

International Manual of Planning Practice

Judith Ryser and Teresa Franchini
Editors



ISOCARP
Knowledge for better Cities



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USB card: full country contributions, accessible through interactive lists by authors and by countries

First and foremost, we wish to express our gratitude to the many authors who have made this book possible. For a successful publication of this kind we depended on the generosity, professional knowledge and insight of planners in their respective countries. Only with such cooperation were we able to update the existing entries and add new ones with accuracy and to high standard. We are particularly grateful for the loyal authors who updated their contribution, sometimes over several editions. We are pleased to welcome new authors who have accepted our invitation to widen the scope of the previous edition. We also appreciate those who were willing to update contributions of the 2008 edition whose authors were no longer available.

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The planning system is the key instrument which balances property rights with the public interest by translating spatial development processes into physical form. In a globalising world cities have gained importance as drivers of the economy and protagonists of sustainability while development takes place at ever increasing scale and pace. Such dynamic evolution requires planning to adjust and innovate relentlessly.

The International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISOCARP) took an early initiative in 1992 to illustrate these processes in the International Manual of Planning Practice (IMPP). The innovative aspect of this unique source of information is to emphasise the relationship between the planning system and its application in practice.

The much expanded 6th edition of IMPP of 2015 in terms of number of countries and content follows the new format of the 5th edition of 2008 as a book with a digital device. The book consists of a concise synthesis of planning systems in 135 countries from all five continents and an essay on the state of the art and future outlook of planning based on the contributions. The USB card contains the full papers with illustrations produced by practising planners.

IMPP brings together their expertise to the benefit of all stakeholders of the built environment. It is also a comparative reference compendium for academics and students and an initial guide for planners, developers and investors with an international outlook. IMPP is being used around the world for international advising, educational purposes and as reference for international cooperation.

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ISOCARP
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International Manual of Planning Practice

**International Manual
of Planning Practice**

AFRICA**EAST AFRICA**

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- 595 Chile
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ASIA**CENTRAL ASIA**

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EAST ASIA

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- 1116 Syria
- 1134 United Arab Emirates

AUSTRALASIA & PACIFIC

- 1141 Australia
- 1155 New Zealand
- 1169 Papua New Guinea
- 1181 Samoa

EUROPE**EUROPEAN UNION, EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AREA AND BILATERAL**

- 1193 Andorra
- 1201 Austria
- 1220 Belgium
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- 1286 Cyprus
- 1300 Czech Republic
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- 1321 Estonia
- 1334 Finland
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- 1362 Germany
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- 1414 Ireland
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- 1457 Liechtenstein
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- 1558 Romania
- 1570 Slovakia
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- 1605 Spain
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- 1630 Switzerland
- 1645 United Kingdom

NON EUROPEAN UNION

- 1670 Albania
- 1679 Armenia
- 1693 Azerbaijan
- 1708 Belarus
- 1725 Bosnia & Herzegovina
- 1740 Georgia
- 1753 Kosovo
- 1764 Macedonia
- 1791 Moldova
- 1801 Montenegro
- 1827 Russia
- 1842 Serbia
- 1862 Turkey
- 1873 Ukraine

1889 AUTHORS AND COLLABORATORS

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The editors, Judith Ryser & Teresa Franchini, London and Madrid, September 2015



GREECE

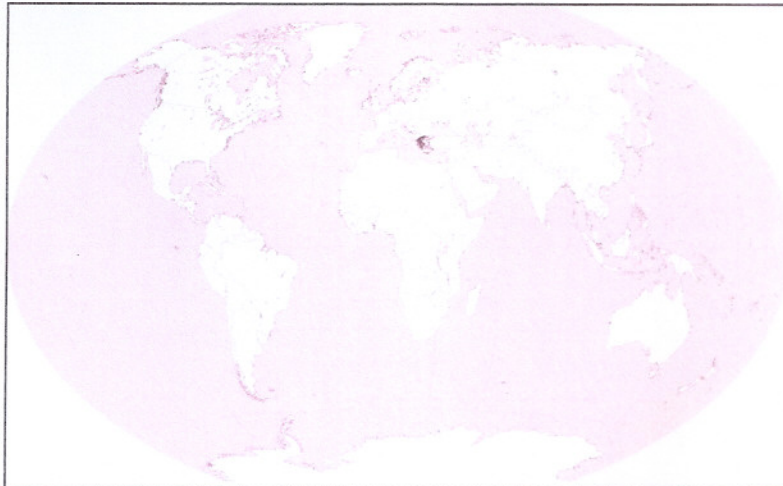
EUROPEAN UNION + EEA



GREECE

GENERAL COUNTRY INFORMATION

Greece is a European country, situated in the Eastern Mediterranean Basin. Its location is considered to be a crucial crossroad between Europe, Western Asia and Africa. Despite Greece being a member of the European Union since 1981, none of its neighbouring countries (Albania, FYROM, Turkey and Bulgaria) have yet become members of the E.U.



Map 1: Greece in the World



Map 2: Greece in Europe

According to the 2011 census, the population of Greece is approximately 11 million; its mainland territory, including islands, extends to 131,957 km² (246,464 km² with the water territories).

Fast facts	Settlements structure (census 2011)
- mainland plus islands total area: 131,957 km ²	- capital city: Athens (3,089,698 population)
- Exclusive Economic Zone: 505,572 km ²	- second city: Thessaloniki (1,032,853 population)
- total population: 10, 815,197 (2011 census)	- density: 82 people/ km ²
- population growth: -1% (2001 – 2011)	- urban population: 8,211,646 (75.9%)
- unemployment rate: 27.3 (2013)	- cities with population >100,000: 8
- GDP 182,054.20 million € (2013)	- cities with population 10,000 – 100,000: 137
- GDP per capita: 17,400 € (2012)	- cities with population 2,000 - 10,000: 266
- GDP growth rate: 8 % (2001 – 2011)	- settlements with population < 2,000: 12,761

Source: Hellenic Statistical Authority – EL.STAT. (www.elstat.gr)

Athens, one of the oldest cities in the world, is the capital of Greece and the most populated urban centre of the country. Thessaloniki, the second most important urban centre, is situated in the Northern part of the country.



Map 3: Settlement structures of Greece

According to the latest Administrative Reorganisation (in 2010) Greece is divided into 13 Regions (2nd tier Local Authorities) and 325 Municipalities (1st tier Local Authorities).



Map 3: Administrative division of Greece (Regions)

Greece is characterised by its inter-regional imbalances and its “isolation” from the rest of the European Union. Development is mainly concentrated in the two metropolitan areas of Athens and Thessaloniki, which together account for almost 60% of the domestic product and almost 50% of the population of the country (2011 census).

Another significant particularity of Greece is its natural geography. Its islands and highlands (Beriatis, 2002) are the dominant pattern, making spatial planning a challenging task. Moreover, as a result of this particularity, Greece has the longest national coastline in Europe (15,000 km), along which the majority of its population lives.

Finally, it should be noted that Greece has been totally affected by the latest economic crisis (2008), which has distorted all major indicators of the country. Besides negatively affecting the economic development of the country, the crisis has also caused serious malfunctions in the spatial planning procedures, a fact which raises controversy on the future of planning in Greece.

PART I PLANNING FRAMEWORK

- **Administrative structure and competences for planning**

According to the latest Administrative Reorganisation (2010), Greece has four (4) levels of administration:

- Central Government
- Decentralised Administration
- Regional Authority (2nd tier Local Authority)
- Municipalities (1st tier Local Authority)

Among the 19 Ministries forming the Government of Greece, the one responsible for spatial planning is the Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change (EE&CC). In addition, there are also eight (8) other Ministries that play an important role in spatial development: i)



Interior Affairs, ii) Economy and Finance, iii) Development and Competitiveness, iv) Agriculture and Alimentation, v) Public Works, Transport and Communication, vi) Culture and Sports, vii) Tourism and viii) Mercantile Marine.

The Ministry of EE&CC includes the following four Directorates for spatial planning:

- Environmental Planning
- Urban Planning
- Spatial Planning
- Forestry and Natural Resources

In addition, at the ministerial level, two bodies play a significant role in planning procedures:

- Co-ordinating Committee of Governmental Policy regarding Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development (ministerial body, chaired by the Minister of EE&CC)
- National Council for Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development [advisory body composed of representatives of local authorities, economic and productive chambers, as well as NGOs, university professors, experts, etc.].

At the regional level, every Region has its own administrative structure with a Directorate responsible for Spatial Planning and Environmental Protection.

- **Other characteristics**

History of planning

The history of spatial planning in Greece can be divided into three main periods, according to the legislation and plans produced.

1st period: up to 1975

Spatial planning and policy in Greece dates back to 1923 when the first Urban Planning Act came into force, imposing the elaboration of a great number of town and settlement Plans in the country. Although the Act of 1923 was often criticised for not incorporating economic and social aspects in the Town Plans, it was not replaced for several decades, until the nineteen seventies.

2nd period: 1975 – 1990

In 1975, the ratification of the Greek Constitution set a new era for spatial planning in Greece. Spatial planning was placed under the regulatory authority of the State (art.24), in an effort to ensure functionality and spatial justice in the development of Greek settlements (Giannakourou, 1999).

At that period, a series of legislative documents were produced, setting a primary framework for the development of spatial planning in Greece. These documents included: a) Law 360 of 1976 for the implementation of regional and environmental planning in Greece, b) Laws 947 of 1979 and 1337 of 1983 for the organisation of settlements in Greece and c) Law 1650 of 1986 for environmental planning.

These Acts produced a series of City Plans for the most important urban centres, the Master Plans for the Metropolitan Areas of Athens and Thessaloniki, and a series of Special Spatial Plans (SSPs) for environmentally sensitive areas (Beriatos, 2002).



3rd period: 1990 to the present

Since 1990, spatial planning in Greece has entered a new era. Legislation produced in the 1990s established the current spatial planning system of the country and also contributed to the production of the new generation of Plans in Greece at all levels (local, regional and national).

Finally, it is worth noting that despite the changes spatial planning has gone through during the last decades, planning tradition in Greece has always had an “urban” flavour and orientation, with an emphasis on urban architecture and building regulations (CEC, 2000).

History of physical development

Due to its long history of development since ancient times (settlements, cultural spaces, temples, stadia, ports and other infrastructures), Greece is widely identified as one of the most exquisite places in the world, from a cultural and a natural heritage point of view.

In modern times, Greece was only liberated from the Ottoman Empire in 1830 after an occupation of almost 4 centuries of domination. Development, however, did not begin immediately. Indeed, such initiatives began only at the dawn of the 20th century with the construction of the railway network, the most important infrastructure, triggering a new era for the economic and physical development of the country. However, since Greece was involved in World War II, physical development essentially began right after the 1950s.

During the post war era, there was a clear trend of ongoing infrastructure and tourist growth in Greece, accompanied by increased rates of urbanisation and change of land use patterns. At that time, and especially after the 1970s, urban and rural areas were in constant transformation with thousands of buildings being constructed (legal or illegal) creating the so-called “rural-urban continuum”.

The last wave of physical development occurred in the 1990s. At that time, as a member of the European Union with economic indicators lagging in comparison to the other EU members, Greece benefited greatly from financial support (by the CFSs), which was channelled for the realisation and improvement of large-scale technical infrastructures. In parallel, due to this ongoing growth, physical development extended throughout the country, leading to the boost of urbanisation, both in city areas as well as the coastal zone (mostly regarding tourism installations and second homes). However, since urbanisation of that time was totally unplanned and uncontrolled, it caused a serious impact on the Greek natural environment and landscape.

Now, more than twenty years later, the harm caused by the uncontrolled development of the 1990s is still a subject that has to be addressed by the State and the competent spatial planning authorities. However, the recent economic crisis affecting the country since 2008 is another obstacle that is postponing any efforts for this purpose.

- **Planning legislation**

Planning legislation in Greece has a tradition of almost one century. However, the existing planning system has been in force since the 1990s and apart from the constitutional provisions (initially voted in 1975 and revised in 1985, 2001 and 2008) consists of the following main legislative acts:

- L. 2742/1999 for sustainable spatial planning, which launched the Spatial Plans at the national and regional level



- L. 2508/1997 for the sustainable development of cities and settlements, which extended the planning area covered by Local Plans to the Municipal limits (instead of the city limits that was the practice until then)
- Building Code [initially came into force in 1985 (L.1577) and then amended and supplemented in 1988, 2000 and 2012 (by Laws: 1772, 2831 and 4067)] which sets the general rules for the construction of buildings
- A series of statutes providing building regulations for special categories of areas, such as: rural settlements, second home areas, tourist development areas, industrial parks, etc.

Finally, it should be noted that according to the Greek planning legislation, areas that are still without Plans in force (usually in the periphery of cities and villages of the countryside, etc.) are not excluded from development/building rights, as long as someone possesses a minimal plot of land (>0,4 ha) which has access to a municipal road.

PART II PLANNING PROCESS

• Planning system and implementation instruments

The Greek planning system includes different types of Plans at all levels, ranging from strategic and framework plans to regulatory urban plans and zoning plans. These relate to each other, with the higher level plans being binding on the plans of lower levels.

Plans at national level

Law 2742, provides two kinds of instruments at the national level: a) the "General Framework for Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development", which constitutes the National Plan and b) the "Special/Sectoral Frameworks for Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development", which constitute Special National Plans and contain guidelines either for specific productive sectors (i.e. tourism, industry, etc.) or for special territories (mountains, islands, etc.).

The National Plan contains general guidelines for the spatial organisation and development of the national territory (in accordance with the principles of ESDP) and specifically for the: a) development poles and axes of the country, b) national and international scale technical infrastructures, c) development of productive activities at the national level, d) structure of the urban systems (Metropolitan areas, etc.) and e) development of mountainous, rural, coastal and insular areas.

Plans at regional level

At the regional level, the same Law (2742) launches the "Regional Frameworks for Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development", which constitute the Spatial Plans at Regional level.

Regional Plans take into consideration all guidelines set by the National and Special Plans and formulate guidelines for the: a) positioning of Greek regions in the national and international context, b) technical infrastructure of regional and sub-regional importance, c) administrative and economic revitalisation/reformation of the Greek periphery, d) organisation of the productive activities, e) structure of the regional and sub-regional urban system and f) protection of the natural and cultural heritage

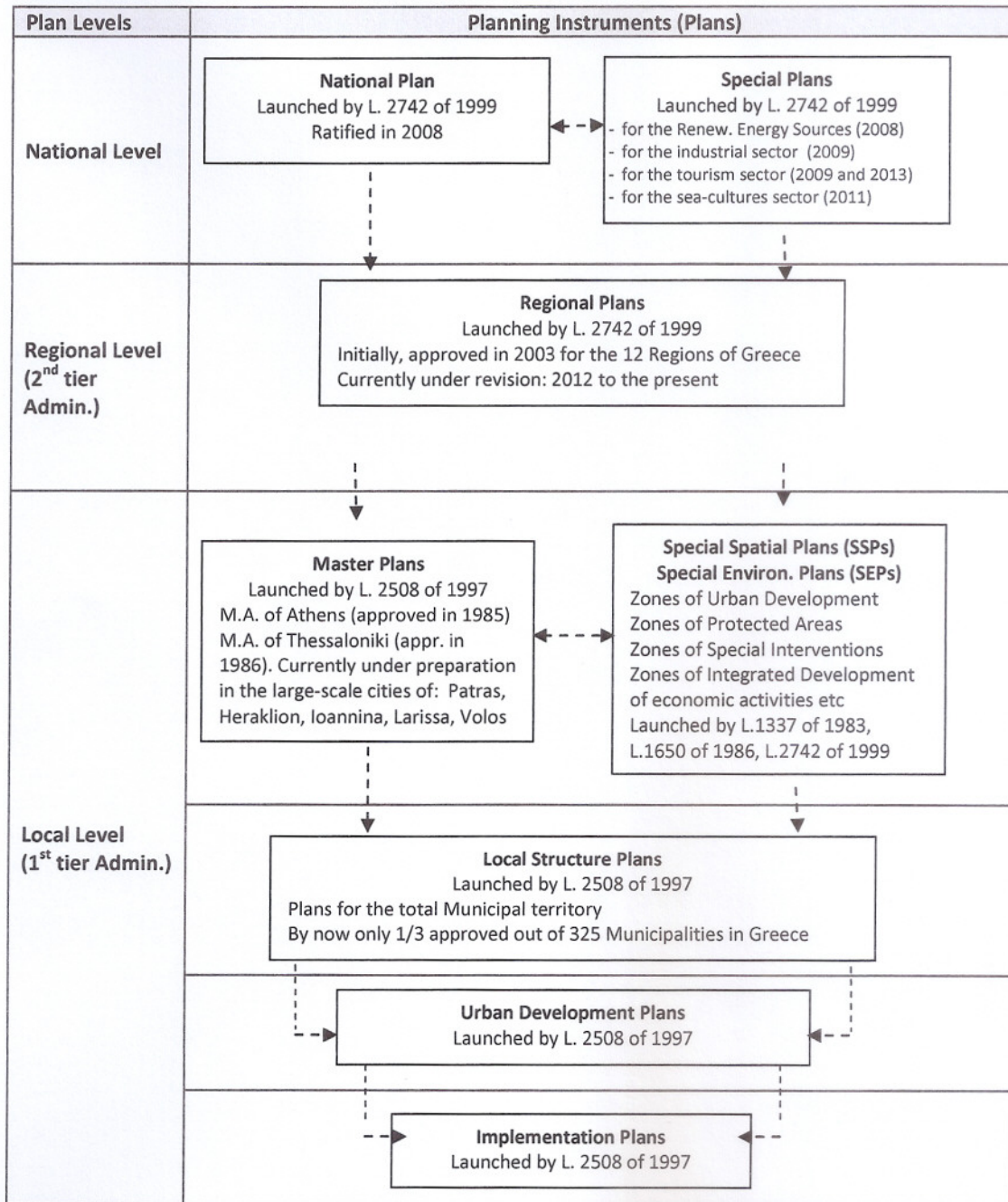


Table 1: Overview of the planning system and planning instruments in Greece

Source: Beriatis, 2002 (updated by the author)



Planning Levels	Type of Plans	Procedures/Competent authorities			
		Elaboration	Consultation	Approval	Ratification
National Level	National Plan	Ministry of EE&CC	National Council of Spatial Planning & SD	- CM Decision - Ministerial Committee	Parliament /National Assembly
	Special National Plans	Ministry of EE&CC	National Council of Spatial Planning & SD	- CM Decision - Ministerial Committee	--No
Regional level	Regional Plans	- Ministry of EE&CC - Region	-National Council of Spatial Planning & SD -Regional Council	Decision of Minister of EE&CC	--No
Local level	Master Plans (with the exception of Athens and Thessaloniki M.A.s)	- Ministry of EE&CC	- Regional Council - Relevant municipal councils	Ministry of EE&CC by Presidential Decree	--No
	Local Structure Plans	- Municipality or - Region, or - Decentralized Administration	- Region - Municipal Council	Secretary General of the Decentralized Administration	--No
	Urban Development Plans	- Municipality, or - Region, or - Decentralized Administration	- Region - Municipal Council	Ministry of EE&CC or Presidential Decree	--No
	Implementation Plans	Municipality		Region	

Table 2: Planning instruments (plans) and procedures at all levels

Source: compiled by the author

Plans at local level

At the local level, the planning system provides four kinds of Plans (of sequential, top-down order):

- Master Plans refer specifically to Metropolitan areas or large-scale cities of Greece (with multi-municipal structure, forming urban agglomerations).
- Local Structure Plans extend to the whole surface of a Municipality, providing guidelines for its spatial organisation.
- Urban Development Plans translate the Local Structure Plans into concrete spatial strategies and provide detailed land-use and development restrictions for the building-up of areas within the Municipal territory.
- Implementation Plans are designed for the implementation of the Urban Plans. They are also Regulatory Plans, regarding mainly for property adjustments.



Finally, it has to be noted that all kinds of plans at all levels (apart from the Urban Plans and the Implementation Plans) have a validity of 15 years and are accompanied by detailed Action Plans, which designate actions required, as well as ways/sources of funding.

- Development control and related mechanisms

Since Greece has an “urban”-oriented planning tradition, development control is mainly accomplished through building permits. Every work or construction made in the country requires a special permit from the competent Urban Control Offices (of the relevant Municipalities). These Urban Control Offices are responsible for implementing a combined system of planning and building control, as well as supervising land-use changes in their Municipal territory.

Moreover, extra permissions are needed in the following cases: a) when the construction takes place in the proximity of an archaeological or historical monument/site and b) when a project (public or private) is expected to have significant impact on the environment.

- Participation and appeal

Consultation and participation is foreseen at all levels by the Greek planning legislation. However, it is at the local level that the procedure of public participation is facilitated the most.

At the national level the only formal structure for realising consultation procedures and socio-political participation is the *National Council of Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development*. The Council, which has the form of a dialogue forum, serves for the consultation of national level Plans and as an advisory body to the Minister of EE&CC for any other issues related to spatial planning. However, public participation at the national level is operated by “open-government” procedures (via internet).

At the regional level consultation takes place among the Ministry of EE&CC, the Regional Authorities and the Planning Consultancy Team, at least twice during the preparation of the Plan. Consultation procedures at this level are also open to the public and to the various local actors (public or private Institutions, NGOs and other stakeholders). Finally, similar consultations are organised within the Regional Councils, and within the National Council of Spatial Planning in order to provide the necessary input to the Ministry of EE&CC before approving the Regional Plans.

At the local level the participatory procedures are as follows:

- the legal process, which derives from the right of citizens (or institutions) to object before the Municipality regarding planning regulations imposed on their properties
- the public participation process, which was formally launched by L.1337 (of 1983) and foresaw the so-called Neighbourhood Planning Committee (NPC). The NPC is a Committee (designated and elected by the inhabitants of the area) which expresses its opinion before the Local Authorities (Municipal Councils) regarding all matters raised by the Local and Urban Plans. Beyond the establishment of the NPC, L.1337 provided other means of public participation (public meetings, release of information through the press, etc.), provisions that aimed at increasing the awareness of the public (in planning and development process matters), in a more organised way.



Financing/funding instruments

Regarding the financing for the preparation and the implementation of spatial plans in Greece, the funding instruments (financial programmes) vary according to the level of the Plan and/or the sector of intervention. At the moment, the main existing financial programmes, co-financed by the EU and the Greek Government, are:

- Community Support Framework (CSF) currently called Partnership Contract which takes the form of:
 - Sectoral Operational Programmes (e.g. for the environment, competitiveness, development of human resources, etc.) at the National Level
 - Regional Operational Programmes at the Regional-Local level
- Community initiatives and programmes of territorial co-operation (e.g. Interreg, TERRA, etc.)

Moreover, every few years the Greek Government releases a new Investments Law, the most recent being in 2011 (L.3908). It must be noted though, that due to the economic conjuncture, these Laws are in constant change (L.4072/2012 and L.4146/2013) in order to comply with the measures demanded by the IMF Memorandum for the economic recovery of Greece.

PART III SUSTAINABILITY AND GOVERNANCE

• Sustainability and other complementary legislation

To achieve sustainability, environmental planning and protection is of paramount importance. Indeed, the protection of the environment must be considered as a non-negotiable dimension in planning procedures, as well as a prerequisite for achieving sustainable development, for the benefit of future generations.

In Greece, the protection of the environment is subject to institutional Law 1650 of 1986, while other relevant environmental issues are also regulated by a great number of community directives incorporated in the Greek legislation, and by other significant acts, ratifying international conventions for the environment (Table 3).

On the other hand, Agenda 21 and its sub-programmes of Local Agenda and Habitat Agenda (considered to be extremely effective planning instruments for Sustainable Development at local level) had no actual results in Greece, despite the immediate efforts of the Central Government to prepare a National Action Plan right after the 1st Rio Summit (in 1992). This missed opportunity was mainly due to: a) lack of information and the weakness of Local Authorities to implement Agenda 21 and b) lack of assistance and coordination on behalf of the Ministry of EE&CC towards the Local Authorities, mainly in matters of public participation and mobilisation of the citizens in planning procedures.

National legislation

- L.1650 of 1986: for the protection of the environment (as amended by L.3937 of 2011)
- L. 2971 of 2001: for the coastal zone (seashore - backshore) and other provisions
- L. 3028 of 2002: for the protection of antiquities and cultural heritage
- L. 3199 of 2003: for the protection and management of water resources
- L. 3937 of 2011: for the conservation of biological diversity

International Conventions (integration to national legislation)

- L. 2205 of 1994: Ratification of the U.N. Convention on Climate Change
- L. 2488 of 1997: Ratification of the U.N. Convention to combat Desertification
- L.3827 of 2010: Ratification of the European Landscape Convention (by CoE)

Table 3: Complementary legislation for spatial planning

- **Governance**

According to the United Nations Development, governance (a term of ancient Greek origin derived from the word "kyvernán") is defined as "the rules of the political system to solve conflicts between actors and adopt decisions (legality) and the "proper functioning of institutions and their acceptance by the public ("legitimacy") which is a consensus - within civil society - by democratic means.

Despite its Greek origin, in comparison to other western European Countries, governance in Greece has no significant weight. With the exception of the *National Council for Spatial Planning*, there are no other similar governance bodies either at the regional or local level.

However, the lack of governance is mostly obvious at the metropolitan level (Greater Athens and Thessaloniki), where no corresponding authority or other responsible body exists for the coordination of all competent authorities and other relevant actors from the public or private sector.

- **Information and Communication Technology**

Information and Communication Technology was recently introduced in Greece. Therefore, for the moment it has no significant use in the planning process. It must be noted though, that ICT plays a constantly increasing role in the effort to strengthen the relationship between authorities and the citizens.

PART IV EVALUATION

Evaluation of the planning framework

Despite the fact that Greece has a planning history of almost a century, it was not until the 1990s, that a complete planning system was set, providing Plans at all levels. However, the fact that these Plans are numerous and must interact with each other in a top-down order has caused a series of malfunctions and contradictions, both in their preparation and implementation. As a result, instead of planning decisions being made by the Planning Authorities, they are often made by the Supreme Court of Greece, which is responsible for the adjudication of objections raised against the Plans.



Evaluation of the preparation procedures

Even if the existing planning system was set up almost two decades ago, the preparation of the Plans is evolving at a very slow pace. Specifically, at the national level, Plans were drawn up during the last five years, but important categories of space are still lacking spatial guidelines (e.g. coastal zones, protected areas, mountains, etc.). At the local level, which is the most important planning level, only about 1/3 of the Local Structure Plans have been produced so far. Finally, another important defect is the mixed order in which Plans are produced, creating a serious gap between guidelines that higher-level Plans ought to provide for Plans at lower level, as well as a discontinuity in planning regulations among neighbouring territories.

Evaluation of the implementation procedures

At the national and regional levels, a serious malfunction results from the low level of public participation and consultation. Usually, Local and Regional Authorities are opposed to guidelines set by a higher-level Plan and therefore resist its implementation. Moreover, due to inefficient control mechanisms, implementation of Local Plans is usually halted by the illegal building construction routinely taking place in Greece. In some cases though, non-implementation of Plans is a matter of insufficient financing, which affects the implementation at all levels. Finally, responsibility also lies with the Ministry of EE&CC, which has failed to provide sufficient supervision on implementation, as well as with other Greek Ministries that are keen on derogating planning regulations in favour of investments considered of high priority and importance for the development of the Greek economy.

In conclusion, spatial planning practice in Greece has reached a crucial point. Maybe the current crisis - which apart from the Greek economy has also challenged spatial planning - can serve as the transition to the next stage. For the moment, the competent Ministry of EE&CC is initiating discussions regarding the reformation of the existing planning system, with the aspiration to improve and simplify planning procedures. However, due to fast track investments that have been launched lately - in the name of the economic recovery of the country - contradictory opinions are heard regarding the future of spatial planning in Greece.

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MAIN WEBSITES RELEVANT TO PLANNING PRACTICE

- Hellenic Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change www.ypeka.gr
- Planning Department of the Metropolitan Area of Athens: www.organismosathinas.gr
- Planning Department of the Metropolitan Area of Thessaloniki: www.orth.gr
- Society of Greek Engineers in Urban and Regional Planning: www.poleodomia.gr
- Greek Urban Planners Association: www.sepox.gr
- WWF: www.wwf-hellas.org
- Greek Biotope/Wetland Centre: www.ekby.gr
- Hellenic Company of Natural Protection: www.eepf.gr
- Hellenic Society for the Environment and Cultural Heritage www.ellet.gr
- Hellenic Ornithological Company: www.ornithologiki.gr
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