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**“ HELLENIC COASTAL POLICY;
RECENT LANDMARKS, PERSPECTIVE AND SOME IDEAS ”**

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HELLENIC COASTAL POLICY; RECENT LANDMARKS, PERSPECTIVE AND SOME IDEAS

0. ABSTRACT

Apart from a brief review of the past Hellenic efforts in the realm of spatial planning, including the recent statutory reformation in the context of sustainable development [Law 2742/1999], this presentation intends to critically depict the under approval Special Framework (Plan) for the **Hellenic coastal space**. This kind of legislation (directive) indicates the beginning of a new hopeful period towards the implementation of a coastal spatial policy in Hellas, after a long period of non-effective efforts or non-efforts.

The Special Framework purpose is to lay into force rules, for both the environment protection and the improvement of the coastal areas productivity, through the integrated spatial development and the rational management of coastal resources. The examined document recognises land and marine section along the Hellenic coastal areas, critical and dynamic zone as well. It contains the following three main chapters:

1. objectives of the national spatial strategy for coastal areas,
2. guidelines for the integrated management of coastal areas,
3. action plan for the next 15 years.

On the other hand, it is obvious that such a “technical/legislative” approach, which focuses no more than to the coastal areas, is not enough to provide the appropriate implementation of integrated coastal management. Many other parameters have to be considered (and be taken into account, their mutual interactions included), like: national sectoral policies objectives, public and private sector activities, the influences of other EU policies, appropriate level of the administrative decentralization, the new concept of territorial cohesion etc. The final impact of the above parameters on the coastal area is with difficulty recognized and hardly measured. In any case, is almost impossible to manage an area without a comprehensive, clear and continuously monitoring and updating information network.

For the above displayed reasons, the need for new tools to study the spatial notion of coastal areas is very essential and necessary. The construction/development of more sophisticate indices is crucial in order to outline a feasible procedure of recording, measuring and finally modeling and presenting (via GIS) any new man-activity on the coastal areas. In this context, this presentation will try to give a rough idea of new indicators related to the shoreline or the “man-made activities volume”.

In fact, this presentation is part of a broader research of the author, concerning the monitoring of coastal (physical and manmade) spatial changes along a coastal region. This research intends to write down the past facts, to investigate the present situation and to propose to the decision makers good practices of measuring and charting the coastal proceedings. Consequently, it is directly related to the coastal land uses and the attached productive activities, the coastal environment and the sustainable use of its resources.

KEY WORDS.

Hellas, Spatial Planning, Coastal Area, ICZM, Indicator.

1. INTRODUCTION - HELLENIC SPATIAL POLICY

The term “spatial planning” was almost unknown in Hellas till early '60s.

In 1975, the new Hellenic Constitution imposed that the protection of the physical and cultural environment belongs to the State's obligations. In the same text, it is recorded that the spatial reorganization of the territory and the development of cities network is under the regulating responsibility of the State (Article 24). This constitution article can be considered as the official starting point for the Hellenic spatial policy.

One year later, the law *for the spatial planning and the environment* (L.360/1976) was approved by the Hellenic Parliament. In addition, ten years later, a new independent law (L.1860/1986) was approved *for the environment*. However, a national spatial plan has never been enacted in Hellas, as L.360/1976 failed to be really applicable.

The gap was fulfilled through occasional research and study-programmes, in different levels (national, regional, local) and sectors. So, a quite acceptable coordination of sectoral policies (such as the ad hoc allocation of productive activities, of main public infrastructure and mainly of the transportation networks) has been achieved.¹ Within this procedure, the main and more urgent goals were: the management of the land uses along the coastline and close to the urban areas, the protection of natural resources, landscape and sites, the preservation of cultural heritage and the renewing of the urban network.

Especially for the coastal areas, two major efforts, during the beginning of '80s and the mid '90s [Ministry for the Coordination, 1981 & MEPPPW, 1997], **failed to activate government will towards the approval of a specific statutory care for the Hellenic coastal space**, including their management.

Finally, at the end of 1999, the Hellenic Parliament approved a new law for *spatial planning and sustainable development* (L.2742/1999). Its central aim is to set specific goals and moreover to contribute to the upgrading of the integrated land uses management, through the coordination of sectoral policies, on the way to the sustainable use of natural resources. What is more, the responsibility for spatial planning was moved from the Ministry for the Economy to the *Ministry for the Environment, Physical Planning and Public Works* (MEPPPW).

The L.2742/1999 has signalized a new beginning towards the establishment of spatial policy in Hellas. It was an effort to re-activate the planning procedure, just after the publication of ESDP [EC, 1999], with which the Hellenic law is in full accordance. In order to cope with its scopes, the law establishes [Kiousopoulos 2002]:

- Two Bodies (Committees). A governmental 8-member ministerial body, responsible for the policy design, the authorization of plans and the coordination of all related actions (*ministerial Commission for the Coordination of Government Policy in the domain of Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development*, CCGP SP&SD) and a non-governmental 19-member advisory body of social dialogue, a kind of think tank, which is obliged to propose suggestions or to give opinions about serious themes of spatial planning, including the General and the Special Frameworks (*National Council for Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development*, NC SP&SD).
- Three types/levels of *Frameworks* (Plans) of Spatial Planning and Sustainable Develop-

¹ Moreover, because of the Plans nonexistence, the State Council (the highest administrative law Court in Hellas) acts as “physical planner”. In fact, it takes initiatives (especially when it is asked to decide about the rightness of an economic activity location), having as main criterion the environmental protection and the sustainable development notion. [MEPPPW, 1997].

ment (SP&SD), the *National* (“General”), the *Regional* and the *Special*. The last one completes the two other types of plans concerning: sectors, critical areas (such as the rural, the coastal and the mountainous areas and the island complexes) or networks.

- Five kinds of *implementation, control and support Mechanisms*, such as: a) Areas for Organized Development of Productive Activities, b) Areas for Special Spatial Intervention, c) Plans for Integrated Urban Intervention, d) Financial means and e) Information network for SP&SD, a National Observatory, in accordance with the European one (ESPON, European Spatial Planning Observatory Network).

2. THE LEGISLATION IN FORCE

The *Law 2742 for Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development* was approved by the Parliament in October 1999. Some months later (January 2000), a draft copy of the General Framework for SP&SD (prepared by an ad hoc composed scientific working group, under the auspice of the MEPPPW) was available to every body for public discussion. After that intense activity, a long period of 15 months of inactivity has followed.

In June 2001 the non-governmental advisory body (*National Council for SP&SD*) was composed. Until autumn of 2004 it has been in session 8 times (14 days long). During those sessions, the following subjects have been contained in its agenda:

- A. *Special Framework for the Prisons spatial location*. It was the first discussed subject as it had an urgent character for the Government, because the prisons construction program had been already begun and it had faced too many legal and social hindrances.
- B. *General Framework for Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development*. It occupied almost the half of the sessions’ time. The discussion has been pressed to an end by the urgent necessity for the first national spatial plan in Hellas.
- C. *Special Framework for the Coastal Space*. It was discussed during two periods (2001 and 2002), the second one on a significantly improved version.
- D. *Special Framework for the Mountainous Space*. It was the last discussed topic. It is notable that with the previous one “covers” the majority of Hellenic territory.

Finally, five years after the law approval (1999), the final results in the domain of the spatial (non urban) planning process are the following:

- Twelve Regional Frameworks (for the Hellenic regions) are discussed and approved according to the law.
- Only one Plan (Special Framework for the Prisons) has been approved legitimately and it is now in force.
- Three Plans (the General Framework and the two Special Frameworks) have been already discussed, but not yet approved according to the law.

3. THE HELLENIC SPECIAL FRAMEWORK (PLAN) FOR THE COASTAL SPACE

The officially discussed at the ministerial CCGP SP&SD (2003), but not yet approved, Special Framework for the Coastal Space, is connected thematically with the “*European Spatial Development Perspective*” [EC, 1999], the “*EU Recommendation for the Integrated Man-*

agement of Coastal Zones” (2002/413/E.P.) and the “Hellenic Strategy towards the Sustainable Development” [MEPPPW, 2002]. It is noteworthy to be mentioned that the discussed Framework has to do with only the sea front and not with the rivers coasts.

It recognizes [MEPPPW, 2003] that along the Hellenic coastal areas (Hca) is located a great historical and cultural variety, constituted from monuments and newer settlements. Moreover, the document ascertains a coastal concentration of: i) a major percentage of transportation and other infrastructure networks, ii) a big enough amount of population (only the sixth Hellenic city is not coastal, and among the 15 biggest only 6 are not located just close to the sea) and iii) a lot of natural and productive resources and activities.

On the other hand, it is appreciated that the Hellenic coastal areas:

- Confront severe ecological problems because of the population augmentation and the productive activities evolution. Both of them threaten more and more the environmental and social balance of coastal zones.
- Are very delicate to natural phenomena, especially the abnormal climate change, the elevation of the sea level, the fluids etc.
- Are characterized by a low level organization that drives to conflicts between the productive land uses and the environment.
- Are characterized by a progressive minimization of their biological variety.
- Have problems related to the water quantity and quality, as the related demand surpasses the supply.
- Suffer from the policy results in areas far away the shoreline, e.g. in mountainous regions.

The Special Framework **purpose** is to lay down rules, for both the coastal environment protection and the improvement of its productivity, through the integrated spatial development and the rational management of resources. It contents the following three parts:

1. Objectives of the national spatial strategy for coastal areas.
2. Guidelines for the integrated management of coastal areas, including their delimitation.
3. Action plan for the next 15-year period.

OBJECTIVES

According to the discussed document, the objectives of the Hellenic national strategic for the Coastal Space have to be implemented at *national*, *regional* and *local* level. They focus on the following:

1. Promotion of:
 - strategic directions for the coastal space aiming at its integrated management, including both the urban development control and the natural environment protection.
 - land policy control.
 - agreements with coastal land owners.
 - financial and tax motivations for regional development.
 - principles and good practices for sustainable development.
2. Re-definition of stakeholders’ function.
3. Production of friendly conditions for initiative’s coming out.
4. Securing of related finance resources.
5. Establishment of monitoring system.
6. Development of training/education programs on ICZM.
7. Limitation of building construction along the coastal areas.
8. Preservation of coastal agricultural areas.
9. Creation of special standards for coastal urbanization.
10. Encouragement of the international collaboration and strengthening the national profile, in

the context of coastal space sustainable development.

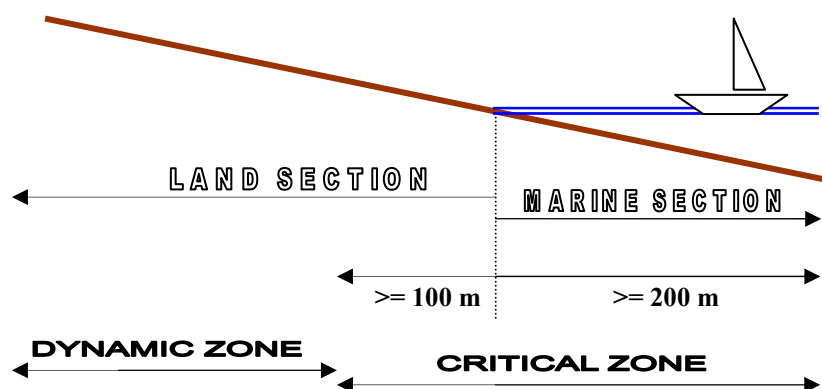
Furthermore, the national strategic objectives for the *islands coastal space* are concentrated on the population stabilization, the integrated economic development, the protection of natural and the cultural heritage, the preservation of insular character, the planning respecting the carrying capacity, the people mobilization and the choice of the appropriate spatial level for planning.

COASTAL AREA DELIMITATION - MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

According to the examined document, **the coastal space contains a marine and a land section.**

1. The marine section is exceeded up to the depth contour of 50 meters, which can not be less than 200 meters near the shoreline.
2. The land section exceeded to the pure continental space, the edge of which is not definitely fixed.

Moreover, the coastal management is divided into **two zones, the critical and the dynamic.** The whole marine section (as it is determined just before) belongs totally to the critical zone. On the other hand, the critical zone width of the land section is under the regulation of the official master plans, but it can not be less of 100 meters in length in non urban coastal areas.



On the other hand, the integrated management of coastal space is *a continuous, multilevel administration process that starts from the space planning and goes on with its monitoring and the implementation evaluation, in the concept of a probable planning revision.* It should be operated by a multiscientist and multisectoral team of stakeholders. It should take care for the legitimate support and the policies coordination. Finally, it is essential to reinforce both the social-economic development and the sustainable development.

For reasons of management guidelines, the analyzed document recognizes four types of coastal areas, the critical zone, the dynamic zone, the islands coasts and the urban coastal areas. For each of them a special set of guidelines is proposed.

A. **CRITICAL ZONE.** The limitation of new infrastructure is the general guidance.

Any new man-made environment (buildings or other constructions) has to be rationalized for its location. In any case, it has to be located in exclusive (restricted) zones, near equivalent land uses, always after a strong justification.

On the other hand, the already existing activities within the critical coastal zone have to be re-

examined, in order to become friendly to the environment.

Simultaneously, activities related to the national economy, the national defense and the natural-geographical character of each coastal area are free to be established along any coast, if their location is decided with the appropriate criteria. In addition, the possibility of environment recovering (in its previous situation, after a development project), is obligatory to be examined.

B. DYNAMIC ZONE. It is recognized that the dynamic zone of a coastal area is a transition territorial area with low level spatial organization, from which arose many threats for the entire coastal area. So the management policy for the dynamic zone is centered to:

- The coordination and the organization of the different (sectoral) spatial policies.
- The control of man activities stress/volume.
- The implementation of environmental friendly good practices.

The accumulative appreciation and the coping with consequences of all the policies as well as the control of action having influence on the coastal system (direct or indirect) could be the general directions. Consequently, actions concerning the promotion of public sensitization and responsibility are very essential.

C. ISLANDS. Hellenic islands are special coastal places because they are so many, generally so small and normally in a quite considerable distance from the continental land. They are places of special care for the planning process, because of the extra criteria that must be adopted. The related management guidelines focus on the following:

- The amelioration of the transportation network is the main concern. Priority is given towards making the already existing infrastructure (more) productive and not adding new ones. In this context, the small islands can be served: a) by smaller means of transportation and b) by more bulky itinerary schedule (according to a radial connection system).
- The promotion of the multi-activation, the disparity of islands' economic base, the support of alternatives development programs. The last ones would be decided under criteria convenient to each island's tradition and the technological possibility of the ongoing Operational Program "Information Society".
- The ensuring of high productivity agricultural (coastal) areas.
- The protection of the natural and cultural island heritage, of landscape and of natural resources, under the sustainable development principles. Special care has to be taken for the architectural ensembles on the coastline.
- The stabilization or augmentation of population, as this is considered to be the fundamental precondition for the sustainable development of the small islands.
- The almost absolute protection of very small non inhabited isles and rocks, as their isolated nature consists unique treasury of natural heritage.

D. URBAN COASTAL AREAS. This type contains the already urbanized coastal areas and those located close to cities or villages, which are going to be expanded. For those areas the focal point of guidelines is the special sensitivity that has to be taken under consideration, during any master plan setting up or reformation.

ACTION PLAN

It has to do with a 15-year period, which is divided into two sub-periods. For the first sub-period (5 years after the Framework approval), the achievements to be done (at the national level) are the following:

1. Identification of wider natural and man-made geographical coastal entities.
2. Illustration and precise description of sectoral policies along the coastal areas (especially of agricultural policy).

3. Depiction/representation of the above guidelines for the closer to the shoreline part of the marine section (till the bottom-line of 5 meters or inside a 100 meter-zone).
4. Delimitation of beaches.
5. Re-appraisal and adjustment of Regional Frameworks technical specifications.
6. Re-appraisal and adjustment of urban master plans technical specifications.
7. Re-appraisal and adjustment of development policy.
8. Codification of the legislation related to coastal areas.
9. Establishment of special coastal land policy, in order significant/considerable parts of critical coastal zone to become public.
10. Establishment of special standards for coastal buildings, taking into account: sustainable development, climate-planning, architectural heritage, disables people etc.
11. Establishment of photo archive for the coastal landscape.
12. Constitution of national spatial Observatory for the coastal areas.

There is not provision either for the second period or for the lower spatial level actions. In any case, the above 12-point program cost is officially calculated to come up to € 2 billions (national level, 5 years) and it is supposed to be covered (partially) by the 3rd Community Support Framework funds.

4. REMARKS AND PERSPECTIVE

Apart from the fact that the just before displayed Special Framework for the Hellenic coastal space is going to terminate an existing statutory lack, it is true that it is really up to date with the more modern and prevailing opinions, as they are incorporated in fundamental international documents on spatial planning. [EC, 1999; OECD, 2001, CoE, 2002; CoE/CEMAT, 2000 etc.]. In addition, it is designed to accept input from the General Framework (national spatial plan) and to have as output strategy rules to the lower level spatial planning.

Moreover, this Special Framework is designed to be dynamic -as the time passes- and to promote a flexible coastal management. However, as this document comes after a long period of inactivity in Hellas, it has to cover a huge gap in the domain of spatial planning. In this perspective, it seems to be not so strict. In fact, even if the proposed coastal policy/management is a quite complicate system of guidelines, **it is not as rigorous as it could be, it is really general.** Moreover, there is no doubt that the analyzed text (as all the similar contemporary documents) seems to be rather **a good study with proposals towards the right direction, than a legal obligatory text with a normative character.**

Beyond the previous general regards, a reader of this Special Framework can easily find out that:

1. A clear hierarchy of the outstanding large number of national and EU policies affecting coastal areas is not established. So the potential impacts are not clear and not formally evaluated.
2. The group of stakeholders is not identified, especially at the local (coastal) level. In this way, the “coastal system” is open (it means flexibility), but not clear (it means ineffectiveness)
3. In the examined case of coastal areas, the sustainable development meaning is not undoubtedly defined. Therefore, every body is speaking about sustainability, but it is not sure that all of them have the same thing in mind, especially at local level.
4. The action plan is: i) non clearly specified at non national level and ii) non-secure fi-

nanced.

5. The natural processes and their dynamic feature along the coasts are absent. In general, the short-term planning dominates (illegal accommodation, land uses conflicts etc.), while the long-term planning is missing.
6. The critical zone guidelines do not at all refer to the existing legislation related to the beaches, even if both of them are related to the same field (critical zone of land section).

Furthermore, two very important remarks on the examined Special Framework are the next ones:

- The critical local implementation is not sufficiently guaranteed. It is well-known that almost all the documents related to sustainable development refer mainly to the national level. This is probably well-justifiable because of the strategic character or because of the local statistics lack. But, it is obvious that the spatial planning favourable results have to be visible up to local level.
- The Special Framework is absolutely lean on the existing tools and mechanism of urban planning policy. Moreover, it is encircled in one ministry's possibilities range. So, it is not sure that the future management of Hellenic coastal areas will be holistic/integrated.

There is no doubt that the whole spatial planning system should be reinforced in Hellas. In this context, the time spent until now is unfortunately great. In any case, it would be better if the finally approved text of the Special Framework for the Coastal Space includes the very significant concept of **territorial cohesion**, in a way to incorporate not only the appropriate social-economic but the geo-environment parameters, too.

In fact, the current approach of coastal areas fits in with a period in which spatial planning has lost its normative character. The power of central government is going to be more reduced in the short future. The augmentation of local administration power, the participatory (spatial) planning and the great number of stakeholders produce a new type of policy. In this context, the policy implementation at local level is critical and it will be helped with efforts towards the next directions:

- To enlarge the awareness on the spatial/territorial notion of the coastal areas, in parallel to their economic, social and environmental aspects.
- To recognise the natural (coastal) space/environment as a particular resource, for the reason that it is going to be minimised, because of the rapidly expanded man-made activities.
- To use geomorphology as basic criterion to the coastal typology at local level.
- To improve the quality of data.
- To generate new types of data, especially for monitoring the man-made activities.

5. SOME IDEAS RELATING GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

A comprehensive approach of coastal space should be supported. Especially, the implementation of ICZM **at the local level** should be sufficiently guaranteed with viable techniques/methods.

The sophisticate approach through the powerful tool of GIS is well-known and already widely implemented. But an effective use of GIS on behalf of a specific coastal area integrated management should encompass a feasible process of recording, measuring and finally modeling and presenting the **exactly size (and location) of all coastal activities**.

Under those circumstances, we need some **new views** of geographical coastal space. We need

a new kind of information, a new kind of vocabulary. In this framework, the following ideas are proposed:

1. Coastal typology based scientifically on the spatial notion.
2. Monitoring the activities via new (geo)indicators.
3. Using an algorithm for the assessment of total pressure on a coastal area.

For example, in order to measure the total pressure on a coastal area we need to outline a feasible procedure of recording, measuring, parametrizing and finally modeling and presenting all man-activities on the coastal areas and its rearrangement in time. An indicator for such a scope could be the following:

NAME OF THE INDICATOR. **Man-activities amount.**

SYMBOL. H_{man}

TYPE. Pressure indicator (according to the OECD' PSR system).

AIM. Measuring of the man-made activities intensity on a specific coastal area, in a specific point of time.

DEFINITION. This is the man-activities "volume" of building or any other construction/infrastructure on a coastal area [V_{man}], in proportion to the surface of the examined coastal area [S]. [V_{man}] could be equal to the every time volume between the natural earth surface and the outer building/infrastructure silhouette surface.

FORMULA. $H_{man} = V_{man} / S$

UNIT. Meters.

METHODOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION. The critical point of view is the [V_{man}] calculation. Beyond the direct calculation of physical volume, the whole procedure should be manipulated via a matrix of **weights** that probably will be given to every activity/construction along a coastal area, in order to regulate/adjust the indicator values to the potential stress of any man-activity.

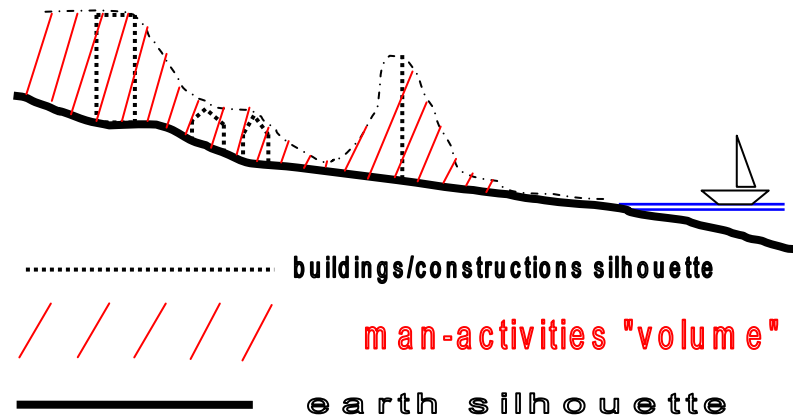
DATA SOURCES. Digital data (maps, satellite images) or aerial photos.

SUGGESTED GEOGRAPHICAL SCALE. Local level, coastal strip, critical zone of the terrestrial coastal section.

RELATED INDICATORS. *Development along shore* [EC, 2000], *Artificialized coastline / total coastline* and *Population density in coastal regions* [Blue Plan, 2000], *Carrying capacity*.

The matrix of **weights** for every activity/construction will be drawn (and it will be checked with case studies) in order to be able to contribute in a reliable forecast of more likely scenarios of every examined coastal area.

The next sketch illustrates the physical meaning of the man-activities "volume".



6. CONCLUSION

The Special Framework of SP&SD for the Hellenic coastal space is not yet legitimately approved. In spite of the mentioned disadvantages, the removal of the existing abeyance would be a favorable progress, as the Hellenic coastal space faces many problems, in the same way as the European one [CEC, 2000].

On the other hand, building a data base related to a coastal area and finally manipulating the spatial information with a GIS is an intermediate goal that should be achieved.

Therefore, specific emphasis should be given to the choice of indicators², particularly for the coastal geomorphology (coastal size, slope, shoreline, land cover etc.). Those indicators will help the shaping of algorithms, such as the above proposed **man-activities amount**, which corresponds with the “volume” of man-activities along a coastal area.

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² Analog efforts are already lanced from United Nations [1996], EU [2000], Blue Plan [2000] ect.

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ABBREVEVIATIONS, ACRONYMS & SYMBOLS

| | |
|---------|---|
| CEC, EC | Commission of the European Communities, European Commission |
| CEMAT | European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning |
| CCGP | Commission for the Coordination of Government Policy (in the domain of SP&SD) |
| CoE | Council of Europe |
| ESDP | European Spatial Development Perspective |
| ESPON | European Spatial Planning Observation Network |
| EU | European Union |
| GIS | Geographical Information System |
| Hca | Hellenic coastal area |
| ICAM | Integrated Coastal Area Management |
| ICZM | Integrated Coastal Zone Management |
| L | Law |
| MEPPPW | (Hellenic) Ministry for the Environment, Physical Planning & Public Works |
| NC | National Council (for SP&SD) |
| OECD | Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| PSR | Pressure – State – Response. |
| SP&SD | Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development |