

The conservation of biodiversity and of the traditional man-made environment in the Greek islands are important drivers for achieving overall sustainable development objectives. They are catalysts for promoting sustainable practices like sustainable tourism and for enhancing local communities' shift towards sustainable lifestyles and resilient societies.



The Exhibition presents the history, traditions, cultural heritage and rich natural biodiversity of the Aegean and the Ionian Seas and comprises:

- a Photo Exhibition
- a Video Exhibition
- a Book Exhibition

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National Centre of Environment and Sustainable Development



Hellenic Ministry of Tourism



Hellenic Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Insular Policy - General Secretariat of the Aegean and Insular Policy

WITH THE SUPPORT OF:



Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs



Greek National Tourism Organisation



Conserving biodiversity and the traditional man-made environment in the Greek islands: Drivers for sustainable tourism and resilient societies

Photo & video Exhibition in the margins of the UN High-Level Political Forum (HLPF)

New York, 9-18 July 2018



Venue:
**UN Headquarters
Conference Building
1B NECK area**



Greece attaches great importance to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as an opportunity for transition to a new fair and sustainable development path which ensures a balance between economic growth, social cohesion and wellbeing as well as protection of the country's globally significant natural capital.

Greece is a maritime nation with more than 9,800 islands and an extensive coastline of 18,400 km. This unique insular geography fosters an exceptionally rich ecological treasury that constitutes the country's identity. Diverse geomorphologic and climatic conditions in the Greek islands lead to the creation of a wide range of ecosystems and habitat types with a high degree of endemism. In turn, this biodiversity wealth constitutes an important asset for enabling sustainable practices, especially in tourism, a back-bone sector for the Greek economy.

The Exhibition intends to show-case how the unique physical characteristics of Greece, instead of drawbacks, become drivers for growth. It aims to highlight the re-invention of sustainable traditional techniques and practices, especially in the arid Aegean islands, that boosts local development, social cohesion, enhanced livelihoods and innovation (in particular regarding SDGs 6, 7, 11, 12 and 15 and their interlinkages), creating resilient societies and a model to be duplicated today in the country and elsewhere.



Biodiversity in the Greek islands

Greece is home to Europe's 40% of the plant species and 18% of the animal species.

Greek islands are one of the most outstanding laboratories of nature and one of the world's hotspots for endemism: 3,500 plant species; 300 bird species; 60 reptile species; over 2,500 species of invertebrates.

Island societies have lived in harmony with nature throughout the centuries.

Traditional man-made environment in the Greek islands

Greek islands gave birth to some of the most renowned civilisations of humanity: they host over 25% of the country's cultural heritage, i.e. 10,000 listed archaeological sites and monuments.

Greek islands also host over 500 listed traditional settlements with unique and diverse architectural and morphological features. Island settlements have been shaped on ingenious nature-based solutions throughout the centuries.

This cultural heritage from the past teaches us how to follow a sustainable development path, as a source of inspiration and innovation, today.

Sustainable tourism in the Greek islands

Tourism contributes to 19.7% of Greece's total GDP with 30 million international arrivals, in 2017.

Greece is a sustainable, 365-day tourism destination: ecotourism and outdoor activities that build on the unique biological wealth and traditions of the Greek islands allow visitors to discover the natural and cultural diversity of each island, while meaningfully supporting local resources, local production and local communities.

