

A Race to Protect Europe's Natural Heritage

WWF European Snapshot Report on the Status of Implementation of the Habitats Directive

ITALY
Score: 17/30

I. Legal Aspects of Implementation			Score: 5/9
<p>Transposition: To what extent has the Habitats Directive been transposed into national or regional law?</p>			
Good/complete transposition 3	Some gaps remaining 2	Key/major gaps remaining 1	Failure to transpose 0
<p>The Directive has been transposed into national legislation but there is an absence of legal instruments to apply conservation measures and no procedures exist for assessing the impacts of measures on habitats and species. Recently, the list of Sites of Community Interest (SCIs) was officially published (22 April 2000). However, the site maps are not yet published. This is the responsibility of the regions. National level legislation currently covers existing nature areas, but makes no mention of Natura 2000 sites.</p>			
<p>Complaints in Progress at the European level: How significant are current Commission complaints in progress against your Member State?</p>			
No outstanding complaints 3	Some complaints not yet dealt with 2	Significant complaints not yet dealt with 1	Decisions of the ECJ not yet dealt with 0
<p>NGOs informed (and inform) the European and national authorities about the conflict between conservation of some Sites of Community Interest and local economic development. For instance, in the proposed SCI "Is Arenas" (code pSCI ITB032228), the European Court of Justice, reacting to pressure from NGOs, blocked a project to build a tourist village. In some proposed SCIs, the range of Community funding being applied in the area, from LIFE-Nature to structural funds, results in the official approval of actions with opposing objectives (eg nature protection action vs intensive agricultural production). For this reason an ongoing LIFE-Nature project has been blocked in the area of San Vittorino (code pSCI IT6020012).</p>			
<p>Member State Response to Complaints: How adequate do you consider your Member State's response to Commission complaints to be?</p>			
Good response at stage of Letter of formal notice 3	Response before case was referral to the ECJ 2	Response only after ECJ case decided 1	No response 0
<p>The number of SPAs (Special Protected Areas, under the Bird's Directive) was (and is still) insufficient. The ECJ began proceedings against Italy for urgent application of the Birds Directive. During the first phase of this procedure, the response from the Ministry of the Environment was clear and immediate: in a few months, the number of SPAs increased. However, today, the number and the surface of SPAs is not yet sufficient and overlapping with the IBAs (Important Bird Areas), proposed by NGOs. This deficiency involves critical aspects of the Habitat Directive.</p>			

II. Protecting Habitats and Species			Score: 7/12
<i>Natura 2000: How adequate is the list of proposed Natura 2000 sites for the protection of habitats and species?</i>			
coherent national network 3	more than 50 % sufficient 2	less than 50 % sufficient 1	no list submitted 0
<p>Considering that national protected areas currently cover 10% of the national territory, the total area covered by the list of the pSCIs and SPAs could amount to 16% of the terrestrial national territory (an excellent result). However, the number of SPAs is insufficient (see above). Shadow list sites have not yet been included by national authorities. Moreover the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network in Italy is not sufficient (absence of corridor analysis, no buffer zone studies, etc.). The proposed official marine sites are totally insufficient. The local populations of some species such as otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) and bottlenose dolphin (<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>) are at risk of extinction. No conservation measures have been planned or implemented. The elaboration of guidelines for management of sites is ongoing as part of a LIFE-Nature project run by the Ministry of the Environment.</p>			
<i>Natura 2000: How does your Member State score on the putting in place of management measures?</i> (Article 6)			
All of the above measures have been adequately addressed 3	Some of the measures have been adequately addressed 2	Very few measures are being addressed or are in place 1	Measures are non-existent 0
<p>The management plans for species or habitats of the Directive, elaborated by the LIFE-Nature project mentioned above, are not yet approved by public authorities except in a single case (Province of Ravenna). The elaboration of guidelines for the management of Natura 2000 sites is ongoing under the responsibility of the Ministry of the Environment. The problem is very difficult for all proposed sites (pSCIs and SPAs) outside officially protected areas (due to the absence of legal instruments to apply conservation measures). There is also an absence of assessment procedures for evaluating impacts of measures inside pSCIs and SPAs.</p>			
<i>Protection of species beyond Natura 2000: How adequate are non-site based measures for the protection of species?</i> (Article 12, 13, 14 and 16)			
All of the requirements have been adequately addressed 3	Some of the of the requirements have been adequately addressed 2	Very few of the requirements are being addressed or are in place 1	Efforts to address the requirements are non-existent 0
<p>No specific protection measures exist to safeguard Habitats Directive species outside the Natura 2000 network. Only general protection measures are found as part of existing national legislation (such as the Hunting Law, Institution of Protected Areas, etc.).</p>			

<p>Complementary measures: Is your Member State giving adequate attention to complementary measures, such as for research, planning and species reintroduction?</p> <p>(Articles 10, 11, 18 and 22)</p>			
Good effort to implement complementary measures 3	Mixed effort to implement complementary measures 2	Poor effort to implement complementary measures 1	No effort to implement complementary measures 0
<p>Efforts to implement complementary measures in the context of the Natura 2000 network are generally poor. At the national level the research effort is low (only a small number of field researchers are studying the status of species and habitats). Planning is ongoing under numerous, but incoherent, programmes (eg Carta della Natura, Rete ecologica nazionale, LIFE projects, regional list of protected areas).</p>			
III. Putting Plans into Practice			Score: 5/9
<p>Finance: Is your government devoting adequate human and financial resources to implementation of the Directive?</p>			
Significant additional resources dedicated to implementation of the Directive 3	Some additional resources dedicated 2	Very few additional resources dedicated 1	No additional resources dedicated 0
<p>The impression is that the approach of the Ministry of the Environment to the Natura 2000 Network is, today, better than two or three years ago. However, despite the significant efforts made, there are still only limited resources dedicated to implementation the Directive at national and regional level.</p>			
<p>Information and Awareness Raising: Is your government doing enough to provide information and raise awareness about Natura 2000 and biodiversity conservation?</p>			
Good information and awareness raising activities 3	Some good activities 2	Few information and awareness raising activities 1	No information and awareness raising activities 0
<p>At central level, some good events are organised by the Ministry of the Environment (such as the First National Conference of Protected areas). At regional level, but not for all Italian Regions, excellent meetings on the Natura 2000 network are organised with the participation of a large public audience. With regard to the official web-site of the Ministry of the Environment, it is not rich in information (maps are poor) and the links with the database are absent. Also, it is not easy to gain access to the official database of the Natura 2000 Network.</p>			
<p>Stakeholder Participation: Is your government doing enough to involve stakeholders and the general public in the Natura 2000 process?</p>			
Significant amount of effort to consult stakeholders + public 3	Good efforts to consult stakeholders + public 2	Limited efforts of consult stakeholders + public 1	No consultations with stakeholders + public 0
<p>During the first phase of the process to create the Natura 2000 network, the performance of the central authorities was very poor on stakeholder involvement. However, the role of NGOs was significant enough</p>			

to stimulate some action in the central institutions. At present, there are limited efforts by central authorities to involve landowners, specific economic interests and the public. Consultations in the process of developing management plans are never conducted. Recently however, within a pilot LIFE-Nature project where the Ministry of the Environment, the scientific community and NGOs are working together, consultation is taking place. The previous experiences of NGOs in private and public consultations as part of LIFE-projects are proving useful at this stage for the elaboration of management plan guidelines for Natura 2000 sites.

IV. Political Will

In your opinion, has there been a change in political will or momentum in your Member State around implementation of the Directive? Describe the current political climate surrounding the Directive if you can.

The impression is that, at national level, ***the creation of the Natura 2000 network is undervalued and its cost underestimated***. There are ***some regions*** such as Abruzzo, Veneto, Friuli and Emilia Romagna where the ***current political position is against implementation of the Directive***. The above-mentioned regional authorities have elaborated a proposal to reduce the number and surface of sites. In other regions (Sardinia) some municipalities are creating a climate of strong opposition to block the creation of the National Park of Gennargentu with indirect effects on the pSCIs inside the area. At the local level conflicts exist (private landowners, hunting lobby pressures) on other side of the country (in the Pollino National Park area, in the Messina Strait, in the Tuscany Archipelago).

V. Conclusions and Recommendations

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