



Maritime spatial planning: Commission refers GREECE to the Court of Justice for its failure to establish and communicate its Maritime Spatial Plans

Brussels, 21 December 2023

Today, the European Commission decided to refer **Greece** (INFR(2021)2226) to the Court of Justice of the European Union for its failure to ensure the correct implementation of [Directive \(EU\) 2014/89](#) on maritime spatial planning.

The Directive sets out a common approach for EU countries to plan their maritime areas. Maritime spatial planning seeks to organise human activities in marine areas to meet various ecological, economic and social objectives. Amongst these are the development of a sustainable blue economy, the sustainable use of marine resources, and the conservation of healthy marine ecosystems and biodiversity. Correct implementation of the Directive is essential to ensure proper achievement of these objectives as part of the [European Green Deal](#).

The Directive requires coastal EU Member States to draw up maritime spatial plans no later than 31 March 2021, and to communicate the plans to the Commission and other Member States concerned within three months of their publication. However, Greece has still not drawn up and submitted their maritime spatial plans to the Commission.

Therefore, following a letter of formal notice sent in December 2021, and a reasoned opinion in April 2023, the Commission is referring Greece to the Court of Justice of the European Union.

Background

The Maritime Spatial Planning Directive ([Directive 2014/89/EU](#)) establishes a framework for maritime spatial planning aimed at promoting the sustainable growth of maritime economies, the sustainable development of marine areas and the sustainable use of marine resources.

Within the Integrated Maritime Policy of the Union, that framework provides for the establishment and implementation by Member States of maritime spatial planning with the aim of contributing to the objectives specified in Article 5 of the Directive. Maritime spatial planning must take into account interactions between activities on land and at sea, reduce conflicts and create synergies, as well as foster cooperation across borders between EU countries (e.g. to develop renewable energy, allocate shipping lanes, lay pipelines and submarine cables, etc.). In this way it also gives effect to the relevant provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

The Commission has today decided to close a similar case against Bulgaria following adoption and submission to the Commission of their maritime spatial plan on 31 August 2023.

For More Information

[Maritime Spatial Planning](#)

[Infringement decisions database](#)

[EU infringement procedure](#)

[Greece \(INFR\(2021\)2226\)](#)

[December 2023 Infringement package](#)

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Press contacts:

[Adalbert JAHNZ](#) (+ 32 2 295 31 56)

[Daniela STOYCHEVA](#) (+32 2 295 36 64)

General public inquiries: [Europe Direct](#) by phone [00 800 67 89 10 11](#) or by [email](#)