

NATURA 2000

For nature

For people



Questions and answers on Natura 2000 areas



"Strengthening the capacities for effective implementation of the aquis in the field of Nature protection"



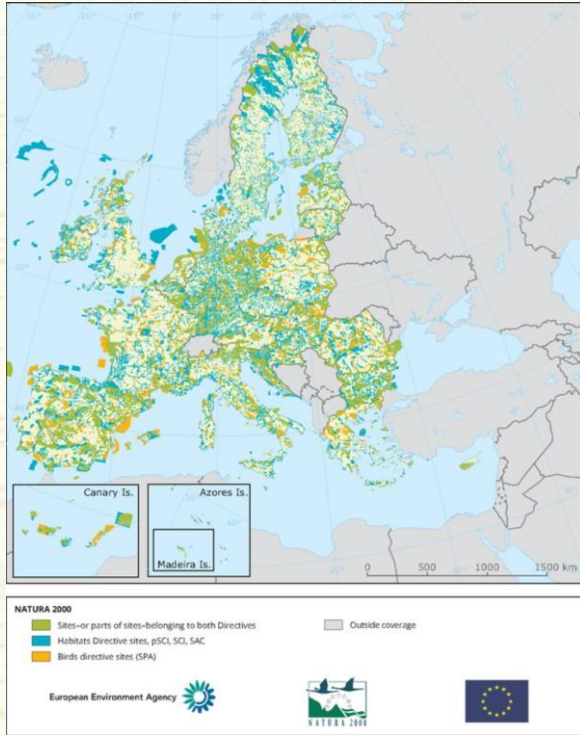
For questions contact: info@natura2000.gov.mk

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Natura 2000 is a network of protected areas covering the most valuable and threatened habitats and species in 28 EU member states. It is the largest coordinated network of protected areas, spreading both on land and at sea. The sites of Natura 2000 network are designated under the Birds and Habitats Directives. However, Member States must ensure that the sites are managed in a sustainable manner

The approach to conservation in Natura 2000 is very wide, largely centered on people working with nature, living with nature. However, Member States must ensure that the sites are managed in a sustainable manner.



Find out more about Natura 2000
<http://natura2000.eea.europa.eu/#>



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Observation tower

Many visitors of protected areas have probably often wondered how exciting it would be to see the area from above. Now this is possible with the 24 observation towers in protected areas, each more than 15 m high. Climbing up each watch tower gives a different view and feeling, because each of them represents another type of ecosystem.



Observation tower in Kamanai state strict nature reserve with picturesque Kamanos swamps and islands, surrounded by forests (Lithuania).

Management of Natura 2000 sites

With the support of EU funds there were more than 20 technical projects for the reconstruction of the hydrological regime implemented in Natura 2000 sites.



Restoration of the natural hydrological regime of areas important for the protection of the bog and swamp forest habitats.



The marshes and meadows were mowed and restored on the edges of cultivated areas. Reed and other herbaceous vegetation was removed.



Management of Natura 2000 Site in Habitat Conservation Area. Inferior plants were removed. Cattles are grazing!



Exercising outdoors as a source of health and happiness

Nature is a source of health and well-being. Metsähallitus together with its partners promote the wellness effects of outdoor activities by offering hikers services such as trails, campfire sites, signposts, maps and information on Finland's most beautiful nature destinations. It has been scientifically proven that nature improves our health and well-being in at least three ways:

- Physical activity increases outdoors
- Nature revives and helps to recover from stress
- Outdoor activities promote our social well-being and sense of community



In Finland, protected areas and hiking sites generate incomes for the local businesses

Local businesses benefit from the funds granted by the Finnish government for national parks and hiking areas, as the funds return to society many-folded through local entrepreneurship and jobs. Government budget funds are used for building and maintaining hiking facilities in protected areas (including Natura 2000 areas). The private sector creates tourism business services around these areas.



What is the difference between a Natura 2000 site and a protected area?

Establishing Natura 2000 network aims at protecting sites with high natural conservation value for habitats and species listed in the Habitats and Birds Directives. These are values of high importance in the EU because they are endangered, vulnerable, rare, and endemic or present outstanding examples of typical characteristics of one or more of Europe's nine biogeographical regions.

Nature reserves, national parks or other nationally protected areas are established under national laws. Sites may be designated for a range of different purposes and may also concern habitats/species other than those targeted by the Natura 2000 network.

Nationally protected areas can be also designated as Natura 2000 sites because of habitats and species which are of EU importance as well.



Do all Natura 2000 sites might become national protected area?

In many cases, the only requirement of the EU is to maintain the habitats and species of European Community Importance at favorable conservation status, by human assistance, e. g. traditional agriculture. For that reason, nominating a site for a site of Special Conservation Interest does not imply that current activities therefrom will have to be changed or stopped.

Member States can choose the way to manage, or maintain the site. This may be regulated in a statutory manner (e. g. making a nature reserve, nature monument, national park, etc.), or contractually (e. g. signing a management agreement with the land owners).

Maintaining habitats and species at favorable conservation status is not necessarily incompatible with human activities. On the contrary, sometimes human activities are the only thing needed to maintain the semi-natural habitats and species in good condition, herein including the well managed hunting.

WILL NATURA 2000 AFFECT THE ACTIVITIES ON MY LAND?

If you are already implementing activities on a site which later becomes a Natura 2000 site, don't be afraid that something will change. Natura 2000 site designation does not mean that all activities must be stopped in the area. In some cases, adaptations or changes may indeed be required to safeguard the habitats and species for which the site has been designated, or to help restore them to a good state of conservation. But in many other cases, the existing activities will continue as before.

In fact, for numerous sites, the habitats and species existing there may be entirely dependent on the continuation of such activities for their long-term survival, and, in such cases, it will be important to find ways to continue to support, and if appropriate, enhance such activities – e. g. regular mowing or grazing or scrub control.



Sheep grazing by private owner to keep open slopes in Aukštaitija National park, which is Natura 2000 site (Lithuania).

ARE FORESTS IN NATURA 2000 MANAGED ONLY FOR CONSERVATION PURPOSES?

No, forests in Natura 2000 can indeed be managed with a view to achieving multiple functions. Apart from nature protection they can be managed for the purposes of timber production, hunting, recreation etc. However, forest management in Natura 2000 sites must always respect the specific conservation objectives and actively contribute to achieve them. Where a Natura 2000 site overlaps with a national nature reserve or a national park, forests are generally managed mainly for conservation purposes according to the relevant national legislation.

Effective management of Natura 2000 sites implies close cooperation between competent nature conservation and forest authorities, public and private forest owners and other interest groups and NGOs. Thus, reaching mutual agreement, whilst respecting the legitimate interests of all stakeholders is very important.



Treasures of the forests. Berries grow naturally in the wild Finnish forests – in one of the cleanest environments in the world.

IS THERE A FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR NATURA 2000 SITES MANAGEMENT?

The Natura 2000 network is the cornerstone of EU biodiversity policy. However, like other protected areas, the Natura 2000 network needs funding in order to achieve its goals.

Management requirements of Natura 2000 have been integrated into different EU funding streams, as the Structural Funds (ERDF), Rural Development Fund (EAFRD), European Maritime Fisheries Fund (EMFF), LIFE, etc.

Of course, Member State should also financially contribute to the measures.

The LIFE program is the only area of European spending that is dedicated solely to the EU's environment and nature conservation projects (as well as projects in some candidate, acceding and neighboring countries). The projects delivered under this program have provided value for money, secured and created jobs, have helped to establish innovative projects across the EU and have delivered successful results on the ground.



Lithuanian LIFE Integrated Project "Optimizing the management of Natura 2000 network in Lithuania".

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR NATURA 2000

Since 1992, LIFE has co-financed some 4171 projects, contributing approximately €3.4 billion to the protection of the environment and climate.

Good news for nature values protection! Financing for Natura 2000 areas is available for long-term!

Find out more about financing opportunities for Natura 2000



ARE FORESTS IN NATURA 2000 TO BE MANAGED ONLY FOR NATURE CONSERVATION PURPOSES?

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Implementation of Habitats and Birds Directives, creation of Natura 2000 sites network is based on the principle of subsidiarity. It is up to the Member State to decide what is the best way to conserve the nature values (habitats and species) in the sites that are of EU Importance.

Management plans are proposed as a useful tool in determining what actions to be taken on a site to keep the habitats and species of EU importance in favorable conservation status. These plans are site specific and give opportunities for consultations with stakeholders (protected area management institutions, local government, non-governmental organizations, local communities etc.).



Discussion on the Management Plan for potential Natura 2000 site in Prespa Lake (North Macedonia).

Natura 2000 sites are managed on the principles of economic activity in protected areas to avoid threats to ecosystems:

- ACCEPTANCE - the system of protected areas is not set against economic activity in general. In fact it promotes appropriate development in suitable locations, time and conditions.
- PRECAUTIONS - it is important to understand in a timely manner the potential negative effects and to try to mitigate them by all means.
- SELECTION - only activities which may harm protected values are prohibited or restricted in protected areas.



Mowing in Natura 2000 site according to the Management Plan (Lithuania).