

**HELLENIC MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, PHYSICAL PLANNING
AND PUBLIC WORKS**

**NATIONAL STRATEGY
FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, 2002
GREECE**

PROGRESS REPORT

DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS & E.U. AFFAIRS

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1. CLIMATE CHANGE AND CLEAN ENERGY¹

Meeting Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction Targets

The Ministry for the Environment, Physical Planning and Public Works (MEPPPW) drew up the *National Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emission Reduction Programme 2000-2010* in 2002. The 1st *National Allocation Plan for Greenhouse Gas Emission Allowances* for the period 2005-2007, including 139 installations, has been approved by the European Commission (EC) and has currently being implemented. The 2nd *National Plan* for the period 2008-2012 included 150 installations and was submitted to the EC on the 1st of September 2006. The Commission approved the Plan in November 2006 but asked for further reductions of the order of 8,5% by the participating installations. These reductions amount to allowances of 6,4 tonnes CO₂ equivalent per year. The total average annual emissions allowances amounts to 69,1 tonnes CO₂ equivalent. The MEPPPW will allocate the allowances of the 2nd *National Allocation Plan* shortly.

At the same time, MEPPPW is concluding the study for the revision of the *National Programme for Climate Change* of 1995. Moreover, the institutional framework for the management and updating of the electronic Registry of emissions' trading allowances has been concluded with the setting up of the *Bureau for GHG Emissions Trading* within the MEPPPW and the assignment of the Registry's management to the *National Centre for the Environment and Sustainable Development (NCESD)*. Thus, all the EU Directives pertinent to the Registry have been transposed into the Greek Law.

Clean Energy

Greece's energy policy in recent years has been largely based on actions for the development of domestic energy market. These actions focused on domestic energy market liberalisation, reduction of energy intensity, exploitation of Renewable Energy Sources (RES) and the introduction of biofuel use, especially in the transport sector. Concurrently, and within the *Energy Policy for Europe* context, our country is part of the major international natural gas, electricity and oil networks, through the participation to energy works in the broader area of Southeast Europe. Some of such very significant works that have been or are constructed are the Burgas-Alexandroupolis oil pipeline, the Greece-Italy natural gas pipeline as well as the interconnections of the electricity grids of Greece to the ones of other neighbouring countries.

Measures/Actions to address Climate Change

Those measures that have been integrated into the relevant sectoral policies (energy saving measures, RES use, further penetration of natural gas etc) and that are promoted through the implementation of the Third Community Support Framework (CSF) Operational Programmes, deal with the stabilization of greenhouse gas emissions, especially the carbon dioxide ones. Moreover, procedures are underway for the fulfillment of obligations arising from the *Vienna Convention*, the *Montreal Protocol* and *Regulation 2037/2000/EC*, through the planning and implementation of a programme to replace ozone layer depleting substances.

¹ *Contributes to meeting the targets of paragraph 38 of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI)*

Energy saving Measures/Actions

Greece is the first EU Member State to adopt the Green Bible on Energy Conservation, in June 2005, while it has already consented on the European Action Plan for Energy Efficiency that has been recently (EU Environment Ministers' Council, 23.11.2006) adopted containing the same quantitative and qualitative targets for energy savings as the Bible.

However, the country's energy intensity remains fairly high, despite the measures and actions taken for its reduction. The higher intensity rates are observed in the households and transport sectors. The households' sector in particular is responsible for almost 40% of the total final energy consumption. The MEPPPW has drawn up a specific *Action Plan for Energy Efficiency and Savings*, encompassing technical measures (promotion of solar technologies and bioclimatic architecture, boilers' maintenance etc) as well as institutional measures (new thermal-insulation regulation, enactment of energy identity of buildings, promotion of the transposing of Directive 2002/91/EC on the energy performance of buildings, measures for savings in the industrial sector etc) of which many are underway or are already in the implementation phase. With regard to the transport sector, it constitutes the primary consumer of imported hydrocarbons in Greece, both for public and goods transportation. The Hellenic Ministry of Transport and Communications is promoting a wide series of measures in support of public transportation while implementing concerted action plans for the improvement of city traffic flow, using traffic control systems. Moreover, measures for the use of alternative transportation means, such as the bicycle, have been implemented.

Energy Mix

The country's energy mix still retains to a great extent the characteristics of previous years with hydrocarbons, i.e. oil and natural gas, as its core components, 99% of which are imported. With regard to natural gas, infrastructure for its penetration has been constructed, especially in central and northern Greece, while the transposition of EU Directive 2003/55/EC for the liberalization of the natural gas market has already been completed by the Law 3428/2005 and the setting up of the Hellenic Transmission System Operator for natural Gas, with Presidential Decree 33/20.2.2007.

Power Generation The national capacity was extended in late years mainly through thermal station and RES projects on Greek territory, coupled with energy transport infrastructure works for the import of the required power from neighboring countries under transnational agreements, thus improving the stability of the system. Nevertheless, lignite remains the primary domestic fuel covering 55,9% of the total energy needs in 2005, with oil accounting for the 13,5% of the needs especially in non-interconnected autonomous island systems, natural gas 12,9%, RES 11,8%, and import-export accounting for 5,8%.

Progress has been achieved in the dissemination of RES, especially of wind energy. The drawing up of the *Special Framework for the Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development for the Renewable Energy Sources* is at its finalization phase and is anticipated to provide a new and dynamic push to RES penetration. Moreover, the Law 3468/2006 has introduced strong economic incentives and has set up a simplified permitting system for the implementation of large projects regarding co-generation,

RES and energy savings in the country, thus making plausible the achievement of the RES target of 20,1% by 2010. These projects provide financial incentives for private energy investments in co-generation, renewable and energy saving systems and contribute substantially to the fulfillment of the country's commitments under the Kyoto Protocol.

Biofuels

With the objective of biofuel penetration in the Greek petroleum market, the Greek national legal order was harmonized, in 2005, with the current into force European legislation (Directives 2003/30, 2003/96, 2003/17) and is now establishing an annual *Biofuel Allocation Programme*, in order to allow for exemption from special consumption tax for certain quantities of biofuels. In 2006, it was decided to convert two sugar manufacturing plants into bioethanol manufacturing plants. In parallel, Greece submitted to the EC its national progress Report on biofuels penetration according to the initially set plausible target of 0,7% by 2005, while efforts are being intensified to achieve the indicative target of 5,75 % by 2010. However, the production capacity and use of biofuels is still low, due to the limited interest for business development in new manufacturing units and the current low investment rate in the production of raw materials.

2. SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

Road Transport

Today, road transport accounts for 2/3 of the demand for transport activity for the movement of people and goods.

Greece's main objective is the development of the Trans-European Road Network (TERN) based on modern specifications, with priorities such as the Patra-Athens-Thessaloniki-Evzoni (PATHE) axis system, Egnatia Road and its major vertical axes, the Central Greece Highway, the Corinth-Tripolis-Kalamata/Sparta axis, the north and south Road Axis of Crete.

It should be stressed that in Greece, the environmental dimension has, since many years, been incorporated in the design of the transport networks and junctions, as a basic prerequisite for their financing and construction.

The total length of the intercity road network of the country today totals approximately 40.000km, 10.000km of which constitute the National Road Network (NRN) part of which belongs to the Trans-European Road Network (TERN). After the completion of the additional, already planned projects – such as the basic axes of the Ionian Road and the Central Greece Highway (E65) – the total length of the Trans-European Network in Greece will rise to approximately 3000 km, 2000km of which will be operational by the end of 2008 and the rest will be completed within the 2007-2013 period.

Track-based Transport Modes

Greece is investing significantly into the development of a rail system which will be integrated in the Trans-European Rail Network and which will contribute to the objectives of the Common Transport Policy and to the sustainable development of the

sector. Recent years' developments include:

- The institutional and operational separation between rail infrastructure and rail operations.
- Investment of about 3 billion € in the development of rail infrastructure, through the Operational Programme "*Railways, Airports, Urban Transport*". These projects include the upgrading of the total length of the PATHE/P line (Patra-Athens-Thessaloniki-Evzoni/Promahonas, 74% of the total length of the network) which is essentially the core of the country's railway network, and the railway connection with the principal port of the country (Piraeus – N. Iconio).
- Development of the Suburban Railway connecting Athens with the El. Venizelos International Airport as well as to the broader Attica region.
- Creation of the institutional framework for the Development of Distribution Parks in the country (Law 3333/2005) as well as preparatory activities for the construction of the Distribution Park at the Thriasio Pedio area.
- Planning for the construction of rail connections to the ports of Thessaloniki, Patra, Lavrion etc.

Transport Safety

Statistics show significant reduction of about 20% in road accident fatalities during 2000-2005. Efforts are continued and are intensified in view of the ultimate goal. Nevertheless, there is still room for the improvement of road safety. The national target coincides with the European target, to halve road accident fatalities by 2010, compared to the year 2000. A package of measures and actions in recent years aims at further reductions of accidents. Some of those measures include: the completion of the *Strategic Action Plan for Road Safety 2006-2010*, the modernisation of the institutional framework for the promotion of road safety through its informative and educational character (modification of the Road Traffic Regulations, point system etc), implementation of specific measures for safe movement of Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGV), road safety educational activities for students, awareness raising activities for the public.

Air pollution

At the national level, increases in concentrations of acidic pollutants and ozone precursor substances have been restricted, a fact that shows a partial decoupling of emissions from GDP growth.

Urban Transport

In urban centres, where pollution comes mainly from the transport sector, a long term downward trend of carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides and sulphur dioxide has been observed. On the other hand concentrations of ozone and PM₁₀ particulate matters have been stabilized at relatively high levels. Part of pollution from particulates is of natural origin and a study has been commissioned for the assessment of the contribution rates to this pollution from dust transported from the Sahara desert. An array of measures and actions for the reduction of pollutant emissions from the transport sector are being implemented including:

- Intensification of roadworthiness vehicle tests and extension of the tests to motorcycles.
- Establishment of the proper legal framework (Law 3534/2007), granting permits

for the use of hybrid cars as taxis, providing exemptions from circulation taxes and allowing circulation within the inner ring road of Athens.

- Development of integrated public transport management systems in Athens and Thessaloniki, within the framework of the New Traffic Maps of cities.
- Development of the tram network in the broader Athens region.
- Procurement of 416 natural gas buses (CNG), 283 clean technology Euro III diesel buses, 140 new technology electrically powered trolleybuses.
- Installation and operation of a telematic system for the better traffic and energy management of the fleet.

Noise Pollution

Noise is also a significant source of pollution. Action Plans have already been conducted for 12 municipalities especially in the Attica region (following the transposition in 2006 of Directive 2002/49/EC on the assessment and management of environmental noise). Moreover the preparation has commenced for noise maps and action plans for the Municipalities of Athens and Thessaloniki, as well as for the mapping of major road and rail axes and airports in accordance with the requirements of the Directive. Threshold values for noise indicators will also be established.

3. SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION ²

Product and service labeling – Information Tools

Programmes, inter alia, for the funding of several organizations for EMAS and ISO14001 certification as well as for the awarding of the Eco-Label are being implemented under the 3rd CSF.

Environmental Management Systems

In recent years, the register of EMAS certified organisations is growing rapidly. The number of registered organisations has jumped from 1 in January 2001, to 10 in January 2004, to 51 in January 2007. Registered organisations come from diverse business areas, mainly of the secondary sector. Moreover, environmental services companies have been added to the registry and the Public Sector has started showing interest as well. The Annual European EMAS awards ceremony was organized in Athens in 2006, during which the European Commission granted to our country the award for Member State with the largest increase in registrations among old Member States.

In the meantime, enterprises from all sectors (Manufacturing, Services, Trade, Tourism) have been receiving funding for the development, and ISO 14001 certification, of Environmental Management Systems. An increasing interest from businesses has been observed as 180 enterprises have been included in the latest round of the pertinent call of the Operational Programme “Competitiveness” of the 3rd CSF.

Law 3325/2005 requires companies from the Attica region whose operation carries significant environmental effects to establish and achieve EMAS or ISO14001

² *Contribution to meeting the objectives of Chapter III of the Johannesburg Action Plan*

certification by 2010.

The European Eco-Label

The *European Eco-Label* has been awarded to 131 products from 21 companies and to 2 services (hotels). With regard to the total number of labels that have been awarded to Greek companies' products, our country is ranked 4th among EU Member States. Emphasis is also placed on further promoting and publicizing the Eco-label.

Integrated Product Policy and Green Public Procurement

With regard to Integrated Product Policy (IPP), specific collaborative projects between the private sector and Universities have been developed, in sectors such as the ecological design and alternative management of telecommunication devices, adoption and implementation of sustainable construction principles from construction companies. At the central government level, the definition of national policy priorities and the compilation of the national report to be sent to the EU are under way. With regard to multinationals' social and environmental performance, a Department has been established within the Ministry of Economy and Finance, with the remit to implement the OECD Guidelines on the environmental and social responsibility of multinational companies.

The promotion of Green Public Procurement (GPP) is still at a primary stage. Some European projects for the promotion of GPP to Local Authorities have been implemented since 2003. At the central government level, the MEPPPW has taken up some initiatives to promote procedures for the drawing up of a *National Action Plan for GPP*, in collaboration with other competent Ministries (Ministry for Development, Ministry of Economy and Finance, Ministry for the Interior, Public Administration and Decentralization)

Environmental Technologies

The general framework for tenders of technical works, studies, research programmes, etc., in Greece, places emphasis on environmental protection issues, energy saving and the promotion of renewable energy sources. Hence, there is a supportive environment for the implementation of innovative technological solutions which help to prevent and combat pollution and save energy and raw materials. The first *Strategic Plan for the Development of Research, Technology and Innovation* was presented by the Ministry of Development in September 2006, with an aim to assist in the formation of the pertinent actions of the Regional and Operational Programmes of the 3rd CSF and to align them with the national objectives. Moreover, the MEPPPW in collaboration with other competent Ministries (Ministry of Development, Ministry of Economy and Finance etc) coordinated the preparation of the *National Road Map*. This Road Map, completed in January 2006, deals with our country's activities in the main areas of the Environmental Technologies Action Plan (ETAP) of the EU.

Since the Development Law 3299/2004 was put into force and up to now, 22 investment plans for the generation of electricity from renewable sources with a total budget of 211,6 million € have been approved. The core research activities, the promotion of the modernization of the public and private bodies and the development of environmental technologies are financed mainly by the 3rd CSF and the Programme

of Public Investments. The Programme of Public Investments provides financing of 9,8 million € for 180 bodies in the field of research, technology and industry, which promote the creation of a Greek platform, aiming at environmental protection and more specifically at the implementation of new technologies in industrial enterprises.

4. CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES³

Water resources

The national actions deal with the implementation of the Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC and the provisions of the new Common Agricultural Policy. The Central Water Authority is already operational (within the MEPPPW) as the 13 Regional Water Directorates do, one per Region, in order to coordinate the integrated management of water resources at country level. The water resources management plans for each of the country's 14 Water Regions will be completed within 2007, the results of which will form a comprehensive instrument for qualitative and quantitative analysis of water resource management policies.

Agricultural activity lies first in the list of water users with an 87% rate. Actions to reduce loss of irrigation water have been supported by the 3rd CSF and better irrigation practices are being gradually promoted through land-improvement works. Meanwhile, studies for irrigation water costing are either completed or underway in various regions of the country (Pinios River, Chania plain, etc).

Today, almost 95% of the population of the country is connected to water-mains, and the trend for this rate is to go higher. The quality of swimming waters is steadily improving, as shown by the increase in the percentage of coastal areas lying within the required limits; from 98,7% in 1998 to 99,4% in 2002 and to 99,9% in 2006. Progress is also made in the control of pollution from urban waste water. Almost 85% of the population of the country's settlements is connected to sewage systems, nevertheless closer monitoring of the systems and staff training are still required. Actions to improve sludge management include the construction of a large-scale sludge drying centre at the waste water treatment plant of Psitalia. With regard to actions for wastewater reuse for irrigation from the output of the wastewater treatment plants, some isolated, local scale activities have been reported (Halastra – Kalohori area). Yet, the national legal framework for water reuse is still pending.

In order to control non-point source pollution, an increasing number of areas of agricultural land are included in nitrate pollution reduction programmes. Following the Action Plans approved before 2003 for the Thessaly Plain, the Kopaida Plain, the Argolic Plain and the Pinios of Ilia basin, similar action plans were approved in 2006 for the Thessaloniki plain, the Strimonas basin and the area of the Arta-Preveza plain. Furthermore, and beyond compliance with the Directive 91/676/EEC on the protection of waters against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources, the agri-environmental programme "*Reduction of nitrate pollution from agricultural sources*" is being implemented since 1995 as part of the rural development policy.

³ Contribution to achieving the objectives of Chapter 4 of the Johannesburg Declaration and, mainly those objectives mentioned in paragraphs 25,32,39,41 and 42

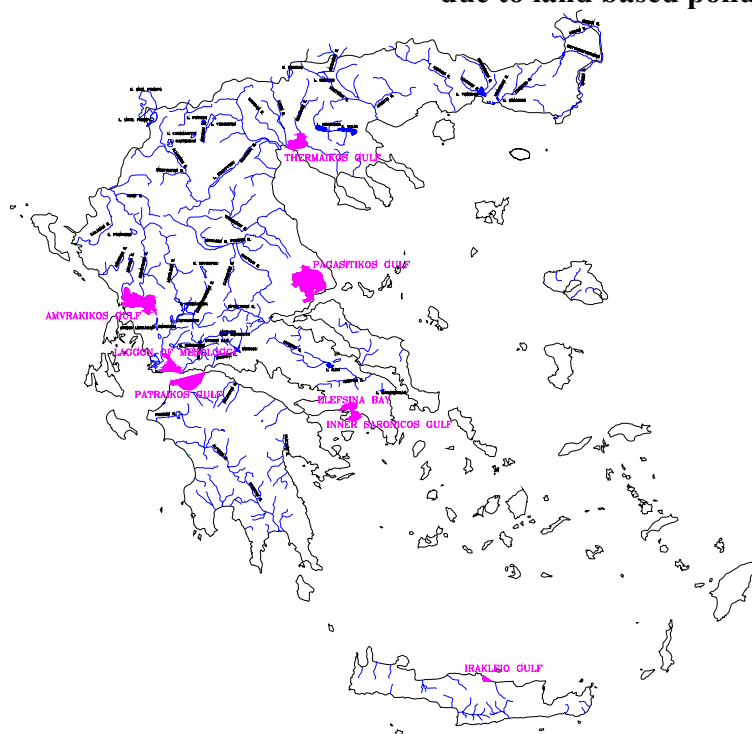
Contracts to enter the programme for 24.800ha of agricultural land were signed between 2001 and 2004, whereas between 2005 and 2006 the contracts corresponded to 112.800ha, a 330% growth rate in two years. The programme is expected to continue during the 2007-2013 Programming Period, with an expansion to new areas such as the Prefectures of Thessaloniki, Kilkis, Pella, Imathia and Serres.

The overall objective of the implemented measures for the wetland resources was their rational use for sustainable development, in parallel with the conservation of the wetland biodiversity and the cultural heritage, taking into account that since 2002 six wetlands have been designated as Protected Areas at the national level.

Marine environment – Fishery resources

A *National Diagnostic Analysis* for the identification of the major national challenges with regard to sea-pollution from land based sources and activities was carried out in the period 2004-2005. On this basis, a National Action Plan was drafted within the framework of the implementation of the pertinent *Protocol of the Barcelona Convention*.

Map 1 – Coastal and marine areas threatened by deterioration due to land based pollution



Source: MEPPPW, National Diagnostic Analysis, 2006

Two areas have been designated (Alonnisos – North Sporades National Marine Park for the Mediterranean monk seal *Monachus monachus* and the Zakynthos National Marine Park for the sea turtle *Caretta caretta*). Designation of new sites is being anticipated (Karpathos and Tilos islands for the Mediterranean monk seal).

Sea fishing, practiced by relatively old fishermen, takes place especially in enclosed bays. It is of an inclusive and multi-species nature and in most cases it is practiced with traditional methods of inadequate profitability and insufficient capitalization. The

Greek fishing fleet, comprised mainly of a large number of small and old coastal vessels, has been reduced within the framework of the implementation of the *Common Fisheries Policy*, dating since 2000, especially after its 2002 reform.

Table 1 - Evolution of the Greek fleet's number of vessels, tonnage and engine power

Year	Number of vessels	Tonnage (GT)	Average Tonnage (GT)	Engine Power (kW)	Average Engine Power (kW)
2000	19 818	107 095	5	621 424	31
2001	19 884	108 246	5	623 998	31
2002	19 292	101 706	5	594 944	30
2003	18 866	98 293	5	570 150	30
2004	18 538	95 585	5	550 896	29
2005	18 276	93 267	5	537 551	29

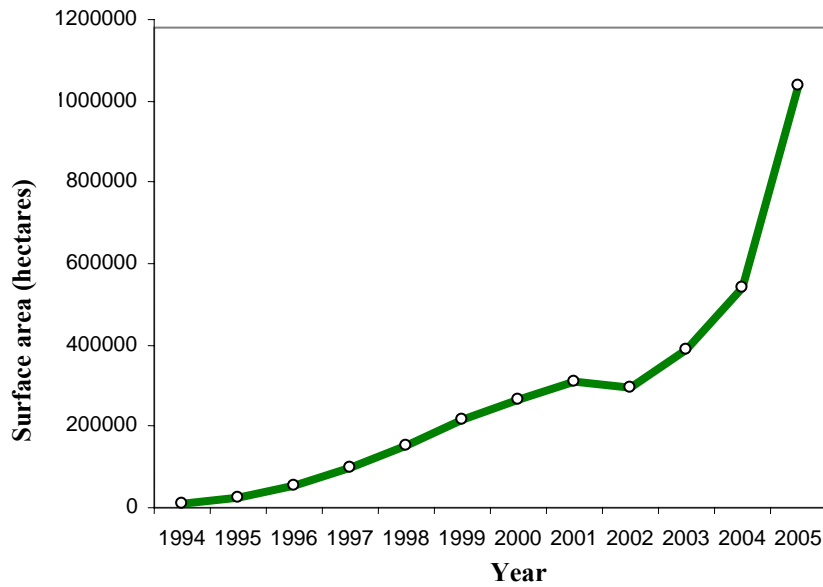
Source: <http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/fleetstatistics>, 2006

Soil Resources

The basic measures to combat intensive use and degradation of soil resources include the expansion of organic agriculture and livestock farming, extensification of livestock farming, maintenance and restoration of hedgerows, conservation and repair of terraces in sloping areas as well as adoption of the *Code of Good Agricultural Practice* (CGAP 568/125347/20-01-2004). In particular, there has been substantial development of organic agriculture in recent years. It's worth mentioning, as an indication, that in 2003 organic farmland accounted for 1% of the total farmland, rising to 1,5% in 2004 and reaching 2,6% in 2005. It should be stressed that in the two-year period 2004-2005 the number of organic farmers as well as the total area of organic farmland showed an upward trend.

It is also worth mentioning that the promotion of organic agriculture, in conjunction with the restrictions in nitrogen fertiliser use and the establishment of systems for the wet treatment of waste, are all included in the basic measures taken for the reduction of GHG emissions from agriculture, taking into account the fact that agriculture accounts for 8,7% of the total GHG emissions.

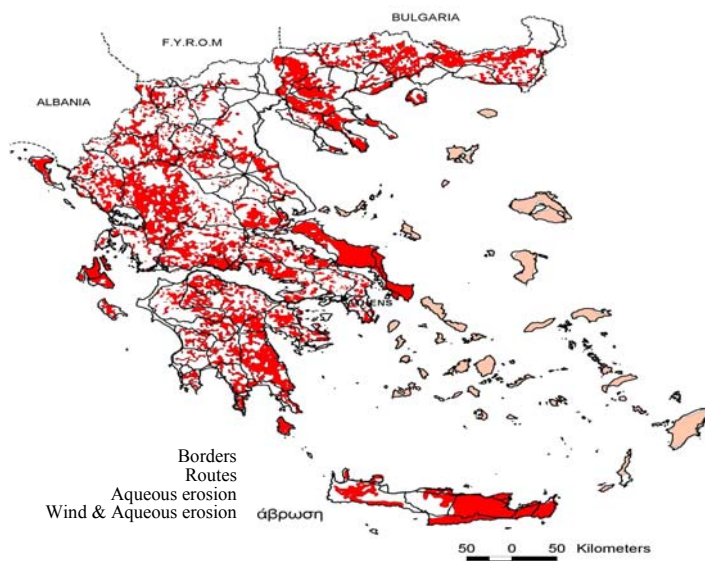
Chart 1 – The evolution of the total area of organic farmland in Greece per year



Source: Ministry of Rural Development & Food 2007

One of the major challenges for the adequate enforcement of measures to combat desertification, is the completion of the institutional and organisational aspects for the implementation of the *National Action Plan to Combat Desertification*, and especially the formation of local desertification committees. The formation of those committees was recently completed. Meanwhile, the definition of the organisational structure being the reason for the implementation and monitoring, at the national level, of the *Convention to Combat Desertification* is pending. The selection of areas for the pilot implementation of the National Action Plan to Combat Desertification and the development and use of indicators for the mapping of areas sensitive to desertification, can, among others, be considered as positive developments.

Map 2 – Areas (hot spots) threatened by desertification



Source: 4th National Report, National Committee to Combat Desertification, 2006

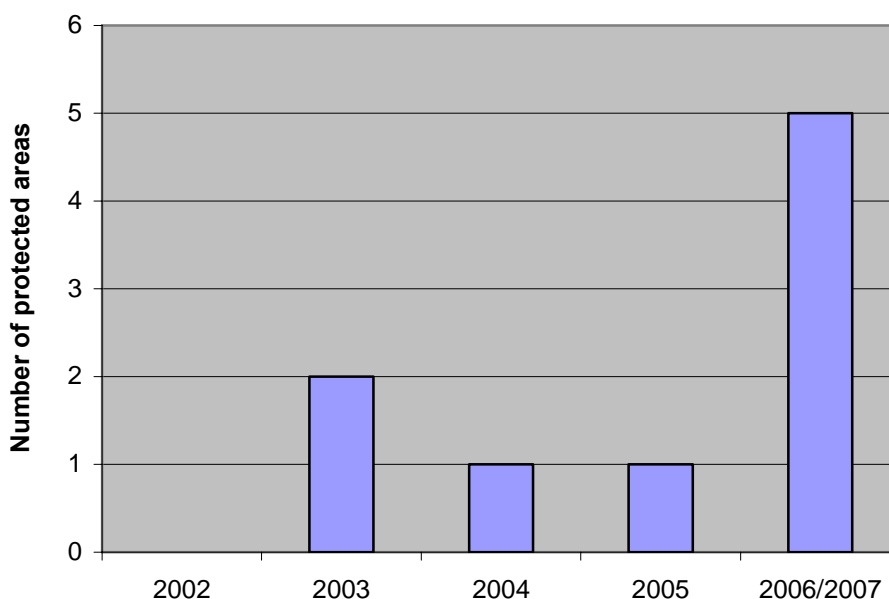
Biodiversity conservation and management

Actions that have been developed for the protection of biodiversity deal with specific flora and fauna species, ecosystems, as well as the organisation and operation of a *National System for the Management of Protected Areas*. Greece ratified the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety in 2004. Greece has transposed all Community Directives for the Environment Sector except for one (2004/035/EC on Environmental Liability, the transposition of which is under way). Actions to protect species and habitats included in integrated *Management Plans* are being implemented in various regions of the country. A *National Strategy for Biodiversity* is being drawn up in order to support an integrated approach for biodiversity conservation, and an Internet portal is under construction for the dissemination of information on biodiversity and so that the public has access to credible data. An assessment of the conservation status of the habitat types and of species of Community Interest has already been launched, an action that will determine the directions for further studied actions and conservation measures. Moreover, the specification of the *Thematic Strategies* for coastal and rural areas, the drafting of an *Action Plan for Biodiversity*, the setting-up of a national framework for biodiversity monitoring, as well as specific actions for threatened species and habitats, have been scheduled within the framework of the Operational Programme “Environment – Sustainable Development” (2007-2013)

Protected Areas

Up to the end of 2006, 19,1% of the land surface (a 2,5% increase since 2002) and 5,5% of the territorial waters of Greece was included in the Natura 2000 Network of Protected Areas. In order to award legal status for the designation of Protected Areas, 84 Special Environmental Studies were commissioned, covering 57% of the area of the Natura Network. The total area of legally designated sites has doubled (from 2,6% of the Greek land surface in 2002, to 4,9% in 2006), but in several areas (e.g. coastal areas, wetlands, forests) degradation phenomena are being observed. In order to deal with these phenomena, environmental inspections institutions and mechanisms have been strengthened, e.g. through the formation of the *Environmental Inspectorate* and the transposition of the *Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive*.

Chart 2 – Evolution of Designation of Protected Areas



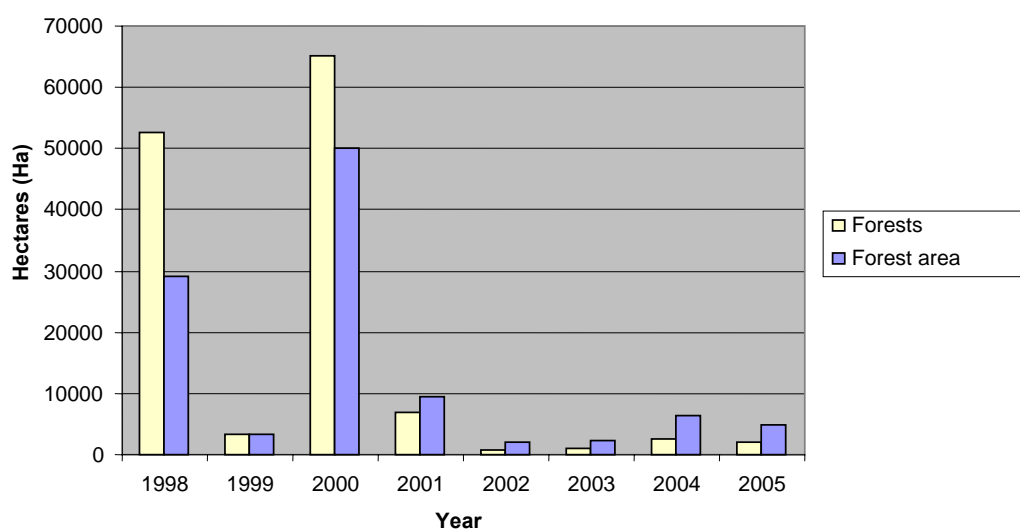
Source: MEPPPW, 2006

25 new *Management Bodies* have been established, in order to manage the Protected Areas effectively. Their spatial jurisdiction, with the addition of the two Bodies for Zakynthos and Shinyas-Marathonas established in 1999 and 2000 accordingly, covers 30% of the total network. Delays in the commissioning of operation of the Management Bodies are being dealt with, through the completion of the institutional framework on one hand (8 Operational Regulations had been approved up to 2004 and the rest 100 have been approved up to now) and the plans of action for their further support through the Operational Programme for the Environment 2007-2013 on the other hand. It is also worth mentioning that the conservation of biodiversity, has also been promoted in sites not included in the Natura 2000 network, through the implementation of the agri-environmental measures of the Operational Programme for Rural Development.

Conservation and management of forests

Forests and forest areas cover 58% of the area of the Natura 2000 Network, a fact that depicts their importance for Greek biodiversity. During the 2002-2005 period, the area of forests and forest areas burned by fires were cut down by 90% in comparison with the previous four-year period (from 264.576Ha to 21.470). Yet the reforestation rate has to increase.

Chart 3 – Forests and forest areas burned by fires



Source: Ministry of Rural Development & Food 2007

Procedures for the identification of the basic criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management have already started. Moreover, actions being taken for the development of a certification of products from sustainable forestry constitute a major challenge. The development of a *Thematic Strategy for Forests and Mountainous Ecosystems* has also been scheduled within the framework of the Operational Programme “*Environment and Sustainable Development 2007-2013*” in order to support an integrated approach in the conservation of biodiversity and the services provided by Greek forests. Yet, the completion of the National Forest Registry

remains a major challenge.

Waste management

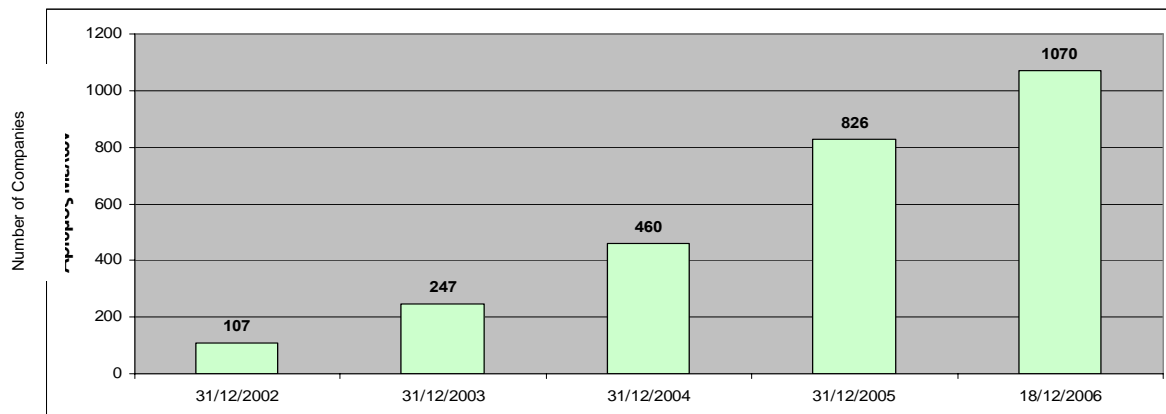
All Community legislation pertinent to waste management has been transposed to the Greek Law.

The *National Planning for the Management of Non-Hazardous Waste* is being implemented since the end of 2003, specialised to the Regional level through the *Regional Plans for the Management of Solid Waste (RSWMP)*. The authority to ensure implementation of the RSWMP lies with the *Solid Waste Management Agencies*.

A large proportion of the urban waste produced is lead to landfills, whereas integrated waste management (reduce-reuse-recycle) is in the first stages, but relevant actions cover a large part of the country, showing significant progress in recent years. Hence, while recycling absorbed a mere 6% of the total waste produced in 2003, in 2006 this rate reached to 20% with a 23% being anticipated for 2007. 10 approved alternative waste management schemes (recycling) are now operational, for packaging, used tires, end-of-life vehicles, electric and electronic equipment, batteries, accumulators, lubricant waste, excavation-construction-demolition waste (to be approved very shortly)

Today, 1070 companies are bound to the *Collective Alternative Management Scheme*, covering the largest share of the Greek market

Chart 4 – Number of companies participating in the Collective Alternative Management Scheme



Source: MEPPPW, 2007

The *Collective Alternative Management Scheme*, in collaboration with more than 380 Municipal Authorities, now provides the opportunity for recycling packaging waste to almost 4,5 million people throughout Greece. Moreover, the establishment and commencement of operation of the *National Organisation for Alternative Management of Packaging* and of other products, is being finalized. This Organisation will be responsible for the implementation of the policy for the Alternative Management of Waste in Greece.

The institutional framework for the management of waste from health care activities has been enacted since 2003, laying down terms and conditions for the management of any type of such waste. This framework, though, has been found to be non-fully functional. The annual production of industrial waste is being monitored since 2004. All Unsupervised Waste Disposal Sites (UWDS) have been registered in detail and the programme for the environmental restoration is being implemented.

In February 2007, the national plan for the management of hazardous waste was legislated, based on the “polluter pays” principle and on the fact that management responsibility for waste lies with the producer and owner of that waste.

5. PUBLIC HEALTH⁴

Actions to improve health services

Provision of access to health services of high quality for everybody, regardless of financial status or place of residence, is a standing and constant objective of the Greek government.

The health sector has in recent years been exceptionally dynamic improving health services in quantity and quality. The new direction of the National Health Service has placed the development of Primary Health Care (PHC) and the safeguarding of Public Health in top priority. Emphasis is placed in the development of PHC through its integration and expansion in urban regions, creating Urban Health Centres in Athens and Thessaloniki, thus providing conditions and equity in access for the citizens. Moreover, integrated PHC in Greece contributes to better coordination and implementation of preventive and health improvement measures in the Community.

10 Health Centres have been established since 2003, in order to cover primary care needs. Regulations for actual and autonomous development of health services in the region are also in preparation, with a view to modernize the National Health Service in terms of organization structure and in human resource potential. The establishment of Primary Care Directorates and the General Practitioner Scheme are also in preparation.

A recent law now regulates the National Health Service supplies. Research for the improvement of the mental health system is carried out and the *National Council for Social Care* is turning into an *Institute for Social Protection and Solidarity*, with the aim of creating an agency/scientific instrument to map out the welfare policy. With regard to Social Solidarity, a Disability Card will be issued, as well as a new Health Booklet for Children.

Law 3293/2004 established for the first time the appointment of the *Ombudsman for Health and Social Solidarity*. The objectives of Law 3370/2005, on the other hand, are to manage major health risks, to eliminate social inequality in citizens’ health, to improve human resource potential and to make efficient use of resources. A new piece of legislation now in preparation of the quality and safety of health services, is anticipated to contribute to the achievement of those objectives.

⁴ see also *National Strategy Report on Social Protection and Inclusion 2006-2008*

Food, feed, animal welfare

An action aiming at the creation and modernization of organization and infrastructure for the improvement of food quality and for safeguarding public health was implemented through the 3rd CSF (laboratory accreditation). Another relevant action dealt with the development of a quality management system for farm produce and the provision of information to farmers and consumers on quality-oriented agriculture.

With regard to labeling genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and traceability of food and feed produced from GMOs, the pertinent Ministerial Decree was issued in 2005. The country's position with regard to GMOs is the ban of GMOs intended for human consumption.

In the feed sector, a Ministerial Decree was issued in 2006, dealing with the existence of undesirable substances in animal nutrition. With regard to the organization of formal inspections and the determination of the principles of organization of those inspections, the Greek legislation has been harmonized with Community legislation.

Actions pertinent to the implementation and observance of standards and the use of consulting services in agriculture took place in 2006. These measures aim at establishing farmer support schemes, in order to encourage them to adapt themselves to demanding environmental, public, animal and plant health, animal welfare and occupational safety standards.

Elimination of inequality in medicare

The Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity, aiming at the development of new projects in the Health and Rehabilitation and Recovery Sectors with the creation of a powerful operational instrument, created the Health Units Corporation (N3239/2004). Moreover, 49 *Daily Health Care for the Elderly* have been created. In order to cover the basic needs of the non self-served elderly, 801 new structures have been added to the 283 existing ones, through the Help at Home programme. With regard to care for mothers and babies, social care units supervised by the Ministry of Health and Welfare, provide special services. For the disabled, there are 24 structures for de-institutionalization. Meanwhile, there are 11 *Recovery and Physical and Social Rehabilitation Centres*, in operation with a 900-bed total capacity and the ability to serve about 2000 visitors per year. Additionally, 37 Social/Medical Centres were created in organized ROM settlements in 2005-2006. In order to face the drug problems the Organisation Against Drugs is developing a range of treatment programmes, whereas an extensive Network of Centres for Prevention has been created throughout the country.

With regard to access of foreigners and emigrants to health services, it is stressed that those with a legal residence and work permits holding an emigrant status, enjoy the same privileges as Greek citizens. Moreover, nationals of the parties of the European Social Chart, who are in lack of sufficient means and are not covered by any security service, receive a Social Protection Certificate, granting them free entrance and medical care in any hospital of the National Health Service as internal patients.

Mental Health

The Government has reviewed the traditional "enclosed" model of protection for the mentally ill, developing procedures for a Psychiatric Reform, with an objective to

“develop services in the community so that the mentally ill person can be treated close to his/her family environment and be supported by it, maintaining his/her social activities at all costs”⁵

Emphasis has been placed in deinstitutionalization and the mental and social rehabilitation and reaccession of 3.500 mentally ill having been hospitalized for a long time in the Psychiatric Hospitals of the Country. Out of 5 Psychiatric Hospitals that were decided to be closed down by the end of 2008, 3 have already been transformed to local centres for mental health services in the community (Petra of Olympus, Chania, Corfu), whereas the Psychiatric Hospital of Tripolis is to be transformed in 2008. Up to now and throughout the country, 2018 new jobs have been created in the alternative community structures to accommodate the chronically ill.

Provision of services in the field of Mental Health is not restricted to the public sector agencies. Mental Health Care Units can be created by profit and not-profit organisations, as well as by voluntary organisations.

The country has been divided in Mental Health Sections, one per Prefecture, in order to ensure better management of Health Care. Whereas the Attica and Thessaloniki Prefectures are divided in more than one Section each, including separate sections for adults, children and adolescents.

Moreover, there has been significant progress in the field of re-employment and re-integration in the labour force of people with chronic mental disorders through the establishment and operation of *Social Cooperatives of Limited Responsibility*. These Cooperatives have been recognised as best practice examples for the mobilization of the social economy and the practice of social entrepreneurship. 14 such Cooperatives have been established already, and the establishment of 5 more in various regions of the country is anticipated up to the end of 2008.

6. SOCIAL INCLUSION, DEMOGRAPHY AND IMMIGRATION⁶

Expenditures for Social Protection

There was significant increase in social protection expenses in the 1993-2003 decade, rising to 26,3% of the GDP in 2003, nearing the European average of 28%. Social expenditure in particular, as recorded in the social budget of 2006, has risen by 9,13% compared to 2005.

Poverty risk, according to the data available, shows a small but steady downward trend.

⁵ *Psyhargos 2001-2010: Programme for the Development of Structures and Infrastructure in the field of Mental Health and Welfare, Ministry of Health and Welfare*

⁶ *see also National Strategy Report on Social Protection and Inclusion 2006-2008 and National Reform Programme 2005-2008, Implementation Report 2006*

Table 2 – At risk of poverty rate and illustrative threshold values

	2003			2004			2005		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Total	20,7	20,0	21,5	20,0	18,9	21,1	19,6	18,3	20,9
0-17 years	21,7			20,7			20,5		
18-64 years	18,0	17,5	18,5	17,5	16,6	18,4	17,0	16,1	18,0
65+ years	29,5	27,2	31,2	28,2	25,6	30,4	27,9	25,2	30,0
Single household	4.922,40			5.300,18			5.642,86		
Households with 2 adults and 2 dependent kids	10.337,04			11.130,37			11.850,00		

Source: National Statistics Agency of Greece, Salary and living conditions statistics (It is stressed that data from EU-SILC refer to the year preceding the research year) 2006. 2005: Temporary data

Measures taken by the government for the elderly (rises in pays of the *Social Solidarity Allowance for the Retired* and of the minimum pension by the Agricultural Insurance Organisation), as well as the recent rise of the Unemployment Allowance (29,8% gradually from 1/1/2007 to 1/1/2008), and the establishment of the Social Solidarity Fund will contribute decisively in further reduction of the poverty risk rates, especially for two sensitive population categories, the elderly and the unemployed.

The unemployment allowance increased by 10% in 2004 in comparison with the 7% rise of 2003. The Newcomer Allowance for youngsters of 20-29 years old and for the unemployed of at least one year, was granted to 1.826 individuals in 2003 and to 1.250 in 2004. The allowance for the long term unemployed aged between 45-65 was granted to 4.999 individuals in 2003 and to 13.905 in 2004.

Latest available data show that large households, and single-parent families belong to high risk poverty groups. Pertinent state aid consists of 3 sets of benefits granted by the Agricultural Insurance Organisation for families with many children, and 2 sets of benefits for families with low income (including single-parent families) whose permanent residence is on mountainous and less-favoured areas or whose children are still under age.

Worth stressing though is the peculiarity of our country with regard to ownership-occupancy. Hence, poverty risk is limited to 17% due to high ownership-occupancy rates, if this ownership is taken into account, along with self-produced goods, and goods and services provided free of charge to the household from third parties.

Employment - Unemployment

Total employment rates have increased within the last two years. With regard to unemployment, the average *rate* fell from 10,5% in 2004, to 9,8% in 2005.

Table 3 – Unemployment rates

(total number of unemployed as a proportion of the total active population of the same age group)

		2003			2004			2005		
		Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
E.U.-25	Total (15+year)	9,0	8,1	10,2	9,1	8,1	10,3	8,7	7,9	9,8
	15-24 years	18,8	18,4	19,2	18,9	18,4	19,4	18,6	18,3	19,0
E.U.-15	Total (15+years)	8,0	7,0	9,3	8,1	7,2	9,3	7,9	7,0	8,9
	15-24 years	16,5	16,0	17,0	16,7	16,2	17,3	16,8	16,4	17,2
Greece	Total (15+years)	9,7	6,2	15,0	10,5	6,6	16,2	9,8	6,1	15,3
	15-24 years	26,8	18,9	36,6	26,9	19,1	36,3	26,0	18,7	34,8

Source: Eurostat, EU-LFS

Unemployment rates dropped further in 2006, reaching to 8,9%.

Long term unemployment, despite its reduction, is still an important problem. Moreover, the distribution of unemployment rates within specific age groups is uneven, with high unemployment rates being observed in the young under 25 years of age. High rates are also observed in women's unemployment. Finally, the shrinkage of the primary sector is an important problem with significant adverse effects.

A favourable institutional framework has been established in recent years, along with a grid of institutes and foundations (e.g. *Social Protection and Solidarity Institute, National Centre for Direct Social Aid, Health and Social Solidarity Ombudsman, National Council for the Connection between Professional Education and Training with Employment*) assisting fundamentally in the analysis and formulation of policy proposals. Moreover, within the framework of the decentralisation policy, the new *Municipal and Communal Code* of 2006, broadens the scope of Local Authorities' jurisdiction to enact social policy

The *Network of Social Support Services* is in operation under the auspices of the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity and with the Local Authorities as beneficiaries, in order to support employment and to link social support with promotion of employment. Services provided include promotion of employment, assistance to direct beneficiaries, and services aiming at combating poverty and social exclusion.

Active policies for employment aim to reinforce mainly groups such as women and the young. With regard to the elderly, the Ministry of Employment and Social Protection has developed policies such as special employment programmes in order to combat unemployment suffering. The objective here, is to give the elderly the opportunity to work but also to secure the necessary number of social security stamps for retirement and pension. These programmes are targeted towards regions and groups with acute unemployment problems (e.g. massive dismissals)

With regard to women's access to the labour market, women's unemployment rates in

Greece compared to men's, are high. Apart from the favourable institutional framework for unemployed women, special programmes are being implemented, including extra incentives. Moreover, scheduled within the 3rd CSF is the subsidization of 900 companies owned by women and the creation of 1500 permanent jobs.

The family, being a strong social tradition in our country, plays an important role in the prevention of social exclusion. Measures to support the family facilitates the women's entrance in the labour market, thus contributing to the reconciliation of family life with business life. All-day-long schools and social care structures (nursery schools and kindergartens, Creative Activity Centres, Centres for Daily Care of the Elderly etc) make a significant contribution towards that direction.

Special care is extended to unprovided children lacking family care. Within this framework, there is an operational *Network of Social Care Units*, providing relief, education and professional training of those children. Moreover, attention is provided to infants lacking a smooth environment at home and to single mothers. Infant and mother protection services are provided by decentralized social care units.

Employment support programmes include quota for hiring young candidates. In addition, there are special programmes for young unemployed people, assisting in the attainment of the necessary work experience (Stage). A distinctive feature of these programmes is their specialised and targeted nature, which takes into account geographical (with an emphasis to the regions), thematic and population statistics.

Vulnerable social groups

With regard to socially vulnerable groups, Law 3304/2005 introduced the legislative framework for the promotion of equal treatment and the battle against discrimination, transposing Directives 2000/43 and 2000/78 into national legislation. The *Network of Social Support Services* has proved to be very useful to socially vulnerable groups. This network's objective is to assist those at high social exclusion risk to find access to employment and to social services. This measure is implemented by Local Authorities.

Social and professional inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (PwD) is also supported by the existing *network of Centres for Education, Social Support and Training for the Disabled* supported by public funds. Apart from the above, there are provisions for the compulsory inclusion of PwD and of other special groups in the labour market on a specific quota basis (8% of total employees for private sector companies, 10% for Civil Services, 5% of all public sector vacancies)

Emigrants form yet another vulnerable group. The Greek legislation was harmonized with the pertinent Community legislation through Law 3536/2007. Major innovations of the new law include (i) legalization of illegal emigrants, (ii) unification of the residence and work permits, (iii) simplification of the renewal of the residence permit and (iv) smooth integration of emigrants to the Greek society through an Integrated Action Programme, which has not been executed during the last years.

Moreover, special projects are executed for the social inclusion of repatriates. As regards subsidised mortgages, the requisite number of 35.000 applications by

beneficiaries from the Regions has already been achieved. The contracts for approved loans have been signed and 90% of the corresponding funds have been withdrawn. In addition, the *Integrated Programmes for the Support of Repatriates* are since 2005 funded by the programme “THISEAS” of the Ministry for the Interior.

Uses of Land

When the already approved *General Urban Planning Schemes* are applied to cities and settlements in the country and new ones are promoted, the quality of life in those areas ameliorates. With the setting up of *Zones of Urban Sprawl Control (ZUSC)* in the vicinity of many big urban areas, the negative impacts of development in the areas surrounding urban sites have minimized, high productivity land emerges and natural resources and cultural reserves are preserved. At the same time, a series of *Zones of Urban Sprawl Control (ZUSC)* has been defined and enacted, in areas of ecologic interest or even in entire islands, for applying special land use and protection terms, so that the related geographic, physical, productive and cultural advantages are preserved and highlighted for a balanced residential development.

Moreover, MEPPPW, taking into account the mobility of the population, has decided to organize the urban development of the wider area around major cities of the country and to define general guidelines, in order to boost their potential. For this reason, MEPPPW is promoting the enactment of *Regulatory Schemes* and *Environment Protection Frameworks* for these cities. Specifically, the *Regulatory Plans* for Athens and Thessaloniki have been compiled since 1985, whereas the studies concerning the *Regulatory Schemes* for Ioannina, Larisa, Volos and Patras are currently being elaborated and plans for other big cities like Heraklion or Kavala will follow suit.

The *General Framework for Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development Framework* of Greece, as well as the *Special Frameworks for Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development* for *RES, Industry, Tourism, Mountainous areas* and *Coastal areas* are at the final stage of Public Consultation.

7. GLOBAL POVERTY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

1. Contribution to meeting the objectives of the EU to address Global Poverty and Sustainable Development Challenges

Greece is contributing to the achievement of the *Millennium Development Goals (MDG)* both as a UN and an EU Member State. The total Greek funding for the implementation of activities to achieve the MDGs was spread for the years 2003, 2004, and 2005 as follows.

Table 4 – Greek funding for actions to achieve the MDG

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)	2003 in m €	2004 in m €	2005 in m €
MDG 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	0,34	9,35	1,37
MDG 2: Achieve universal primary education by 2015	32,18	0,23	0,07
MDG 3: Promote Gender equality and empower women	0,96	0,63	0,11
MDG 4: Reduce child mortality	19,40	6,06	22,93
MDG 5: Improve maternal health	0,03	-	-
MDG 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases	5,10	12,46	2,80
MDG 7: Ensure environmental sustainability	5,84	3,64	2,13
MDG 8: Develop a global partnership for development	49,30	26,20	37,25
Total	113,15	58,57	66,66

Source of data: International Development Cooperation Division / Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2007

Greece contributes to the implementation of the EU Initiatives, launched at the *World Summit on Sustainable Development* in Johannesburg (2002), with key emphasis on the “*Water for Life*” Initiative of the EU (EUWI), since it has undertaken the role of the Lead Country of the *Mediterranean Component of the EU Water Initiative (MED EUWI)*⁷, since 2003. MED EUWI represents a catalyst for peace and stability in the politically and ecologically sensitive areas of SE Europe, Middle East and North Africa. The most important activity of MED EUWI currently under implementation is the organisation and conduction of strategic “*Country Policy Dialogues*” on both water supply and sanitation and integrated water resources management in selected Mediterranean partner countries. Such Dialogues have already been launched in Lebanon and Egypt. The Environment and Development Directorates-General of the EC reviewed, in January 2007, the progress of the overall Initiative (2002-2006) and MED EUWI ranked 2nd in the success list right after the African Component. Greece also successfully organised the *Conference of the Water Directors of the Euro-Mediterranean and South Eastern European Countries*, in Athens (6-7.11.2006), and more such meetings are scheduled for 2007 and 2008. Our country provides financial support to MED EUWI allocating an average of €100.000 per year from own resources, since 2003. Moreover, it has secured an important co-financing from the EC’s DG AidCo, for the period 2006-2008.

The *Official Development Assistance (ODA)* of Greece, despite the significant financial difficulties that the country is currently facing, has been shaped as shown:

Table 5 – Official Development Assistance

Year	Bilateral ODA (m\$)	Bilateral ODA (% GDP)	Multilateral ODA (m\$)	Bilateral ODA (% GDP)	Total ODA (m\$)	Total ODA (% GDP)
2002	106,97	0,08	169,17	0,13	276	0,21
2003	228,26	0,13	133,90	0,08	362	0,21
2004	160,75	0,08	160,08	0,08	321	0,16
2005	206,64	0,09	177,76	0,08	384	0,17

Source of data: International Development Cooperation Division / Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2007

Greece has contributed financially, for the period 2004-2005, to the budgets of the following Multilateral International Organisations:

⁷ Through MED EUWI, Greece contributes to the achievement of the JPoI targets on water supply and sanitation by 2015 and on integrated water resources management, in the Mediterranean region.

- the European Commission, including the European Development Fund (approximately 89% of the total multilateral ODA). In particular the 9th EDF received €12,5 m for the years 2002-2007;
- the World Health Organisation;
- the World Bank (total contributions from 2002 to date reached to €21,33 m);
- the Global Fund to Combat AIDS; and
- the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

In addition, Greece contributes to the UNDP's budget (€ 0,294 m per year), to the HIPC Trust Fund for the alleviation of the dept of heavily indebted poor countries (€ 4,5m for the years 2001 – 2002), to EBRD (€ 7,315 m from 2002 to date) and to the EBRD Technical Cooperation Special Fund (€ 1,5 m).

Greece's development activities to combat global poverty with an emphasis on the achievement of the MDGs, covered thematically and financially the following sectors during the years 2002-2005:

Table 6 – Greece's Development activities to combat global poverty

Sector	Contribution in m €
Social infrastructure and social services	435,9
Education	127,12
Health of population and reproductive health	64,3
Management of water resources	3,49
Energy	0,12
Environmental Protection	4,46
General budget support	3,28
Special and emergency aid	21,32

Source of data: International Development Cooperation Division / Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2007

The geographical distribution of the ODA indicates a focus in the regions of the Mediterranean and SE Europe. Since 2003, African countries have also been included in the distribution and in particular those of the sub-Saharan Africa (Ethiopia, Ivory Coast, Eritrea, Sudan, Egypt, South Africa). Greece, being a member of the *World Trade Organisation*, contributes to the achievement of the objectives of the EU, within the framework of the “Doha Round”⁸, participating systematically in the ongoing negotiations and submitting specific proposals for reductions to tariff and non-tariff barriers for services and products, such as the desalination systems, for the benefit of developing countries.

With regard to *International Environmental Governance*, Greece sides with and supports the EU position for the upgrading of the UN's Environment Programme (UNEP) into a UN *Environment Organisation* (UNEO) with wider responsibilities. Moreover, Greece supports the cross-sectoral role of the UN Commission for Sustainable Development (UNCSD), and participates actively to all related International Meetings, Initiatives and Summits.

Ratification and implementation of International Multilateral Agreements,

⁸ Within this framework, Greece contributes to the achievement of the JPoI targets to gradually reduce subsidies that distort the rules of the free market

Conventions and Protocols, and in particular those of an environmental nature, are of top priority for Greece and are being systematically promoted in institutional and implementation terms. Greece (MEPPPW) supports the work of International Organisations and Multilateral Environmental Agreement Funds, through regular annual contributions from own national funds, reaching approximately € 12 m during the years 2002-2007. Greece has also contributed, from 1994 to date, to all four phases of replenishment of the Global Environment Facility (GEF). It is indicatively mentioned that the contribution of Greece to the 3rd GEF's replenishment (2002-2006) was € 5,73 m, and the same amount will be deposited for its 4th replenishment (1.7.2006 – 31.6.2010).

2. Cooperation for the promotion of Sustainable Development at the bilateral level

Greece (via the MEPPPW, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) has signed and ratified *Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) in the Environment and Sustainable Development field* with several neighbouring countries, such as Turkey (into force since 30.6.2001), Bulgaria (into force since 15.7.2005) and Albania (into force since 19.7.2005). Additionally, the promotion of common objectives for the achievement of sustainable development is an important element of discussions and cooperation in numerous “*Joint Ministerial Committees for Economic and Technical Cooperation*” of Greece with third countries.

Greece implements the “*Hellenic Plan for the Economic Reconstruction of the Balkans*” (HPERB , 2002-2011), with a budget of € 550 m, that provides funding for investments and infrastructure works to 6 Balkan States (Romania, Bulgaria, Albania, FYROM, Serbia-Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina).

Moreover, Greece plays a leading role in the establishment of a single energy market in its broader region as well as in the harmonisation and approximation of the national legislation of the SE European States with the EC's institutional framework on energy, through the establishment of the “*Energy Community of South-eastern Europe*”, indicating the country's role as an energy hub in the region. In addition, Greece contributes to the creation of a free trade zone⁹ in Western Balkans.

Through the cooperation of Greece with the *Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation* (BSEC), came an agreement of co-financing in 2006, between Greece and the UNDP, for the development and implementation of a € 0,5m three year programme to support SMEs in Black Sea countries.

Finally, Greece participates systematically in all activities of the *Euro-Mediterranean Partnership*. Our country is placing particular emphasis on the environment sector and, specifically, in the implementation of the new EU Initiative for the “*De-pollution of the Mediterranean sea by 2020 – Horizon 2020*”.

⁹ *Through this type of activities, Greece makes a substantial contribution to the achievement of the JPoI targets to “Acknowledge the need to increase access in international markets as a determining factor for the development of many countries”.*

8. CULTURE

The overall strategy for the Culture sector was designed around two central axes: the Conservation and Promotion of the Cultural Heritage and the Development of the *Contemporary Hellenic Culture*. The projects related to monument and museum interventions in the Cultural Heritage sector are listed as it follows below:

- Significant progress has been made in the **Museum sector**, with a panhellenic network of Museums developed throughout the country. Additionally to the New Acropolis Museum, the following museums are indicatively mentioned: the National Archeological Museum, the Archeological Museums of Thessaloniki, Patra, Heraklion, Olympia, Delphi, Rhodes, Ioannina, Thiva, Nafplio, the Byzantine museums of Athens and Thessaloniki, etc.
- With regard to the **Monuments Sector**, structural support, conservation and restoration needs of all major monuments were met. It should be indicatively noted that through the 3rd CSF, an integrated intervention programme was implemented in the Athens Acropolis and the surrounding archeological sites, as well as in the major archeological sites of the country, such as in Mycenae, Tiryntha, Olympia, Ancient Messiness, Delos, Knossos, Festus, Lindos, Pella, Vergina, Philippos, Dodone, Nicopolis, Medieval Rhodes, Mystras, etc.
- With regard to the **Contemporary culture**, the activities were concentrated in large cities, due to the nature and the significant amount of investment funds required. The relevant works helped solve chronic problems of the contemporary Hellenic culture and include the glyptotheca in Goudi, the National Theatre in Athens, the housing of the film archives of Greece at the Laida cinema, the Gaitis Museum in Ios the completion of the Conference and Culture Centre of Thessaloniki, the creation of new cultural infrastructure in major cities such as Heraklion, Komotini, Serres and Tripolis.

Apart from capacity-building measures, the Programme also included *new types of actions*. Within this framework, *new cultural institutions* have been established (e.g. the International Book Fair) and others are being promoted (e.g. the Biennale of Plastic Arts). These institutions support the tourism and the creation of new employment positions. Moreover, a special programme was designed and funded for the first time, namely the “*Education and Culture*” programme, which links the culture with the education and the training process. The aim of this programme is to develop actions and initiatives in order to demonstrate and support the connection between Education and Culture. Emphasis is laid on *the development and dissemination of the intangible assets of the Hellenic Culture*. Hence, Greek literature, ancient drama, lyric poetry, philosophy, but also contemporary cultural creativity can now be easily revealed and disseminated, especially to the young.

The results of these interventions are already visible. In the table below, the aggregated data on museums’ and archaeological sites’ visits, during the 1998-2006 period are presented.

Table 7 – Visitor’s numbers in museums and archeological sites (1998-2006)

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
MUSEUMS	2.236.302	1.814.823	2.061.887	1.886.236	2.687.649	1.759.647	2.501.967	2.692.128	2.795.465
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES	6.608.240	5.832.645	6.416.439	6.218.029	6.674.810	6.155.328	5.788.289	6.893.546	7.516.665
TOTAL	8.844.542	7.647.468	8.478.326	8.104.265	9.362.459	7.914.975	8.290.256	9.585.674	10.312.130

Source: *Archaeological Resources and Expropriation Fund – National Statistical Service of Greece 2007*

The Cultural Heritage sector supported, through the 3rd CFS:

- Development works throughout the rural country: the spatial distribution of monument resources gave the opportunity to implement projects in the geographic jurisdiction of smaller towns and agglomerations.
- Development of areas with a geographic disadvantage (islands, mountainous areas), possessing, however, considerable monument resources. Several projects were carried out in small and less developed Aegean islands (e.g. Samothrace, Psara, Tilos, Nisyros, Kastelorizo, etc), through the 3rd CFS. In mountainous areas respectively, projects are implemented to raise awareness and appreciation of ancient cities (e.g. Thesprotia), Byzantine monuments (e.g. in Erytria), as well as traditional architecture (mansions, bridges, cobble stone paths, etc.).

Two new programmes are under preparation, namely *the Cultural Egnatia and Cultural Ionian Road*, whereby the huge number of travelers through these new road axes will be able to come across the monuments spread along their route.

With regard to the *modern urban landscape*, the positive outcomes of the Unification of Archeological Sites in Athens should be stressed. The unification works helped reveal archeological sites and monuments and at the same time contributed to the restoration of historical buildings in the urban structure surrounding these sites. Moreover, free and public spaces were created along the perimeter of the sites, suitable for walks and mild recreation activities. Another important example of this kind, with a very positive outcome, is the programme for the restoration and preservation works in the Mediaeval Town of Rhodes.

9. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Greece has comparatively low expenditure for education and training. In 2003, public expenditure on education and training represented 3.9% of the country’s GDP, while the average in the eurozone and in the EU-25 countries was 5% and 5,2%, respectively. With regard to expenditure per level of education, Greece lags behind on primary and secondary education. However, public expenditure percentage on tertiary education – is higher than the European average one. In Europe, private investments in education are on average 0,63% of the GDP, whereas in Greece they range around 0,22%.

Horizontal policies and actions¹⁰

Equality between men and women: Current situation in education and training, with regard to gender equality, depicts important steps towards the phasing out of inequalities, a fact that is also reflected by the high participation rates of women to all levels of education. Inequalities in labour market, by contrast, still remain the same (28,1% employment gap rate vs. 15% in the EU-25, Eurostat 2005). Therefore, challenges in women's education in Greece are not largely related to the level of education and to their participation in education, but mainly to the link of education with the labour market needs and to lifelong learning opportunities.

Indicative educational activities to promote gender equality, include the operation of the all-day-long attendance school, which helped mothers to work or to improve their professional qualifications; programmes for the support of initial vocational training and education of women, which included actions for raising awareness of educators on gender discrimination issues; programmes for counseling and vocational guidance, based on the gender dimension; and initiatives to reform/modernize the training material, so as to avoid reproduction of gender stereotypes .

Vulnerable and Socially Disadvantaged Groups: The integration of persons with disabilities in the educational system is promoted and supported through the *Centres for Diagnosis, Evaluation and Support*, of the Integration Departments of the general education schools and through the *Model School Units for Special Education*. The exact number of students with learning disabilities in primary and secondary education has not been recorded, but it is estimated to be approximately 180.000-200.000, of which 19.038 students attend special education schools (Source: Ministry of National Education and Religions, 2005). Nevertheless, these students do not always receive the necessary support, such as technological aid devices, Internet access, educational material adapted to their disability type (e.g. Braille system for blind students), etc.

The *Associations of Parents of Disabled Persons* or the *Association of Disabled Persons* have created additional structures providing support services. These structures are self-financed in their majority, but they are also supported by national and community funds.

During the 2004-2005 school year, 311 *Special Education School Units*, 1654 *Integration Classes*, 72 *Special Vocation Training Workshops* and 58 *Diagnosis, Assessment and Support Centres*, were operational, numbers that depict a satisfactory structural improvement. Meanwhile, the training of educators who teach disabled students is a decisive factor for special education efficiency. In 2003-2004, 7.633 educators were trained in programmes for disabled students and, since 2003, 2.822 educators of students with learning problems have received training.

Intercultural Education: Basic interventions in this sector are targeted mainly on 4 population groups: roma, muslims of Thrace, Greek-speaking citizens of third countries who are of Greek origin (omogeneis) and repatriates and foreigners. Welcome classes and crash courses throughout the country, along with the additional teaching support scheme, provide supportive teaching in Greek language and tutorial

¹⁰ See also chapter 6

support on other fields, so as to facilitate a smooth adjustment in the general education system. Additionally, intercultural schools (elementary, intermediate and high schools) operate in the country, with the aim to retain students with cultural differences within the national educational system. It should be noted here that the attendance of students at school is secured, regardless of their parents' residency status.

Promotion of Information Technology: The *Digital Strategy 2006-2013*, which has been compiled by the National IT Committee, aims to instigate a “digital leap” in productivity and quality of life, advancing information and communication technologies, as well as new skills, as part of the basic strategic direction of the country in the coming years. The new digital strategy replaces the “White Paper” on Information Society and it is compatible with the new European strategic policy framework for the Information Society “2010”, as well as with the Lisbon Strategy.

Currently, pilot programmes are being implemented or developed on distance learning, with the use of Information and Communication technologies, aiming at facilitating educational activities at all educational levels. In order for the Digital Strategy to be effectively implemented, educators in primary, secondary and technical vocational training schools are trained on, inter alia, the use of new technologies, during their participation in all educators' learning schemes (crash course, introductory, in-school, distance, short- and long-term).

Finally, the *Quality Assurance System for Higher Education*, established in 2006, and the *Quality Assurance Authority*, who is responsible for the management and operation of this System, are all active in fields such as the preparation of quality check levels, the methodology of reports for the assessment of teaching, research and administrative activities of Higher Education Institutes, etc.

10. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT¹¹

National policy

Most of the programmes promoted, aimed in supporting enterprises to implement *Research and Technological Development* (RTD) projects, as well as to link *Research* with *Production*. Meanwhile, actions to support the RTD capacity-building in the public and the private sector, the development of human resources and the encouragement of entrepreneurship were also promoted.

Institutional framework

The new institutional framework enabled the establishment of the *National Research and Technology Council*, of the *Intergovernmental Committee*, and of the *National RTD Management Organisation*. Moreover, the new law on the *Development of Scientific and Technological Research* is pending completion. This framework encompasses the establishment of new structures for the design, adoption and

¹¹ *Contribution to the achievement of the objectives of paragraph 38 of the Johannesburg Action Plan*

implementation of the research policy in Greece, involving several government activity sectors and under the direct superintendence of the Prime Minister.

RTD Funding

The contribution to the achievement of the goals laid out in the *Lisbon Strategy* and, in particular, of the goal to increase the investment in a knowledge-based economy, as well as the fulfillment of the new cohesion policy requirements, constitutes the central development option of Greece in today's increasingly demanding European and International setting. The rate of the Gross Domestic Expenditure on Research and Technological Development (GDERTD) as a percentage of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), was risen only to 0,61% in 2004 and is expected to reach 1,5% by 2010.

National RTD actions

National *Research, Technology and Innovation* actions were implemented mainly through the 3rd CSF. During the last years, an array of support actions for the development of Research and Innovation has been recorded, in various sectors of the Hellenic Community (e.g. health, education, social structure, environment sectors). Actions implemented can be classified in two categories:

- I. Support of RTD programmes, targeted to enterprises and collaboration between enterprises and knowledge production bodies, such as:
 - Programmes to encourage research and technology transfer and dissemination to enterprises
 - Actions to support research and technology potential
 - Public awareness raising of new technologies, support of R&T policies and R&T information management

- II. Actions and Programmes for the promotion of Innovation and the creation of knowledge-intensive enterprises, such as:
 - Support of Research Units for the standardization, and commercial use of research results and the creation of new businesses (spin-off)
 - Development of knowledge intensive *R&T Parks and Incubators (seven Scientific and Technological Parks)* as well as development of *research centres and public laboratories* aiming to provide services to businesses
 - Advance of the plan to create *Regional Innovation Poles (five poles and one innovation zone)*
 - Creation of clusters in the field of microelectronics

Research Activity per sector

Almost half of the research activity in our country is carried out at the Higher Education Institutes, whereas the participation of the production sector is low. Survey data on enterprises reporting research expenditure show that, during the 1999-2003 period, 73,51% of the enterprises were small-size, with less than 50 employees, 10% were large-size and 16,64% were medium-size enterprises. Nevertheless, it is estimated that the bulk of the in-business expenditure comes from large- and medium-size enterprises.

Research activity per region

With regard to the geographical distribution of enterprises active in research,

enterprises in the Attica region are the vast majority followed by enterprises in Northern Greece. The contribution from the remaining areas is very small or insignificant.

Strategy reinforcing actions

In connection with the promotion of the integrated strategy to increase Research Investments (policy mix), the following reinforcing actions could be cited:

- Participation of Greece in the *European Space Agency* since 2005
- Implementation of the Law 3296/2004 on the tax exemption of expenditure for scientific and technological research from companies' net profit
- *Development Law 3299/2004* gives priority to investments in innovative products and services and enables the funding of RTD projects purely from national funds (approximately €4,700,000 during the last 2 years), in addition to those from the regular state budget, with which Research Centres are being funded.
- Cost reductions in patenting procedures

11. DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION AND MOBILISATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY PARTNERS

Communication

With regard to public access to environmental information, public participation in environmental decision making and access to justice on environmental issues, Greece has in place a complete institutional framework encompassing:

- the Aarhus Convention of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), ratified in 2005;
- EU Directive 2003/4 concerning public access to environmental information through electronic databases and public telecommunication networks, incorporated into Greek Law in 2006;
- EU Directive 2003/35 on "*providing for public participation regarding the drawing up of certain plans and programmes relating to the environment and amending with regard to public participation and access to justice Council Directives 85/337/EEC and 96/61/EC*" was effectively transposed into the Greek legislation through the enactment of a Joint Ministerial Decision (JMD). This JMD defines measures of judicial protection of the public against acts or omissions by the Public Administration regarding access to information and participation during the procedure for approval of environmental terms & conditions.

However, in Greece, the right of access to information is not limited to environmental issues. On the contrary, this right has been increasing in significance since, according to the Constitution, any competent agency or authority should respond to any citizens' enquiries for the provision of information or provision of official documents, within a certain time period that cannot exceed a 60 days time frame (article 10, paragraph 3 of the Constitution). The right of access to official documents is specified in the Administrative Procedure Code stipulating the conditions for public access to Public Services' documents. Finally, Directive 2003/98/EC on the further use of public

sector information has been incorporated into the Greek legislation with Law 3448/2006, providing the right for further use by persons or legal entities of documents held by public sector bodies, for commercial or non-commercial purposes other than the initial purpose for which the documents were originally produced.

Mobilisation of civil society organizations and partners

In Greece, the general public and the NGOs can submit comments and proposals on environmental issues at the preliminary stages of the decision making process and consultation procedures constitute a common practice at the central, regional and local levels (see also chapter 12).

12. ELABORATION OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

In May 2002, the *National Centre for the Environment and Sustainable Development (NCESD)* drew up the *Greek National Strategy for Sustainable Development* that was approved by the Ministerial Council, in June same year. The 2002 Strategy was prepared through collaboration with the “*National Coordination Committee of the Government Policy in the field of Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development*” that was at the time also acting as the National Preparatory Committee of Greece in view of the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development, encompassing representatives from competent Ministries and the NCESD. Representatives from Local Authorities, employer and trade unions, research institutes and NGOs also participated in the preparation procedure, directly through thematic working groups or through participation in wider Workshops.

The main aim of the 2002 Strategy was the achievement of economic development, while safeguarding social cohesion and environmental quality. The main sectors of action were climate change abatement; reduction of air pollutants; reduction and rational management of solid waste; water resources management; combating desertification; protection of biodiversity and natural ecosystems; and sustainable management of forests. Social and economic sectors for the promotion of relevant activities included the sectors of energy, transport, agriculture, industry, tourism, spatial planning and employment.

The *Strategy* also stressed the fact that the three pillars of Sustainable Development are of equal importance and interrelated and should be developed through actions on various levels of sectoral policies. The *Strategy* reported on the baseline situation for each sector, the objectives and the necessary actions in order to achieve the set objectives.

The responsible body for the coordination of the *Strategy* implementation was MEPPPW whereas nine Ministers participated in the “*National Coordination Committee of the Government Policy in the field of Physical Planning and Sustainable Development*”. Depending on the topic, more Ministers could also take part in the Committee’s Meetings.

For the coordination and the better implementation of the *Strategy*, the “*National Council for Physical Planning and Sustainable Development*” was operationalised, in

which representatives from MEPPPW, Local Authorities, employer and trade unions, research institutes and NGOs participated. However, its function did not last for a long period of time since the coordination between agencies was proven to be rather weak and on an ad hoc basis. However, the inter-Ministerial coordination was strengthened for the drafting of the National Strategic Reference Framework (2007-2013) where the principles of the *Strategy* were encompassed to a large extent.

Currently we are in a *Review of the 2002 Strategy* process, which is to be finalized very shortly. Almost all Ministries and Society groups are involved in this Review process since its very initial preparatory stages. Prior to the drafting of the Revised Strategy's first draft, an open invitation was uploaded on the MEPPPW website to all groups and entities to be involved in a Dialogue process, in the context of a public consultation.

The first draft of the Revised Strategy has taken into account the proposals submitted by Ministries and the results of the consultation procedure, also taking into account the general Government planning as well as the sectoral priorities and strategies .

The second round of the public consultation followed and the text of the *National Strategy for Sustainable Development* was compiled, taking into account views and comments expressed by Ministries and other public entities during this second round.

The *National Strategy* contains all the priorities of the *EU Sustainable Development Strategy* adapted to the Greek context, with the addition of four chapters of national priority namely: Agriculture, Tourism, Culture and Physical Planning.

The “*National Council for Physical Planning and Sustainable Development*” is being activated in order to follow up on the implementation of the Strategy, in collaboration with the NCESD, by issuing biennial progress reports of the implementation of the *National Strategy*.