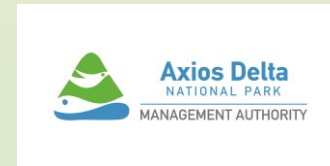




Natura 2000 Biogeographical Process Mediterranean Kick-off Seminar

Thessaloniki, 26 – 28 May 2014

Grasslands Working Group



*Natura 2000 Biogeographical Process
Mediterranean Region*

Introductions



Chair:

Dr Panayotis Dimopoulos, University of Patras, Professor in Botany and Ecology

Facilitator:

Hans Van Gossom, ARCADIS, Project Manager Environmental Policy



*Natura 2000 Biogeographical Process
Mediterranean Region*

Identifying the state-of-art: selected Habitats and their conservation status

- 3 true grassland types, 1 shrub (and more of continental origin)
- Several other grassland types require attention
- Enlarge grassland group with scrubs?



Identifying the state-of-art: main issues and problems

- Main issue: either too intens or even more no grazing at all. Traditional agricultural practices are not maintained.

- Pressures:

Fragmentation

Unregulated and overgrazing

Afforestation/succession

Wild boar and wolves

Urbanisation and tourism

Intensified agriculture

Invasive non-native species

Climate change

Depopulation/repopulation

Mining/energy power production

Pollution (e.g. nitrogen)

Fire



Identifying the state-of-art: Management and collaborative practices

- Features, values and context varies between countries. Seek generalities, but consider site-specific needs
- Traditional extensive management schemes; extensive grazing; farming at low intensity, low
- Provide variety in structure and composition, both on macro and micro scale; a balanced approach
- High nature value farming; valuable natural products
- Exclusive nature tourism
- Positive discrimination: people to appreciate services nature provide and the beauty of their natural heritage
- Land management agreements; bottom-up approach



Identifying the state-of-art: case study examples

Presentation of two case studies:

- *The ecosystem functioning dimension in Natura 2000 habitats: a monitoring approach based on remote sensing*
 - **Dr Javier Cabello**, University of Almería, Spain
- *The impact of tourism and population policy on grasslands of Mediterranean area*
 - **Dr Jasenka Topic**, Univ. prof., retired, Croatia



Knowledge	Management	Network	Advice to governments
Lack of information: which nature do we have?	Appropriate intensity of grazing, while providing economic return	Known information is not present where it should be (AA, farmers)	Money under CAP used for Natura2000, include Natura2000 angle in rural development scheme
Lacking data on climate change: threat or opportunity	Fire as a threat, but if controlled as a solution.	Guidance on Farming and Natura 2000	Demographics and changing attitudes: have people living in rural areas. Incentives, subsidiary programs
Which reference values for favorable conservation status	Big animals: wild boar, wolves Inappropriate use of grazing animal types (too many cows)	Positive discrimination: Ecosystem services and being proud about natural heritage	Too little exclusive nature tourism
Grazing (intensity, when, duration,)	High nature value farming; valuable natural products Exclusive nature tourism	Connect with people in the field, not only stakeholder representatives; bottom-up approach	Have grazing covered by appropriate assessment
Monitor human activities	Buying seeds outside of EU for restoration	Suggesting alternative less damaging agricultural practices	Include grazing in forest management plan considering the role of forestry in Medit.

Engagement 1: guidance document farming and Natura 2000

Who?	European Commission (indicated by Mr. Ludovic Le Maresquier)
Why?	To provide guidance on how to deal with farming and Natura 2000
How? Actions	Dissemination of guidance document through communication platform and other fora.
Timing	Forthcoming



Engagement 2: share knowledge on monitoring

Who?	Dr. Javier Cabello, Mr. Daniel Goñi
Why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve monitoring strategies and help understand conditions and pressures/threats of habitats of community interest in the Mediterranean region• To compare and contrast different approaches in approaching FCS and Favorable Reference Values to reach more consistency in the Mediterranean region (a sort of “ideal”).
What and how?	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Share knowledge on monitoring strategies and discuss FCS2. 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)
Timing	Starting early October with e-mail to Grassland group and other potentially interested parties.

Engagement 3: networking for grassland management

Who?	Dr. Jenny Calabrese, Dr. Domingos Leitão, Mr. Kyriakos Skordas, Dr. Michael Vrahnakis
Why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To create a better connection between EC, management authorities and stakeholders on documents and common decisions• To better adapt and apply to local conditions the indications of the Guidance document on farming in Natura 2000• To share ideas, lessons learnt, best practices, on how to achieve conservation results in grassland areas• To present success stories to stakeholders and wider public
How? Actions	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Produce a document introducing need of networking on grassland management2. Post document on the Natura 2000 Platform and discuss it in local forums and groups, like the Grassland Symposium in Greece.3. 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.4. Propose practical activities to EC to be funded by EU programs. These activities aim to show success cases in Natura 2000 management and gains to local communities.
Timing	Action 1 will start now and action 2 will start next September. Action 3 will be developed until the end of 2014. Action 4 must be planned for 2015.

Engagement 4: Networking for best-practices

Who?	Dr. Dimitar Ouzounov – Chlora website
Why?	Finding ways to have (potential) inhabitants and (potential) tourists being attracted to live in or visit rural areas
What and how?	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Networking for best-practices on tourism in grasslands and on how to counter abandonment of land through for example production of valuable natural products2. E-mail – Skype – Chlora website
Timing	Starting in October



Engagement 5: Technical workshops on management

Who?	Dr. Panayotis Dimopoulos, Dr. Georgios Fotiadis, Dr. Michael Vrahnakis, Dr. Jasenka Topic, Dr. Pezco Conezo, Dr. Dimitar Ouzounou, Dr. Marios Andreou, Dr. Ioannis Tsiripids
Why?	To identify and prioritize concrete actions for Natura 2000 Mediterranean grasslands habitat types
How?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Having workshops in the coming year to pick up the technical discussion on managing grassland sites• Any advice on opportunities for funding travel expenses is most welcome
Timing	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Workshop 1: mid-late October 2014 in Greece in Prespa National Park2. Workshop 2: April 2015 in Italy in Conero - Ancona



Engagement 6: Project application under Interreg

Who?	Dr. Panayotis Dimopoulos, Dr. Eduardo Biondi, Dr Dimitar Ouzounou, Dr. Jasenka Topic, Dr. Georgios Fotiadis, Dr. Marios Andreou, Dr. Apostolos Kyriazopoulos, Dr. Ioannis Tsiripidis
Why?	Problematic Management in (East and West) Mediterranean countries
What and how?	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Initiate group involving private and public sector with scientific support by scientific institutions2. Interreg (IPA) project
Timing	IPA call is not open yet. Proposals can be submitted to the IPA ADRIATIC CBC Program solely during the period when a public call for proposals is open.



