultation process among members of the Steering Committee and their experts was composed of a series of habitats that did not cover the full range of water dependent habitats in the Mediterranean. Although the focus of the discussion would be on these four habitats, reference to other habitats requiring particular attention was possible. The workshop participants confirmed that these water related habitats were generally in poor conservation status and that they required special attention for their conservation and restoration. An overall factor contributing to unfavourable conservation status was linked to the (ecologically) inappropriate water level management (in the context of the Mediterranean hydroperiod). Maintaining or restoring natural hydrological dynamics should therefore be one of the overarching objectives for the conservation and restoration of Mediterranean freshwater habitats.

2.3.2 Introductory case study presentations

Two case studies were presented to give some practical food for thought for the following discussions.

Dr Anilla Shallari presented the case of her organic goat farm in Southwestern France (Aude department) on behalf of LPO (BirdLife partner in France). The farm is located on the margins of a Natura 2000 site. The objective of the farming project is to assess whether modern organic farming is compatible with generating a secure income while complying with environmental legal constraints and opportunities. The results of the five-year field trials of organic farming on previously conventionally farmed land showed that the benefits for biodiversity became rapidly apparent, with the observation of increasing numbers of wild species of plants and animals. However, the results of the biodiversity benefits of the organic farming practices were largely based on incidental evidence and had not been evaluated through formal monitoring approaches, including the description of a baseline situation. In the context of existing environmental compliance and available financial incentives, the financial balance of the farming approach was positive. However, the seasonality of work peaks limited the options for living a modern life, as it also made it difficult to hire additional personnel.

Ms Vasso Tsiaoussi (The Greek Wetlands and Biotope Centre) presented two cases of riparian forest (*Salix alba* and *Populus alba* galleries) restoration in Northern Greece, one in the Nestos Delta where the project outcomes had been a success, and the other in Lake Kerkini where the outcomes had been less

successful. These forests suffer from land reclamation and alteration of the hydrological regime. The first project aimed at the re-establishment of the habitat type by planting in land previously used as forest plantation while the second involved the introduction of a water management scheme aiming to ease the pressure on an existing riparian forest from abrupt and extreme fluctuations of water level at the mouth of River Strymon in Kerkini Lake. Both interventions aimed to improve the conservation status of the habitat type. In the Nestos delta, a small area of forest affected by modified hydrological regime was restored. Success factors in this project were the development of a clear vision, good working contacts established with a committed management authority, and the planning of maintenance conservation. In the case of Lake Kerkini, the initial success factors included the close working relationships with a sectorial organization. The initial success was later jeopardized because of a government reform after project completion: the initial buy-in was lost.

Both presentations and the subsequent discussion resulted in a number of general conclusions about conservation project development and implementation in Mediterranean priority (fresh water) habitats.

- Need for a clear vision and objectives
- Importance of monitoring effects of management
- Need for baseline
- Knowledge, research and training
- Adopt integrated adaptive approaches
- Ensure funding for maintenance of management
- Seek appropriate partners
- Assess and anticipate risks
- Combine management plans (for various objectives)

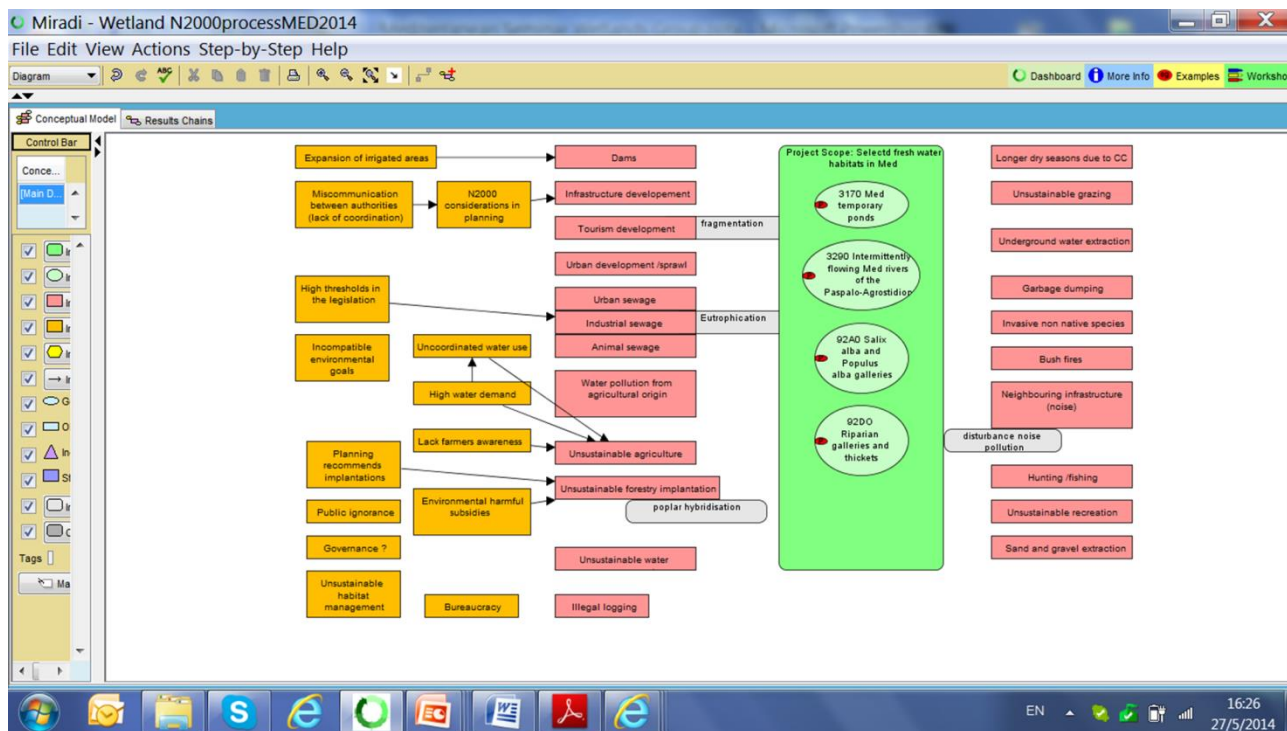
In addition, during the workshop a number of general considerations were raised with reference to the management of habitats for priority consideration (within the Mediterranean Biogeographical Region).

- For successful management strategies at Biogeographical level:
 - Need for a sound knowledge base
 - Improve definition of habitats (and their grouping), describe sub-types in so far as they are relevant for management choices and strategies
- Consider the management of these habitats also in the context of N2K vs WFD (and other relevant legislation):
 - Threats and pressures
 - Monitoring
 - Using the adequate indicators
- Reduce the administrative burden for national and regional administrations for implementation of all environment directives: more coordination needed
- Make sure the relevant EU level guidance and documentation cascades down to the level of the site managers. The Natura 2000 Platform can help here.

2.3.3 Pressures and problems

The exploration of the major pressures and problems started from the list of issues as presented in the Seminar Input Document ([link](#)). Participants were asked to list pressures and threats on post-its which were grouped into more general clusters. The clustered pressures and threats were inserted into MIRADI

(Adaptive Management Software for Conservation Projects)⁶ to allow an on-screen and interactive analysis of the factors influencing these pressures and threats.



PRESSURE / THREAT	FACTORS / REASONS
Dams	Expansion of irrigated areas
Infrastructure development	Natura 2000 considerations in planning, miscommunication between authorities
Tourism development	
Urban development / sprawl	
Urban sewage	
Industrial sewage	High thresholds in irrigation
Animal sewage	
Water pollution from agricultural origin	
Unsustainable agriculture	High water demand, uncoordinated water use, lack of farmers awareness
Unsustainable forestry implantation	Environmentally harmful subsidies, public ignorance
Unsustainable water management	
Illegal logging (of riparian forests)	

⁶ <https://miradi.org/>

Sand and gravel extraction
Unsustainable recreation
Hunting and fishing
Neighbouring infrastructure (noise)
Bush fires
Invasive non-native species
Garbage dumping
Underground water extraction
Unsustainable grazing
Longer dry season due to climate change

Other factors not clearly linked to one specific threat included:

- Lack of public awareness
- Governance
- Unsustainable habitat management
- Bureaucracy

From the full list of threats and pressures, **three major pressures** affecting Mediterranean freshwater habitats were selected by consensual discussion:

- Inadequate management of water (including dams) (quantitative)
- Pollution from agricultural origin
- (Future) land use changes

2.3.4 Management and solutions

Through the brain writing technique⁷ possible solutions to the three selected pressures were listed. These were presented and discussed in plenary.

Pressure 1: Inadequate management of water (including dams) (quantitative)

- Implementation of the EU (nature and related such as WFD) Directives requirements and national laws.
- Coordination among the managers and users.
- Serious calculation of water balances and ecological demands, using the correct methods. Then prioritize the requirements. Remaining water should be prioritized.

⁷ <http://www.mycoted.com/Brainwriting>

- Include environmental costs in cost of water.
- Restoration of natural hydrological regimes by simulation of natural conditions.
- Small water storage facilities that help biodiversity (small ponds, reservoirs).
- Use of alternative environmentally friendly water sources.

Pressure 2: Pollution from agricultural origin

- Use crops that are regionally adjusted.
- Evaluate impacts on natural values, monitor agricultural activities and conservation status of natural values and identify sensitive species.
- Define buffer zones around important areas and prevent the use of agro chemicals in these buffers. Improve the buffer zone as natural zone and integrate.
- Ensure that legislation is correctly implemented (Pesticide Directive; Conditionality, Rural Development Fund).
- Awareness and education of farmers about legislation and good practices.
- Promote the sharing of successful experiences and cooperation between farmers.
- Ensure that agricultural funds integrate environmental issues and conservation needs.
- Consumer awareness of the quality of products from sustainable agriculture.
- Use regional products and implement ecological and regional labelling.

Pressure 3: (Future) land use changes

- Land use planning beforehand, at local and regional and national scale. Integrate habitat types. (WFD, Flood Directive).
- To increase awareness at different levels., including raising awareness about delimitation of the areas.
- Law enforcement. Require that procedures are followed up.
- Provide users with alternatives. For example if farmers cannot graze their sheep in a particular area an area where it is possible should be suggested.
- Integrate European Landscape Convention with HD Art 10.

2.3.5 Identified opportunities for cooperative action: recommendations and commitments

ACTION	OUTPUTS / MECHANISMS	WHO	WHEN
Increase awareness about WFD & HBD by Informing or training protected area managers in WFD provisions and water managers in Bird and Habitats Directives	Collect and disseminate through the Natura 2000 Platform existing guidance Develop new or provide existing training Enquire about the EU Commission-led process Expert group on HBD / WFD / MSFD	University of Valencia, ECNC	
Reduce the use of organic chemicals (pesticides, herbicides,	Writing recommendations and guidelines		

ACTION	OUTPUTS / MECHANISMS	WHO	WHEN
fertilizers) by promoting the adoption of regionally adapted crops			
Reduce the use of organic chemicals (pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers) by promoting the branding and marketing of regional organic products	Workshop on branding of sustainable regional products in and around Natura 2000 sites	Eurosite (explore possibilities to join with planned workshop on the subject)	2015
Reduce the use of organic chemicals (pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers) by promoting the application of Functional Agro-Biodiversity (FAB) ⁸ in Mediterranean River catchments	Disseminate the lessons, guidance from the European Learning Network on Functional agrobiodiversity through the Natura 2000 platform Organise a workshop on introduction of FAB principles in the Mediterranean	ECNC, Tour du Valat	2014 - 2015
Avoid conversion of freshwater habitats by Informing spatial planning processes to consider conservation of freshwater habitats	Establish formal contacts between Natura 2000 biogeographical process and MedWet initiative to share documents and guidance Provide integrated / adaptive management training Develop Mediterranean level guidelines for integration of HBD, WFD, MSFD to take full account of each other (e.g. Not only list of N2K sites in WFD)	ECNC (platform) Tour du Valat (MEdWet) Conservation coaches / Axios Delta MA	

⁸ <http://www.eln-fab.eu/>

2.4 Mediterranean grassland habitats

2.4.1 Selected habitats

It was noted that the Natura 2000 grassland types selected for priority consideration within the biogeographical process, are actually three grassland types and one shrub type, which is of continental origin, although does occur on mountains in southern Italy. It was mentioned that several other grassland types require attention. The suggestion was also made to enlarge the grassland group with scrubs, as these currently do not fit within the covered habitat type groups. It was further highlighted that grasslands are anthropogenic habitats depending on human activities. One additional note was made that the information about Cyprus, with respect to the number of Natura 2000 sites that include 5330 and 6220 habitat types, requires correction in the background report.

2.4.2 Pressures and problems

In addition to the pressures and problems described in the seminar input document, the following issues were highlighted during the workshop:

- Land is either abandoned or suffers from intensified agriculture (which of the two occurs depends on the suitability of soil for agriculture). Intermediate intensity of grazing is the solution. Often, inappropriate use of grazing animals is an issue, for example, many sheep have been replaced by grazing cows, which have a more drastic impact on floristic diversity.
- The average age of the human population is increasing and there is a decrease in human population size because of limited birth numbers. Therefore, in combination with land abandonment, there are progressively less young people available that may be convinced to live in rural areas and practice extensive agricultural management practices (cf. case study presentation by Dr Jasenka Topic).
- Rising populations of wild boar, that damage vegetation and scramble the land such that machines cannot operate, is an issue. Also, wolves killing sheep further demotivate those few people that may still practice extensive agricultural practices.
- Pollution, especially nitrogen pressure, was indicated to be an issue.
- When natural areas are restored it can sometimes be a problem to find plant seeds within Europe. As a consequence, the seeds are bought in the US. Considering the threats by some alien species and the logical choice for native or even autochthonous plants this practice should be discouraged. Guidance may help on where to find appropriate seeds.

2.4.3 Management and solutions

In addition to management and solutions described in the background document, the following issues were highlighted during the workshop:

- Provide motivation to connect ecosystem valuing with agricultural policy, that is, promote high nature value farming with valuable natural products. An example of good agricultural practice is

the Pag cheese production on the Island of Pag. Habitats on the islands have been monitored long-term and remained similar across years. Consider positive labeling/branding of such products.

- Organize exclusive nature tourism (cf. case study presentation by Dr Jasenka Topic). For example, in Kazakhstan botanic excursions are offered and in the US scientific excursions are open for exclusive tourism at a rate of 20,000 USD. Flagship species may attract tourism as illustrated by great and little bustards near Caceres in Spain.
- In addition to fire being a threat, it sometimes may offer opportunity. Controlled fire ecology is a practice that deserves further attention, despite it being costly and only realistic at small scales. Expertise is building up in Greece and Cyprus, but more research is needed.
- Foster positive discrimination: people to appreciate services nature provide (Ecosystem Services) and being proud about the beauty of their natural heritage. This should be covered in sectorial programs.
- Land management agreements; connect with people in the field directly, not only with their stakeholder representatives, that is, to use a bottom-up approach. Such an approach may be more time consuming, but allows for local managers to be heard and motivated.
- Shift from protecting nature against humans to working with nature with humans. Find the balance in having extensive agricultural practice, but allowing for economic prosperity.
- Some grassland types need trampling. Some areas are used for camping purposes in summer and grasslands covered with flowers in spring.
- It is very important that management is based on knowledge of ecology! Properly plan for site management and consider the needs and requirements of key (animal) species. School programs may be developed to include such knowledge.
- Exchange of best-practices on the various indicated possible solutions.

2.4.4 Gaps

The gaps identified during the working group session could be allocated to one of four different larger categories.

A. Knowledge

- Lack of information regarding climate change prevents the decision about whether it is a threat or an opportunity.
- Lack of knowledge of the reference values to be used when evaluating favorable conservation status.
- Monitoring human activities may also provide further knowledge to allow for policy and management decisions to be made.

B. Management

- Striking a balance in the appropriate intensity of grazing that is sufficient and provides economic return.
- Guidance on farming and Natura2000.

- Considering the issue of grazing capacity and stocking rates: knowledge on optimal intensity and duration of grazing is needed, when is the best period for grazing, for example not too early in spring and grazing regimes.
- For management and policy decisions: not only knowledge on species and vegetation (entities) is useful, but understanding processes and functions and considering these spatially (based on remote sensing) will allow better informed decisions be made (cf. case study presentation by Dr. Javier Cabello). Ecosystem functioning should be included in Natura2000 processes. Remark: remote sensing is an appropriate technique for large scale areas, but is not adequate for heterogeneous smaller areas (mosaics). Also, it can work with larger syntaxa, but not with each specific (possibly indicator) plant.

C. Networking

- Known information is not always available where it should be. For example, with farmers or administrations in charge of appropriate assessment.
- Research is needed to suggest alternative, less damaging agricultural practices). Farmers should be shown it is possible, in practice, to live a good life in balance with nature.

D. Advice to governments

- Money under CAP to be used for Natura2000. Natura2000 actions should be included as a theme in the rural development scheme.
- Consider subsidiary and intensive programs for people living rural lifestyles.
- Collaborate to work out schemes on exclusive nature tourism.
- Have the practice of grazing and how it is applied be subject to the appropriate assessment procedure, to prevent overgrazing occurring.
- In the Mediterranean region, management of grasslands falls within the competence of the Forest Authorities. Therefore, it is necessary to have grazing covered in forest management plans.

2.4.5 Identified opportunities for cooperative actions: recommendations and commitments

ACTION	OUTPUTS / MECHANISMS	WHO	WHEN
Produce a guidance document on farming and Natura2000 to provide guidance on how to deal with farming within the Natura2000	Dissemination of guidance document through communication platform and other fora.	European Commission (indicated by Mr. Ludovic Le Maresquier)	Forthcoming
Share knowledge on monitoring to: - improve monitoring strategies and help understand conditions and pressures/threats of habitats of community interest in the Mediterranean region - compare and contrast different approaches in approaching FCS	Share knowledge on monitoring strategies and discuss FCS Through email group if possible as a subtheme within the forum of the communication platform (e.g. mailing group on grassland monitoring in the Mediterranean area)	Dr Javier Cabello, Mr. Daniel Goñi	Starting early October with e-mail to Grassland group and other potentially interested parties.

ACTION	OUTPUTS / MECHANISMS	WHO	WHEN
and Favorable Reference Values to reach more consistency in the Mediterranean region (a sort of “ideal”).			
<p>Foster networking for grassland management:</p> <p>To create a better connection between EC, management authorities and stakeholders on documents and common decisions</p> <p>To better adapt and apply to local conditions the indications of the Guidance document on farming in Nat 2000</p> <p>To share ideas, lessons learnt, best practices, on how to achieve conservation results in grassland areas</p> <p>To show success stories to stakeholders and wider public</p>	<p>Produce a document introducing need of networking on grassland management</p> <p>Post document on the Natura2000 Platform and discuss it in local forums and groups, like the Grassland Symposium in Greece.</p> <p>Create a discussion group (email group) to share success cases in grassland management. Members of this group will come from scientific institutions, administration bodies, NGOs and other relevant.</p> <p>Propose practical activities to EC to be funded by EU programs. These activities aim to show success cases in Natura2000 management and gains to local communities.</p>	<p>Dr Jenny Calabrese, Dr Domingos Leitão, Mr. Kyriakos Skordas, Dr Michael Vrahnakis</p>	<p>Action 1 will start now and action 2 will start next September.</p> <p>Action 3 will be developed until the end of 2014.</p> <p>Action 4 must be planned for 2015.</p>
<p>Networking for best-practices to find ways to have (potential) inhabitants and (potential) tourists being attracted to live in or visit rural areas.</p>	<p>Networking for best-practices on tourism in grasslands and on how to counter abandonment of land through for example production of valuable natural products</p> <p>E-mail – Skype – Chlora website</p>	<p>Dr Dimitar Ouzounov</p>	<p>Starting in October</p>
<p>Technical workshops on management to identify and prioritize concrete actions for Natura2000 Mediterranean grassland habitat types</p>	<p>Having workshops in the coming year to pick up the technical discussion on managing grassland sites</p>	<p>Dr Panayotis Dimopoulos, Dr Georgios Fotiadis, Dr Michael Vrahnakis, Dr Jasenka Topic, Dr Pezco Conezo, Dr Dimitar Ouzounou, Dr Marios Andreou, Dr Ioannis Tsiripidis</p>	<p>Workshop 1: mid-late October in Greece in Prespa National Park</p> <p>Workshop 2: April In Italy in Conero - Ancona</p>
<p>Project application under Interreg to address Problematic Management in (East and West) Mediterranean countries</p>	<p>Initiate group involving private and public sector with scientific support by scientific institutions</p> <p>Interreg (IPA) project</p>	<p>Dr Eduardo Biondi, Dr Panayotis Dimopoulos, Dr</p>	<p>IPA call is not open yet. Proposals can be submitted</p>

ACTION	OUTPUTS / MECHANISMS	WHO	WHEN
		Dimitar Ouzounov, Dr Jasenka Topic, Dr Georgios Fotiadis, Dr Marios Andreou, Dr Apostolos Kyriozopoulos, Dr Ioannis Tsiripidis	to the IPA ADRIATIC CBC Program solely during the period when a public call for proposals is open

3 Closing plenary session

The presentations of the four habitat working group results sparked a plenary discussion that focused on three main themes: 1. Labelling and branding; 2. EU Funding; 3. Policy integration and 4. The way forward.

Labelling and branding - The European Commission published a feasibility study on labelling and branding for Natura 2000, however, its outcomes and recommendations have not yet been fully implemented. Instead, the Natura 2000 Award has been set up and its first edition was presented in 2014. There was the suggestion to produce a Natura 2000 label for private sponsoring of good management practices and a label for outstanding Natura 2000 management authorities. However, in the context of the Natura 2000 Biogeographical Process the labelling of products could be an idea for a follow up workshop. Good examples exist, such as in The Netherlands where Staatsbosbeheer (the state forest agency) has established a cooperation agreement with the Australian wine brand Banrock Wine. For each bottle sold in The Netherlands this company donates a few cents to the management of the Weerribben National Park. There is continuous demand from protected areas managers for information about how to set up branding schemes for regional agricultural products in cooperation with businesses. In addition to organisations such as Eurosite and Europarc, IFOAM was also mentioned as a possible party to further develop this issue. It was noted that Natura 2000 labelling should also be considered in the context of the consequences of the new pesticide directive that will have great repercussions on farmers farming inside Natura 2000 sites.

EU funding - Mechanisms such as labelling and corporate funding can provide some means to cover the funding requirements of Natura 2000 management, but this must not distract the attention the significant EU funding mechanisms that can be applied to Natura 2000, such as structural funds. In this context, especially the potential of European Regional Development Funds was mentioned. In particular the new INTERREG programme will be launched shortly and provides some still poorly tapped financial resources for Natura 2000. It offers opportunities to finance actions in the context of Natura 2000 management and restoration, and should therefore be of great interest to the participants in the Natura 2000 Biogeographical Process. The areas of application are the EU member states, Norway and Switzerland for the funding period 2014 – 2020. It promotes European territorial cooperation for cities and regions along three main strands: Cross border projects between two Member states (strand A); Transnational projects (strand B), and Interregional cooperation (strand C). The EU provides approximately €9 billion for the European Territorial Cooperation from 2014: €6.6 billion for the cross-border cooperation (INTERREG VA), €1.8 billion for the transnational cooperation (INTERREG VB) and €500 million for the inter-regional cooperation (INTERREG VC). One of the thematic objectives (number 6) explicitly refers to natural heritage and in particular Natura 2000.

Policy integration - Participants raised the issue of integration of the Nature Directives with other relevant policies such as the EU Biodiversity Strategy, the Marine Strategy Framework Directives and the Water Framework Directive and recalled that a special working group had been set up to investigate

synergies between these policies. These relationships and synergies are being explored by the Commission and the Member States. To date this work has resulted in a Frequently Asked Questions Document⁹ drafted on the basis of expert opinion. Areas where follow up action is required have also been identified. The Nature, Water and Marine Directors met in December 2013 and have the issue on their agenda, but they are waiting for a political mandate to proceed further. As a follow up, a workshop is planned for December 2014 to assess common objectives, to review monitoring and reporting systems and methods, and to identify possible problems existing with some measures. In the future an increased involvement and input from member states will be expected and the exercise will be extended also to include the Pesticides, Nitrates and Floods Directives. It was noted that, in addition to this work at EU and Member State level, NGOs such as Eurosite, organise specific workshops addressing the practical effects of the various directives on practical nature management.

The way forward - The organisers thanked all delegates for their active participation and valuable contributions during this short but intensive Mediterranean Kick-off Seminar. The many results of the working group discussions presented during the closing session provide the basis to develop some very promising follow-up actions. The European Commissioner and the contractor supporting the Natura 2000 Biogeographical Process play a coordinating and supporting role for these follow-up actions, but the initiative clearly resides with the site, local, regional and member state level actors. The Commission initiated and supports the Natura 2000 Biogeographical Process to help the member states in their duty to implement the nature directives. In addition, the Commission underlines the fact that there are various types of funds available to carry out projects and activities in relation to the implementation of the Nature Directives, in particular, the structural funds are available to be used by Member States and specific actions and strategic objectives relate to nature and environment and nature protection. The delegates were encouraged to remain in contact, to extend the network to also include their colleagues and to take forward the many interesting ideas that had been discussed during the Seminar.

⁹ <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/FAQ-WFD%20final.pdf>

4 Annexes

4.1 Programme of the Mediterranean Kick-off Seminar

DAY 1: Monday, 26th May 2014

NOTE THAT ALL TIMINGS WITHIN THE PROGRAMME ARE INDICATIVE ONLY.

Time	Activity	Objectives & outcomes	Description
08.00 to 09.15		Registration of participants	
09.15 to 10.30	<p>Welcome & introductions</p> <p><i>Target outcome: Clear understanding amongst participants about expectations from the Kick-off Seminar, in its context as a continuing process.</i></p>	<p>Opening of the Seminar</p> <p>Formal welcomes from the hosts & Greek Ministry:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ President of the Axios, Loudias Aliakmonas Management Authority: <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Emeritus Professor Themistoklis Kouimtzis A.U.TH.</p> <p>Introduction to the four Habitat Working Groups' Chairs – Neil McIntosh ECNC:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mrs Stella Varelzidou (GR) – Wetlands; 2. Ms Zrinka Jakl (HR) – Coastal; 3. Mr Constantinos Papasavvas (CY) – Forests; 4. Prof. Panayiotis Dimopoulos (GR) – Grasslands. <p>The context, importance and purpose of the New Natura 2000 Biogeographical Seminar Process – François Kremer, European Commission.</p> <p>Introduction the site visits and the work of the Axios Management Authority – Mrs Stella Varelzidou.</p>	<p>Present the Seminar process, approach and methods to be used – the Mediterranean Kick off Seminar:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Is a starting point in a continuing, long-term process; ○ Focus on practical management techniques for specific habitats; ○ Identify common priorities and shared interests; ○ Clarify the scope for collaborative and cooperative actions; ○ Seek concrete actions with confirmed actors where possible; ○ Introduce Chairs and Facilitators; ○ The need for participative and constructive dialogue – achieved through group working and exercises to draw out participants' experience and 'real life' examples. <p>Present the Natura 2000 process and its strategic context.</p>
10.30 to 11.00		Coffee & preparation for departure for site visits	
11.00 to 20.00	Site visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Departure from the Makedonia Palace Hotel by coach – expected journey time to first site <1 hour approx. <p>PLEASE BRING WATER, SUNSCREEN, MOSQUITO REPELLENT AND SUITABLE OUTDOOR CLOTHING, INCLUDING FOOTWEAR. ALSO, PARTICIPANTS SHOULD BRING THEIR CAMERAS AND BINOCULARS.</p>	The primary purpose here is to provide a benchmark of priority habitats as a basis for discussions in the group sessions.
	Site visits	<p>One of the most important wetlands in Greece is located on the western shoreline of the Thermaikos Gulf. The Axios - Loudias - Aliakmonas Estuaries National Park, consists of the deltas of the Axios and Aliakmonas rivers, the estuaries of the Gallikos and Loudias rivers, the Kalohori lagoon, the Nea Agathoupoli marsh and the Alyki Kitrous lagoon. This is a large complex wetland system with a total surface area of around 320 sq. kms. Thanks to the great diversity of ecological conditions – ranging from extensive rice fields, grasslands and riparian forests to salty marshes and swamps - the area makes an ideal habitat for many species of wild animals and plants.</p> <p>Together, participants will be able to see how Natura 2000 is being implemented on different sites around Thessaloniki, what challenges there are and what solutions are being applied. Also, of course, delegates will be able to network informally, share their own experiences and discuss the condition of Mediterranean priority habitats, in their countries, "in the field".</p> <p>We are extremely grateful to the Axios Management Authority for organising the site visit and also to them and their partners for arranging our guides to inform us about their work in Natura 2000 sites.</p> <p>Note that a local restaurant has been selected for lunch, which is provided as part of the programme – delegates will enjoy lunch in the beautiful coastal setting of Methoni Village.</p>	

DAY 2: Tuesday, 27th May 2014

Time	Activity	Objectives & outcomes	Description
09.00 to 09.30		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflections on Day 1 as a framework for the Habitat Group sessions. • Biogeographical region overview based on the background document and feedback from national experts. • Invited speakers will profile 'real life' experience of management approaches in priority habitats. 	<p>During the day, all delegates are invited to comment on the status of the habitats according to their experience at national/transnational levels. This will be illustrated by several case studies within each group.</p>
09.30 to 11.00	<p><u>Habitat Groups: session 1</u></p> <p>“Where are we now and where to we need to be?”</p> <p><i>The aim of this session is to develop shared understanding of the 'bigger picture' based on current experience at regional, national & local levels.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To allow group participants to meet & introduce themselves. • To provide an overview of the current status and condition of priority Mediterranean habitats from biogeographical region, national & local levels. • To grow understanding about the EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy targets to be reached and specific implications arising for their habitat. <p><i>Planned outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To allow participants to develop their ideas about how the Natura 2000 biogeographical process can help them to achieve their priorities for their habitats. • To begin to sharpen focus on the practical habitat management issues, possible solutions and proposed actions. 	<p>The key questions to discuss here, per habitat group, are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the favourable conservation status of each habitat? • Where are we now in relation to achieving the EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy targets? <p>Each habitat group will benefit from (at least) one specific site-level case study.</p> <p>CASE STUDY PRESENTATIONS:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ms Anila Shallari (France) – Wetlands; 2. Ms Vasiliki Tsiaoussi (Greece) – Wetlands; 3. Dr Lydia Alvanou (Greece) – Coastal; 4. Dr Graziano Caramori (Italy) – Coastal 5. Ms Sophie Bourlon (France) – Forests; 6. Dr Miguel Bugalho (Portugal) – Forests; 7. Dr Javier Cabello (Spain)- Grasslands; 8. Dr Jasenka Topic (Croatia) – Grasslands. <p>All delegates are invited to participate actively in the discussions, share available information, highlight gaps in knowledge and, collectively, contribute to the identification of common issues/ problems, shared priorities, scope for solutions and possible collaborative actions.</p>
11.00 to 11.30		Coffee break	
11.30 to 13.00	<p><u>Habitat Groups: session 2</u></p> <p>“What needs to be done?”</p> <p><i>Continuing from the previous session, grow understanding of how the Natura 2000 Biogeographical process can be useful for and used by participants to achieve shared interest and priorities. Start to focus on the scope for collaborative working and cooperative actions that can be usefully developed through the process.</i></p>	<p>What needs to change, what can be improved, and what new actions can be developed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to the Habitat Group section in the Seminar Document and the previous sessions' discussions, to start to prioritise issues and identify practical solutions. • To share practical habitat management experiences and identify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What works? • Where are the challenges, issues or problems? • To propose solutions where there is consensus about the need for practical habitat management actions, as well as common understanding about the steps that can be taken. • To develop solutions that evidence collaboration and cooperation between stakeholders – all inputs from stakeholders should be justified in terms of their contribution to achieving progress towards the important strategic targets for their habitats. <p><i>Planned outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To begin to develop a level of consensus about common priorities and shared interests that can or need to be addressed, relevant for each habitat group, to ensure progress towards achievement of the EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy targets. • To identify gaps to be prioritised for future consideration: equally, to note any differences of opinion that may exist. 	<p>The main purpose of this session is to discuss participants' examples and experiences of current joint-working approaches they are aware of and know to work; alternatively, where there would be value and need to develop new joint working. Reflecting also on the case study presentations, basically, two questions are posed here:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the problems? • Where is there scope for useful collaboration? <p>Ideas from current or proposals for planned projects will be shared. Examples about existing joint-working focussing on practical management knowledge sharing will be discussed – for example, strategic level initiatives (such as guidelines/ advice etc.), and policy-related initiatives, but the focus should remain on practical management collaboration opportunities.</p> <p>Areas where there are recognised gaps in know-how should be identified and discussed in terms of what practical steps can be developed to address these gaps.</p>
13.00 to 14.30		Lunch	

14.30 to 15.45	<p><u>Habitat Groups: session 3</u></p> <p>“How do we proceed?”</p> <p><i>The aim of this session is to plan desired outcomes & define cooperation or collaboration objectives.</i></p>	<p>To begin to focus discussions and develop agreement about the scope for collaboration and cooperation to take forward common interests and shared priorities, relevant to their habitat group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To agree (realistic & measurable) objectives that can be achieved appropriate for cooperation and collaboration – consider who will be involved, how they could work & what they could do/ contribute. 	<p>Building on the previous sessions, Group participants will be able to discuss (in some detail) solutions, possible actions and proposed first steps required to take forward agreed, common priorities.</p>
15.45 to 16.00		Coffee break	
16.00 to 17.30	<p><u>Habitat Groups: session 4</u></p> <p>“Planning for action – what, who, how & when”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To work together to seek commitments from within the group (where possible) to achieve the outcomes. To develop a proposed action plan for collaboration and cooperation within the Mediterranean region in terms of what, where & when. To identify and select short-term actions (coming months) and longer term actions (future years). To agree and propose tangible priority actions, which need to be taken, where possible including by whom and when. 	<p>This session will be used to sum up the key points arising from the day’s discussions, especially to capture the common priorities and shared interests where it is agreed there would be most value in developing further cooperation. Focus will be given to specific actions that aim to improve management practice and quality: also, there will be scope to include attention for relevant, identified cross-cutting issues, such as stakeholder engagement practices, communication & outreach, mitigation of and adaptation for climate change impacts etc.</p>
17.30 to 18.00		Free time/ networking	
18.00 to 20.30	<p><i>Knowledge Market</i></p>	<p>This session will be formally opened by our Seminar hosts, representatives from the Greek Ministry of Environment and the Axios Management Authority.</p> <p><i>This is an interactive session provided by stakeholders and Seminar participants to showcase their work, their materials and best practice examples.</i></p> <p><i>A buffet reception and drinks will be served during the Knowledge Market.</i></p>	<p><i>Further details of the Knowledge Market are provided below.</i></p>

Note that any concrete actions deriving from cross cutting issues will be discussed within habitat groups. Reflecting levels of interest and priority, the aim will be to firm up actions proposed for cross cutting issues of common / shared interest and avoid general discussion – only those cross-cutting issues with potential to be covered by the actors of the new biogeographical process in collaboration will be noted.

DAY 3: Wednesday, 28th May 2013

Note: 08.00 to 09.00 – Habitat Group Chairs and Facilitators will finalise their group presentations for the plenary session on Day 3.

Time	Activity	Objectives & outcomes	Description
09.15 to 09.30	Recap on Day 2 & introduction to Day 3		
09.30 to 11.00	Habitat Groups – feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentations from each of the Habitat Groups; Plenary discussion about results Confirmation of proposed recommendations. 	<p>Each Habitat Group will present an overview of the key points discussed on Day 2 and the outcomes achieved and agreed by group participants. Each Group will have been asked to propose 3 priority Seminar follow-up actions and to signal commitments to take forward these actions. The presentations will be made by the Habitat Group Chairs, supported by their facilitator.</p>
11.00 to 11.30		Coffee break	
11.30 to 12.30	Mediterranean Seminar: Closing session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To summarise outcomes and agreed, common priorities. To confirm results and concrete actions identified during the Seminar; To plan and confirm timescales for next steps. Note of thanks & close 	
12.30 to 13.00		Departures	

4.2 List of participants of the Mediterranean Kick-off Seminar

Name	Function	Organisation	Country	Email
Coastal habitat working group				
Dr Lydia Alvanou	Biodiversity Monitoring Coordinator	Management Authority of Axios, Loudios and Aliakmonas Delta	Greece	lydia.alvanou@gmail.com
Mr Vincenzo Brancato	Technical Manager PROVIDUNE Caserta	Province of Caserta	Italy	vincenzomariabrancato@provincia.caserta.it
Dr Nuno Caiola	Researcher	IRTA	Spain	nuno.caiola@irta.cat
Dr Graziano Caramori	Biologist	Istituto Delta Ecologia Applicata	Italy	grazianocaramori@istitutodelta.it
Arch Barbara Conte	Expert	Water Basin Authority	Italy	abconte@yahoo.it
Dr Andreas Demetropoulos	President / Expert	Wildlife Society	Cyprus	andrescws@gmail.com
Mr Bernie Fleming	Director	Fleming Ecology	United Kingdom	bernie@flemingecology.co.uk
Ms Myroula Hadjichristoforou	Head of the Marine Environment Division	Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment	Cyprus	mhadjichristoforou@dfmr.moa.gov.cy
Ms Zrinka Jakl	Nature Conservation Programme Coordinator	Association for Nature, Environment and Sustainable Development Sunce	Croatia	zrinka.jakl@sunce-st.org
Ms Katja Jelić	Expert Advisor for Ecological Networks	State Institute for Nature Protection	Croatia	katja.jelic@dzzp.hr
Dr Emmanouil Koutrakis	President of the Board of Directors	Fisheries Research Institute	Greece	manosk@inale.gr
Dr Liesl Torres	Chief Executive	Government of Gibraltar	United Kingdom	liesl.torres@gibraltar.gov.gi
Arch Raffaella Nappi	Head of Urban Environment Sector	Water Basin Authority	Italy	raffaella.nappi@autoritadibacino.it
Dr Panayiotis Panayiotidis	Researcher	Hellenic Centre for Marine Research	Greece	ppanag@hcmr.gr
Dr Maria Panitsa	Assistent Professor	University of Patras - Department of Environmental and Natural Resources Management	Greece	mpanitsa@upatras.gr
Mr Fotios Papoulias	Policy Coordinator	European Commission, DG Environment, Unit B.3 "Nature"	Belgium	Fotios.Papoulias@ec.europa.eu
Mr Antonio Sigismondi	Public Servant	Regional Government of Apulia	Italy	sigismondi@tin.it; a.sigismondi@regione.puglia.it
Dr Eleni Tryfon	Natura 2000 Authority	Ministry for the Environment, Energy and Climate Change	Greece	e.tryfon@prv.ypeka.gr
Mr Stephen Warr	Environment Officer	Government of Gibraltar	United Kingdom	stephen.warr@gibraltar.gov.gi
Dr Giovanni Zaccaria	Official expert	Regional Government of Apulia	Italy	g.zaccaria@regione.puglia.it

Name	Function	Organisation	Country	Email
Grasslands habitat working group				
Dr Marios Andreou	Biologist	Frederick University	Cyprus	andreoum@gmail.com
Dr Edoardo Biondi	Professor	Autonomous Province of Bozen / Bolzano	Italy	e.biondi@univpm.it
Dr Javier Cabello	Professor	Autonomous University of Madrid	Spain	jcabello@ual.es
Dr Jenny Calabrese	International Officer and Senior Researcher	Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari	Italy	calabrese@iamb.it
Dr Panayiotis Dimopoulos	Professor in Botany and Ecology	Ministry for the Environment, Energy and Climate Change	Greece	p.dimopoulos@prv.ypeka.gr
Dr Georgios Fotiadis	Scientific Collaborator	Society for the Protection of Prespa	Greece	gfotiad95@gmail.com
Daniel Goñi	Biologist / Free-lance Ecologist	Larre Consultancy	Spain	dani.larre@telefonica.net
Dr Hans van Gossum	Project Manager Environmental Policy	ARCADIS Belgium	Belgium	h.VanGossum@arcadisbelgium.be
Mr Stephen Grady	Senior European Adviser	Joint Nature Conservation Committee, JNCC	United Kingdom	Stephen.Grady@jncc.gov.uk
Dr Apostolos Kyriazopoulos	Assistant Professor	University of Thrace - School of Forestry and Management of Environment and Natural Resources	Greece	apkyriaz@fmenr.duth.gr
Mr Ludovic Le Maresquier		European Commission, DG Environment, Unit B.3 "Nature"	Belgium	ludovic.le-maresquier@ec.europa.eu
Dr Domingos Leitão	Coordinator Terrestrial Programme	Society for the Study of Birds	Portugal	domingos.leitao@spea.pt
Mr Federico Minozzi	Policy Officer	Europarc Federation	Germany	f.minozzi@europarc.org
Dr Dimitar Ouzounov	Scientific Expert (Botanist)	Univeristy of the Marche	Italy	uzunovd@gmail.com
Mr Kyriakos Skordas	Office Director	Hunting Federation of Macedonia and Thrace	Greece	skordas@hunters.gr
Prof. Dr Jasenka Topić	University Professor, retired	University of Zagreb	Croatia	jasenka.topic@gmail.com
Ms Liliana Virtopeanu	Councillor	Ministry of Environment and Climate Change	Romania	liliana.virtopeanu@mmediu.ro
Dr Michael Vrahnakis	Chair	European Dry Grassland Group	Germany	mvrahnak@teilar.gr
Freshwater and wetlands habitat working group				
Dr Susanna D'Antoni	National Natura 2000 expert	Institute for Environmental Protection and Research	Italy	susanna.dantoni@isprambiente.it
Dr Antonio Camacho	Professor	University of Valencia	Spain	Antonio.Camacho@uv.es
Dr Thomas Galewski	Project Manager	Tour du Valat, Research centre for the conservation of Mediterranean wetlands	France	galewski@tourduvalat.org
Mr Thomas Hadjikyriakou	Manager	Akrotiri Environmental Education and Information Centre	Cyprus	akrotiricentre@cytanet.com.cy
Mr Rafael Hidalgo	Head of Protected Natural Areas	Ministry of the Environment, and Rural and Marine Affairs, Directorate-General of Natural Environment and Forest Policy	Spain	Rhidalgom@magrama.es
Mr Neil McIntosh	Deputy Director	European Centre for Nature Conservation	Netherlands	mcintosh@ecnc.org

Name	Function	Organisation	Country	Email
Mr Napoleon Piakis-Chantzievangelou	Researcher / Biologist	Management Body Nestos Delta-Vistonida-Ismarida	Greece	piakisn@fd-nestosvistonis.gr
Dr Ana Rainho	Head of Unit for Biodiversity Conservation	Institute for Nature Conservation and Forests	Portugal	anarainho@icnf.pt
Ms Gema Rodriguez	Biodiversity Policy Officer	European Habitats Forum - WWF Spain	Spain	grodriguez@wwf.es
Dr Francisco Sanchez Aguado		European Environmental Agency	Denmark	Francisco.Sanchez@eea.europa.eu
Dr Anila Shallari	Administrator	League for the Protection of Birds (Birdlife Partner)	France	anilashallari@yahoo.it
Mr Mark Snethlage	Senior Project Manager	European Centre for Nature Conservation	Netherlands	snetlage@ecnc.org
Dr Jaume Tormo	Network Project Manager	Eurosite	Netherlands	jtormo@eurosite.org
Ms Vasiliki Tsiaoussi	Head, Department of Biotic Resources and Management of Natural Areas	Greek Biotope Wetland Centre (EKBY)	Greece	vasso@ekby.gr
Ms Stella Varelzidou	Scientific Coordinator and Director	Management Authority of Axios, Loudios and Aliakmonas Delta	Greece	stella@axiosdelta.gr
Ms Marina Xenophontos	Environment Officer	Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment	Cyprus	m Xenophontos@environment.moa.gov.cy
Dr Ierotheos Zacharias	Assistant Professor	University of Patras - Department of Environmental and Natural Resources Management	Greece	izachari@upatras.gr
Forests habitat working group				
Ms Sophie Bourlon	Natura 2000 Project Manager	Luberon Regional Nature Park	France	sophie.bourlon@parcduluberon.fr
Ms Marie-Alice Budniok	Director of Legal and Administrative Affairs	European Landowners Organisation	Belgium	legal@elo.org
Dr Miguel Bugalho	Researcher and Forest Officer	University of Lisbon	Portugal	mbugalho@wwfmedpo.org
Ms Sarah Combalbert	Natura 2000 scientific expert	Ministry of Ecology, Energy, Sustainable Development and Spatial Planning	France	sarah.combalbert@developpement-durable.gouv.fr
Mr Panayiotis Drougas	Natura 2000 authority	Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change - Special Secretariat for Forests	Greece	p.drougas@prv.ypeka.gr
Ir François Kremer	Policy Coordinator Natura 2000	European Commission, DG Environment, Unit B.3 "Nature"	Belgium	Francois.Kremer@ec.europa.eu
Mr Johan Lammerant	Business Development Manager	ARCADIS Belgium	Belgium	J.Lammerant@arcadisbelgium.be
Dr José A. Mejías Gimeno	Lecturer in Plant Biology	University of Seville	Spain	jmejias@us.es
Dr Aristotelis Papageorgiou	Associate Professor	University of Thrace - School of Forestry and Management of Environment and Natural Resources	Greece	apapage@fmenr.duth.gr
Mr Constantinos Papasavvas	Forester	Forest Association	Cyprus	cpapasavvas@yahoo.gr
Dr Konstantinos Papaspyropoulos		Hunting Federation of Macedonia and Thrace	Greece	kodafype@hunters.gr
Dr Katerina Raftopoulou	LIFE Monitoring Team	Astrale South East Europe: Greece, Cyprus, Bulgaria	Greece	katerina.raftopoulou@astrale.org
Dr Ioannis Tsiripidis	Assistant Professor	University of Thessaloniki - School of Biology	Greece	tsiripid@bio.auth.gr

Name	Function	Organisation	Country	Email
Not participating in habitat working groups				
Mr Olivier Argagnon	Botanical Expert, PNR Porquerolles	National Mediterranean Botanical Conservatory of Porquerolles	France	o.argagnon@cbnmed.fr
Dr Coralie Beltrame	Project Manager	Tour du Valat, Research centre for the conservation of Mediterranean wetlands	France	beltrame@tourduvalat.org
Mr George Glossis	Mayor of Delta Municipality	Delta Municipality	Greece	
Mr Theodoros Karaoglou	Minister of Macedonia and Thrace	Ministry of Macedonia and Thrace	Greece	
Emeritus Professor Themistoklis Kouimtzis, A.U.TH.	President	Management Authority of Axios, Loudios and Aliakmonas Delta	Greece	
Ms Irene Koutseri	Conservation and Research Sector Coordinator	Society for the Protection of Prespa	Greece	i.koutseri@spp.gr
Ms Foteini Tsavdaroglou		Management Authority of the Lakes Koronia and Volvi	Greece	
Mr Apostolos Tzitzikostas	Governor	Region of Central Macedonia	Greece	

4.3 List of organisations and projects presented at the Information Market

The “Knowledge Market” offered the possibility for Member State and stakeholder representatives to present best practice examples from nature protection activities with a specific focus on Natura 2000. This included: presentation of management plans; ongoing or concluded LIFE projects; stakeholder integration activities; regional, national or local initiatives for Natura 2000; display of posters, maps and other relevant materials; dissemination of guidance, information resources or other literature; and, display of posters. The aim was to share news about those activities and initiatives which target improving the quality and practices of nature conservation in Natura 2000 areas, or the wider landscape. This interactive session was designed to stimulate discussion between Seminar participants, share and gather information, and to provide useful inputs for further projects, collaborations and co-operations.

Apulia Region, Italy

Biomap Project; GRASTEPP tra Gravine e Steppe.

Presented by: Giovanni Zaccaria

Autorità di Bacino, Italy

Power point and publications.

Presented by: Raffaella Nappi

Axios Delta Management Authority, Greece

1. Lessons learned from the application of the Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation in Axios Loudias Aliakmonas National Park: the example of garbage strategy.

2. Integrated management actions for the conservation of wetland biodiversity threatened by residential development planning within a Natura 2000 site.

3. Spatial Planning & Protected Areas Management: The case of the Kalochori lagoon in Thessaloniki.

Presented by: Stella Vareltzidou

Conservation Coaches Network - Europe

Poster on the Application of the Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation for Protected Area Management, Cross Site Learning and Programme Management. Examples of application in print.

Presented by: Stella Vareltzidou

Cyprus Forest Association, Cyprus

Restoration possibilities of endemic forest fragments with *Juniperus* spp. in Cyprus.

Presented by: Konstantinos Papasavvas

Cyprus Wildlife Society, Cyprus

Power point presentation on the Cyprus Turtle Conservation Project (Methods and Results).

Presented by: Andreas Demetropoulos

Delta Nestos-Vistonida-Ismarida Management Body, Greece

1. A poster about an ongoing program evaluating the impact of the growth of the Great Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) population on the ichthyofauna of the coastal lagoons of the East Macedonia-Trace National Park.
 2. Tourist maps of our National Park. Demonstration of a relative application for smartphones.
 3. Demonstration of material from an ongoing project labelling the quality of products and services from companies that operate within the boundaries of our National Park.
 4. Popular species identification guides of the Park's most important species and habitats in Greek and in English.
 5. Atlas of River Nestos Fish Fauna.
 6. A presentation about a unique remnant of the Great Riparian Forest of the Nestos River, the Riparian Forest of Keramoti (91F0) will be screened on a laptop.
- Presented by: Napoleon Piakis-Chantzievangelou

Department of Environment, Cyprus

Power point for Coastal (breeding sites of the sea turtle) and Wetlands conservation status (LIFE OROKLINI).

Presented by: Marina Xenophontos

European Landowners Organization & Natura 2000 Users Forum

Best practices. Presentation of projects and initiatives, leaflets, posters, and a short video.

Presented by: Marie-Alice Budniok

Eurosite

Presentation of LandLife project, leaflets

Presented by: Jaume Tormo

Greek Biotope Wetland Centre, Greece

1. ORIENTGATE - A network for the integration of climate knowledge into policy and planning., Case study: Effects of climate change on wetland ecosystems of Attica Region of Greece (power point presentation and a leaflet).

2. Project name: ADAPTFOR -Adaptation of forest management to climate change in Greece (LIFE). Four pilot studies in Greece (poster).

Presented by: Vasiliki Tsiaoussi

Hunting Federation of Macedonia and Thrace, Greece

Stakeholders undertake wildlife habitat improvement actions. The case of hunting organisations in Greece.

Presented by: Kyriakos Skordas

Hunting Federation of Macedonia and Thrace, Greece

Impact of Hunting Federation's Gamewarden on Environmental Law Enforcement.

Presented by: Konstantinos Papaspyropoulos

Lake Kerkini Management Authority, Greece

1. Actions for the Protection and Promotion of Lake Kerkini National Park.

2. Books, leaflets, photo-posters.

Presented by: Chryssanthi Intzidou

Luberon Regional Natural Park, France

Case study "Management and protection actions to maintain and restore the Luberon regional natural park forest's quality and high biodiversity: focus on network of leave islands".

Presented by: Sophie Bourlon

Management Authority of Lakes Koronia and Volvi, Greece

Presentation of the results of the 4 years implementation of the program concerning the supervision of the lakes Koronia Volvi National Park. Implications for further actions.

Presented by: Foteini Tsavdaroglou

Management Authority of Lakes Koronia and Volvi, Greece

Monitoring program of surface water of the lakes Koronia and Volvi. Proposals for further management actions.

Presented by: Marios Asteriou

Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari (MAIB) / International Centre for Advanced Studies on Mediterranean Agriculture (CIHEAM), Italy

Publications (printed)

Presented by: Generosa Calabrese

National Centre for Marine Research (HCMR), Greece

Power point presentation on the coastal habitat types in the Greek Natura 2000 network of sites.

Presented by: Panayotidis Panayotis

Nature Conservation Unit-Frederick University, Greece

Improving the conservation status of the priority habitat types *1520 and *5220 at the Rizoelia National Forest Park' (LIFE12 NAT/CY/000758).

Presented by: Marios Andreou

Society for the Protection of Prespa, Greece

Wetland and Habitat management in Natura 2000 sites of the Prespa basin (also at the transboundary level): Presenting various publications (leaflets, reports, studies, maps, poster) from LIFE projects in the Prespa area, Natura 2000 mapping, Action Plans, decision-making structures, agro-environmental issues, etc) produced by the Society for the Protection of Prespa (local NGO).

Presented by: Irene Koutseri

State Institute for Nature Protection, Croatia

Interpretation manual for determination of terrestrial habitats according to the Habitats Directive.

Interpretation manual for determination of marine habitats according to the Habitats Directive.

Poster: Natura 2000 in Croatia

Presented by: Katja Jelić

University of Seville, Spain

1. Research Group EVOCA (Spain) on Conservation: A diversity of Approaches (power point presentation).
2. Persistence by clonal growth in threatened relict populations of *Rhododendron ponticum* (poster).

Presented by: José A. Mejías