

# Integrated development of the Natura 2000 network along waterways

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**European Commission**

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# What is happening to biodiversity in Europe ?

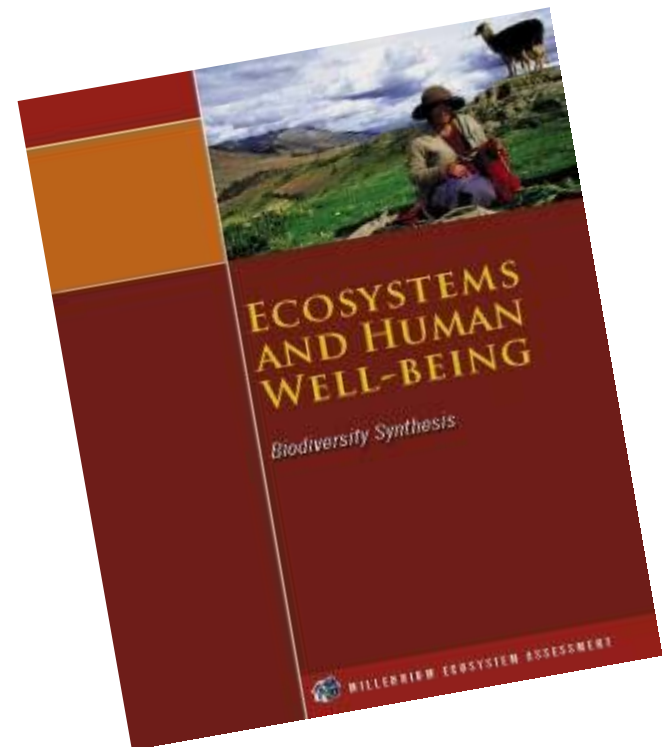
- **45 % of Europe's butterflies threatened**
- **38% of Europe's birds threatened**
- **40% coastal dunes lost since 1900 (1/3rd - 1977)**
- **12% loss of grasslands in EUR 9 (1975-95)**
- **loss of natural forest (now 4% of forest area)**

source: European Environment Agency



# Biodiversity loss - importance of ecosystem services

- 2005 UN Millenium Ecosystem assessment highlighted importance of 'ecosystem services'
- the provision of goods – food, fibre, fuel and medicines
- the regulation of the air we breathe and the quality of our waters (also flood protection!)
- soil fertility, pollination and other essential support services
- cultural benefits – from aesthetic enjoyment to spiritual solace



# EU Action to halt the loss of biodiversity

- **2006 Communication on halting the loss of biodiversity to 2010 – and beyond :**  
Sustaining ecosystem services for human well-being
- **EU biodiversity action plan with a clear set of targets and actions to halt biodiversity loss**
  - **Covers relevant sectors & horizontal policy areas in a unified way**
  - **provides a joined up approach by identifying what needs to be done at Community level and at MS level.**



**Mid-term report (2008): if business as usual, we will fail to meet the target**

# Critical role of EU nature legislation and Natura 2000

## ■ ‘Birds Directive’ (79/409/EEC)

All wild birds protected + protected areas for threatened and migrating birds

## ■ ‘Habitats Directive’ (92/43/EEC)

Protected areas for threatened species and habitats + list of animal & plant species in need of strict protection

■ **NATURA 2000**: the ecological network of protected areas under the Birds and Habitats Directives





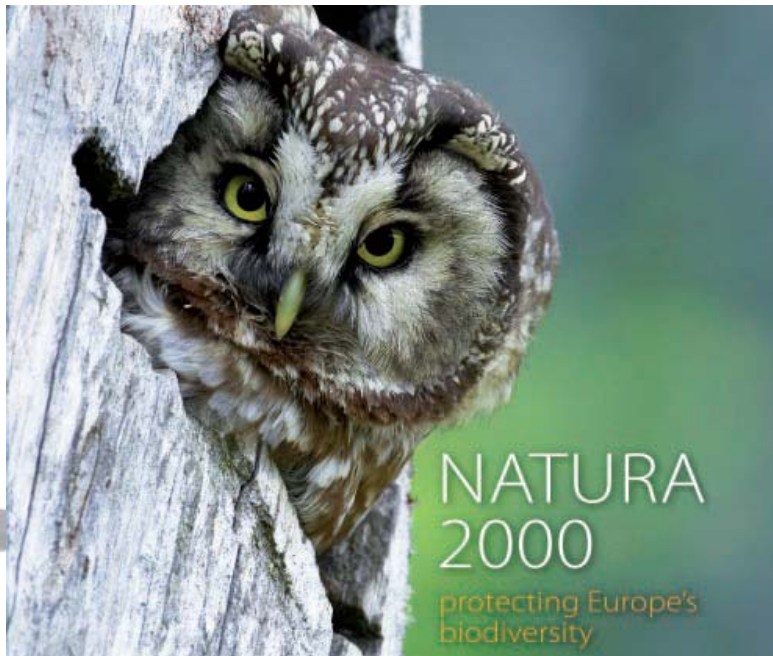
# The Natura 2000 network

A major pillar of biodiversity action in Europe

A combination of species and habitats protection


Habitats Directive ~ 14% of EU - 27 territory

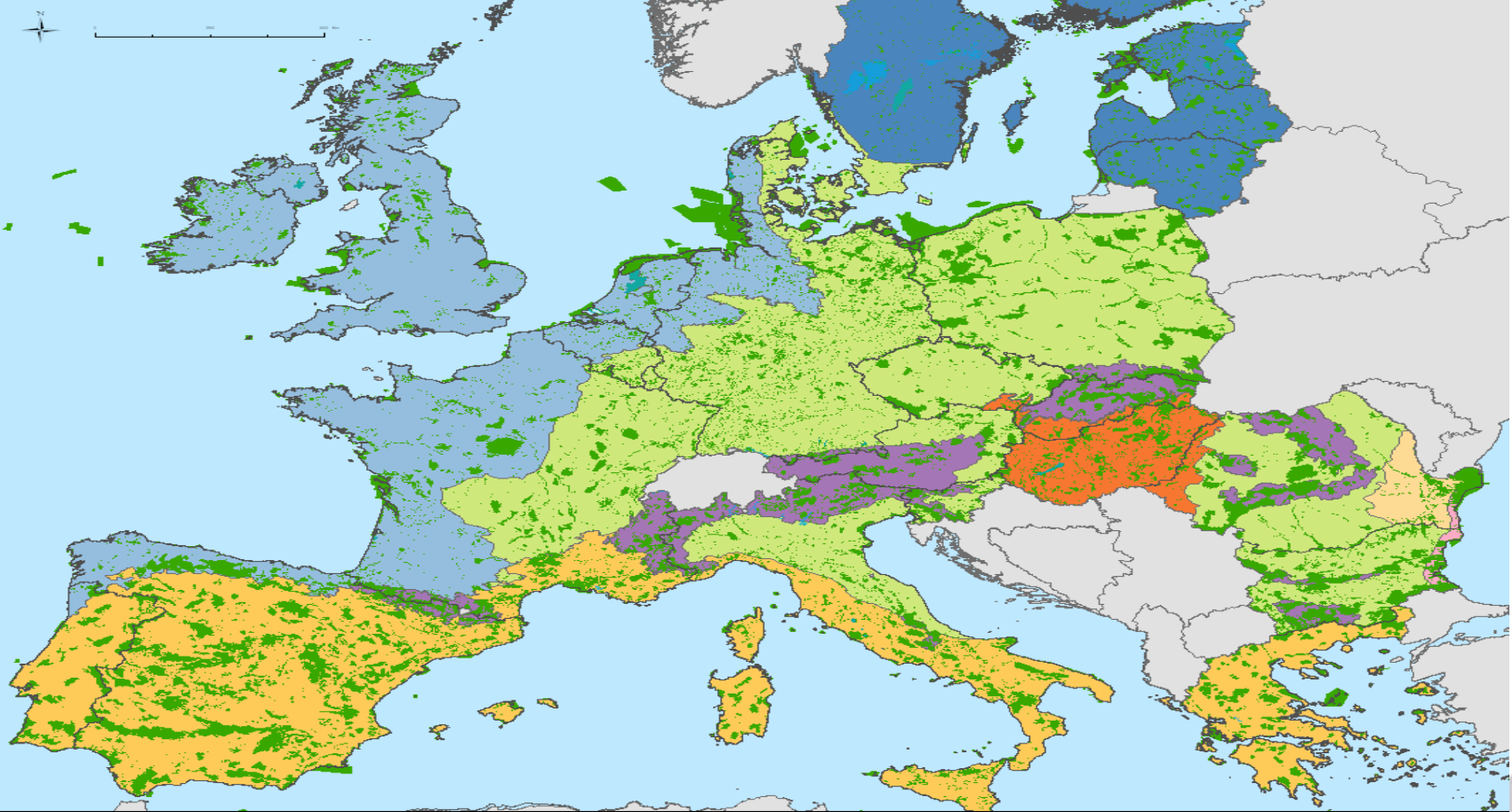
For Birds Directive ~ 11 % of EU – 27 territory



Total: ~ 25,000 sites  
~17 % of EU 27 territory



-  Natura 2000 sites
-  Alpine biogeographical region
-  Atlantic biogeographical region
-  Black Sea biogeographical region
-  Boreal biogeographical region
-  Continental biogeographical region
-  Mediterranean biogeographical region
-  Pannonian biogeographical region
-  Steppic biogeographical region

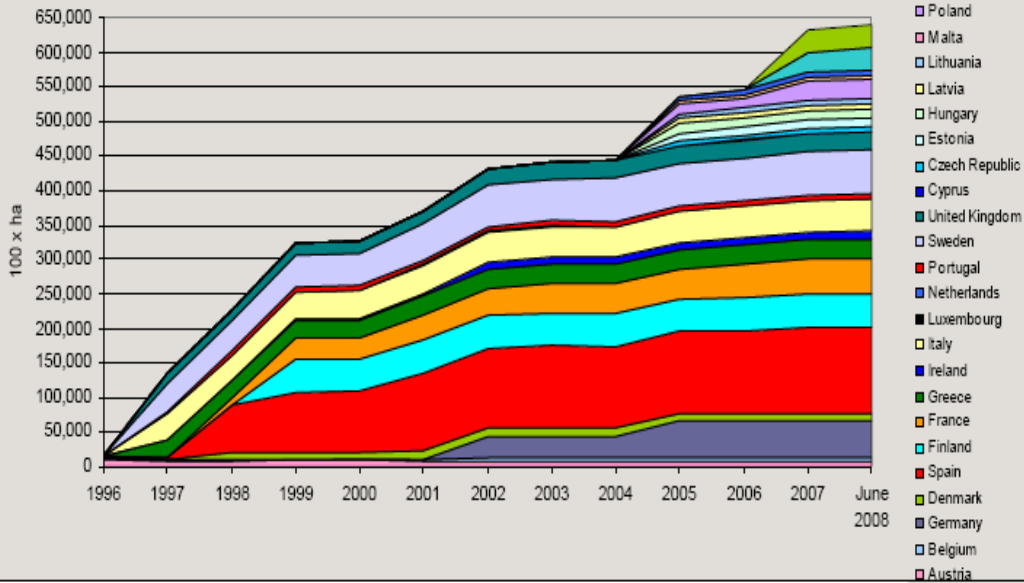


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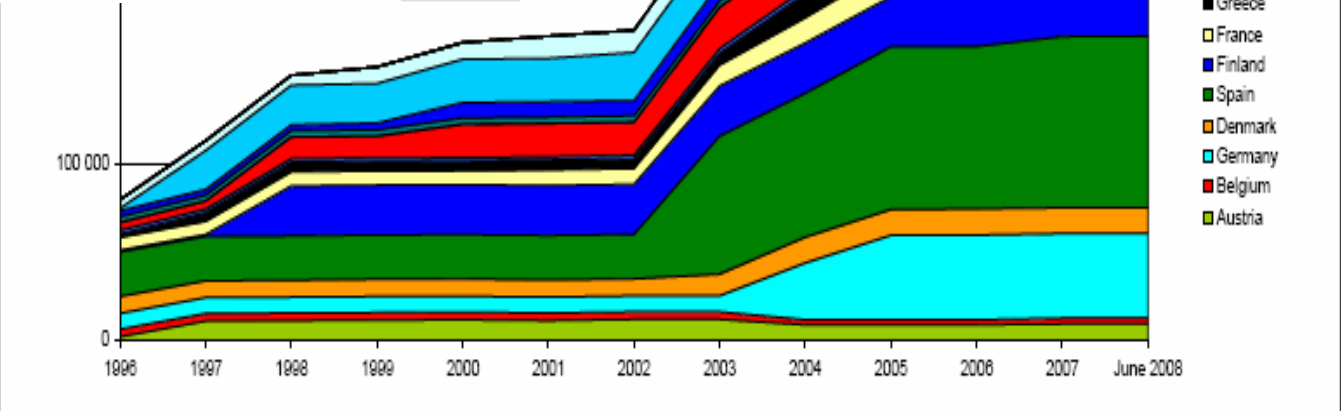
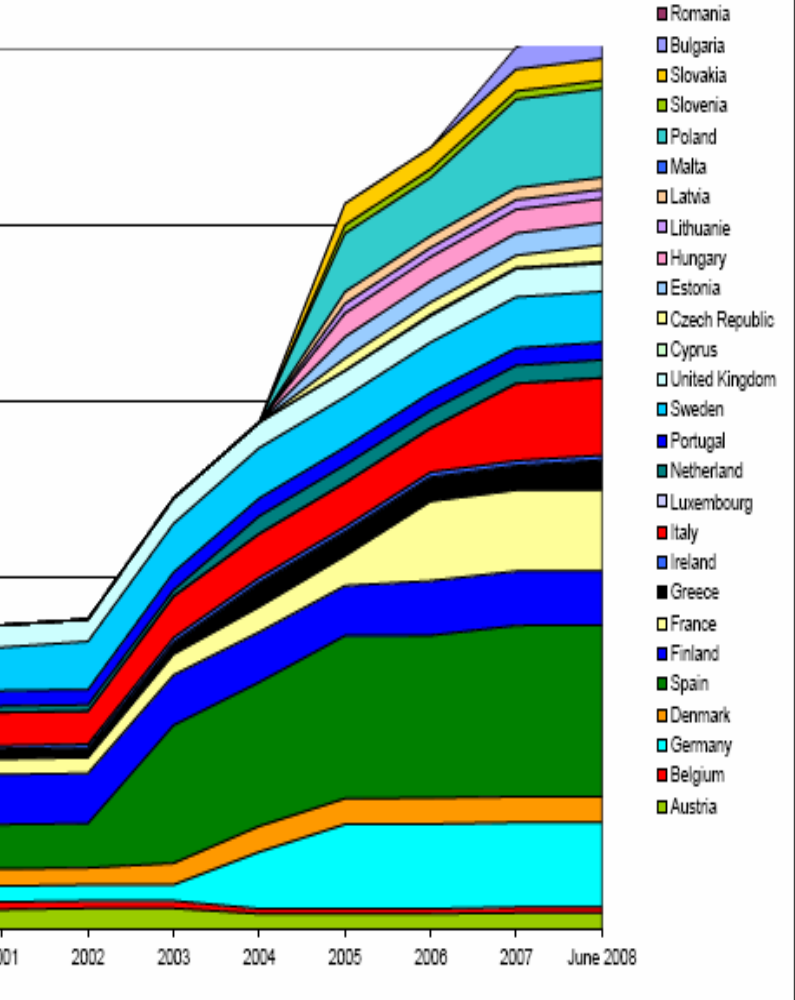


environment

# Sites of Community Importance (Habitats)

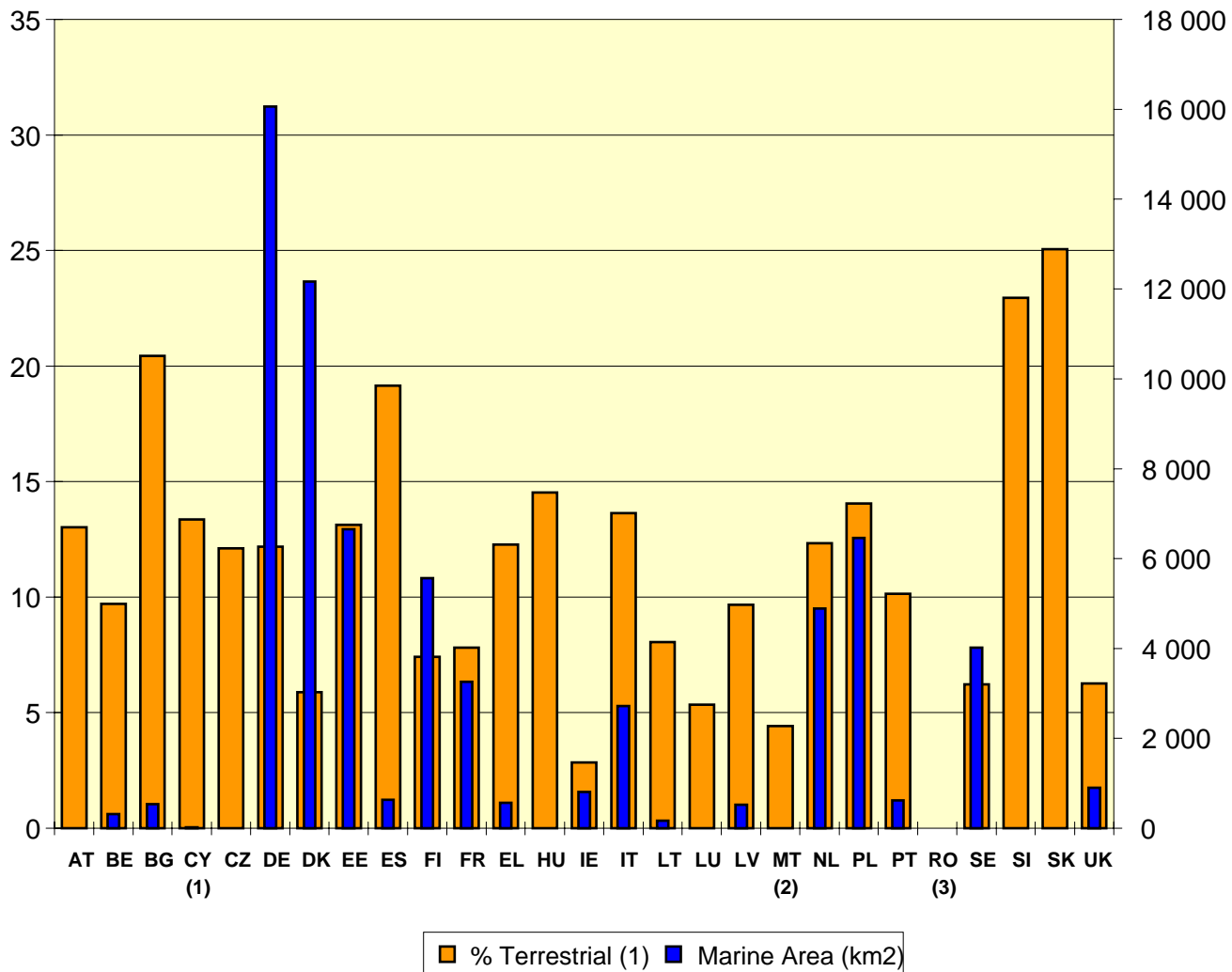


# Special protection areas (Birds)

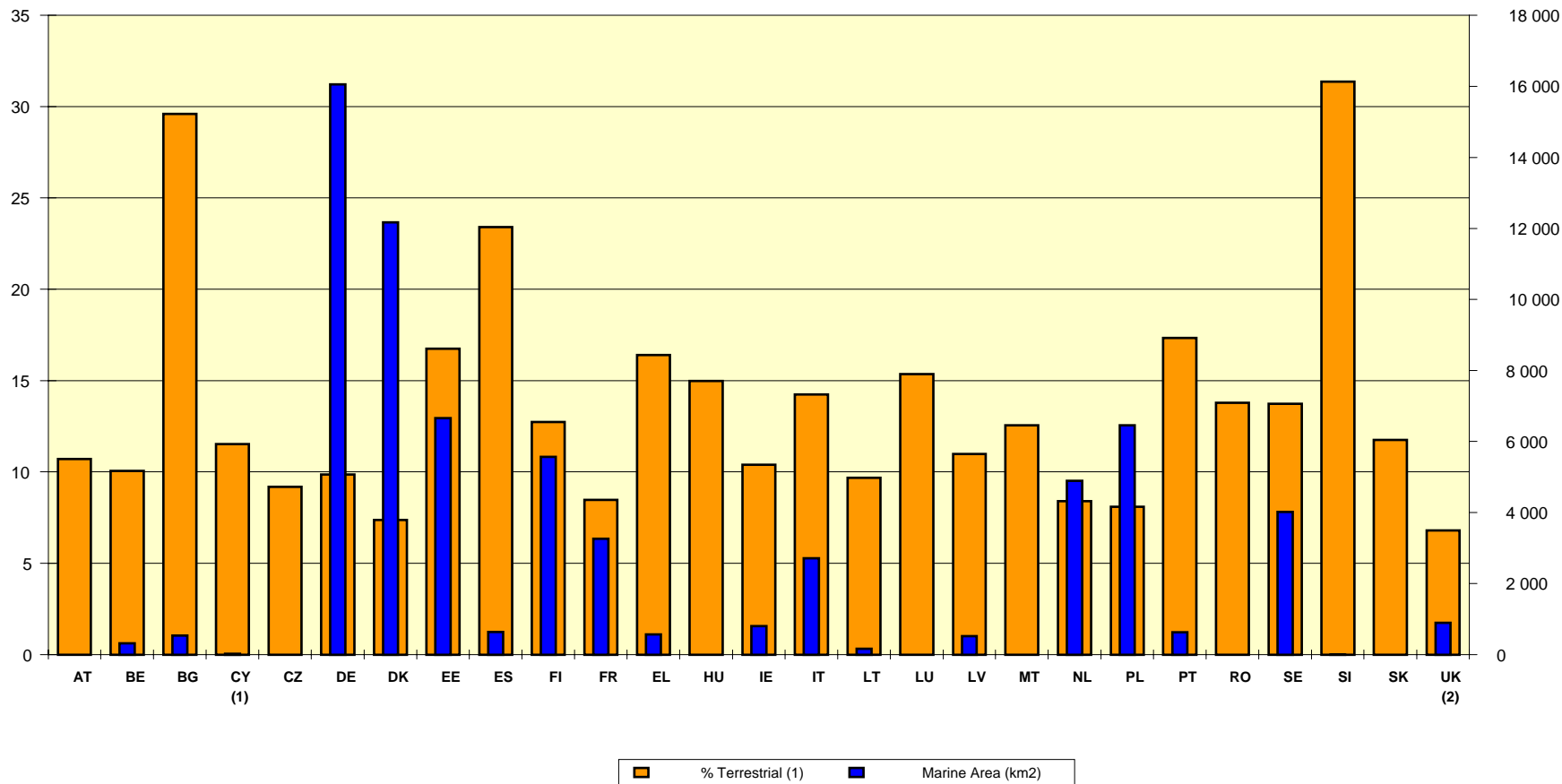




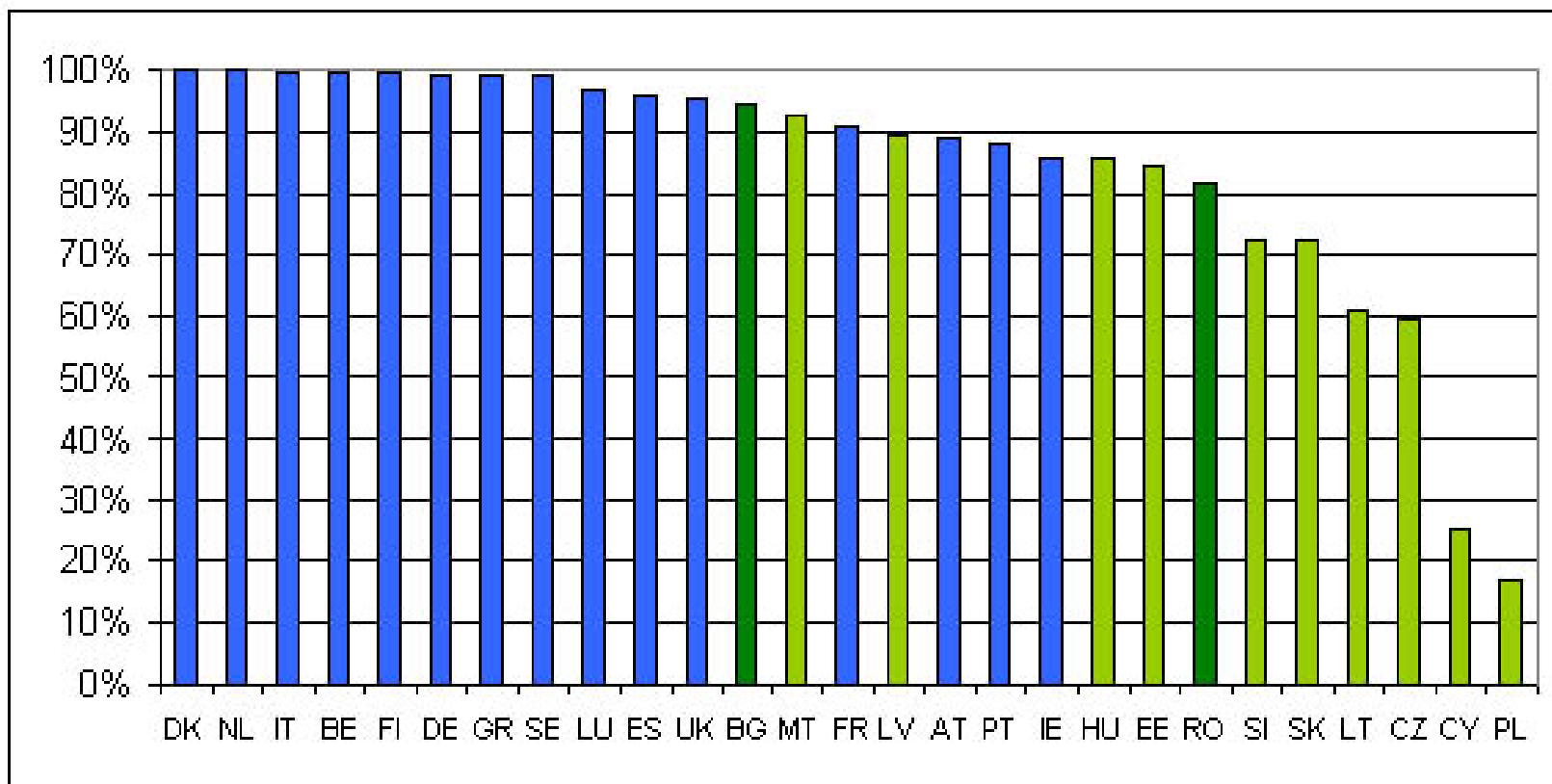
# SPAs database December, 2008



## SCIs database December, 2008



# State of play June 2008- distance to target (level of sufficiency)



# Important features of NATURA 2000

- **NATURA 2000 is not a set of paper parks**
  - **Site designation exclusively based on scientific criteria**
  - **Strong protection system**
  - **Nature conservation considerations factored into other decision-making**
  - **Procedure to deal with potentially damaging developments**
  
- **Not limited to nature reserves**
  - **Most areas privately owned**
  - **emphasis on conservation and sustainable use (ecologically, economically and socially)**
  - **Management plans are very useful tool**

# Article 6 the Habitats Directive

- **For sites Member States shall:**
  - Establish necessary conservation measures
  - Avoid deterioration
  
- **Prepare appropriate assessment for any plan or project (except direct management of site)**
  - Likely to have a significant effect on site
  - Either individually or in combination with other plans or projects



## Art. 6.3/4 Habitats Directive, simplified

**Possible negative impact on Natura 2000 site?** → yes

**Nature impact assessment** → If negative

**Alternatives?** → If no

**Overriding public interest?** → If yes

**Compensation measures - Commission opinion (if priority interest)**

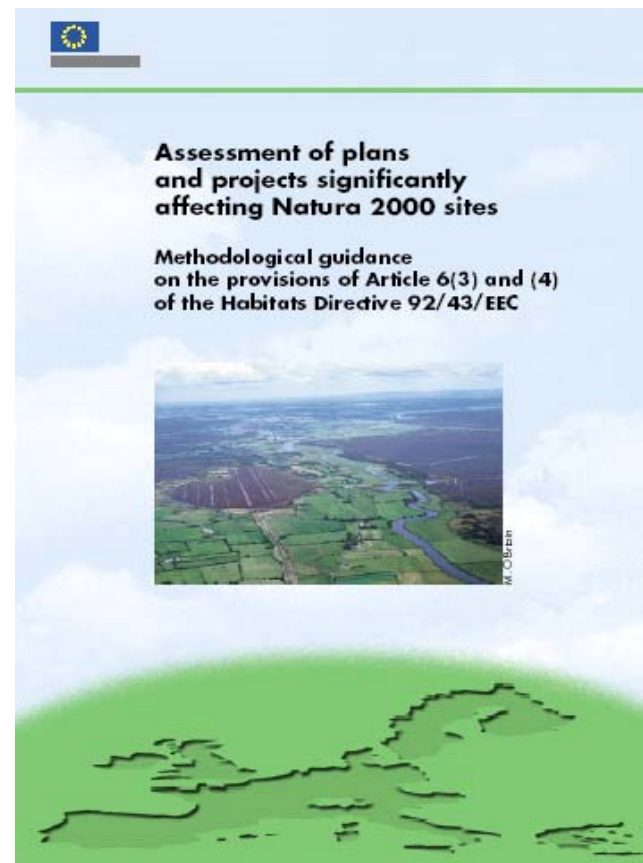
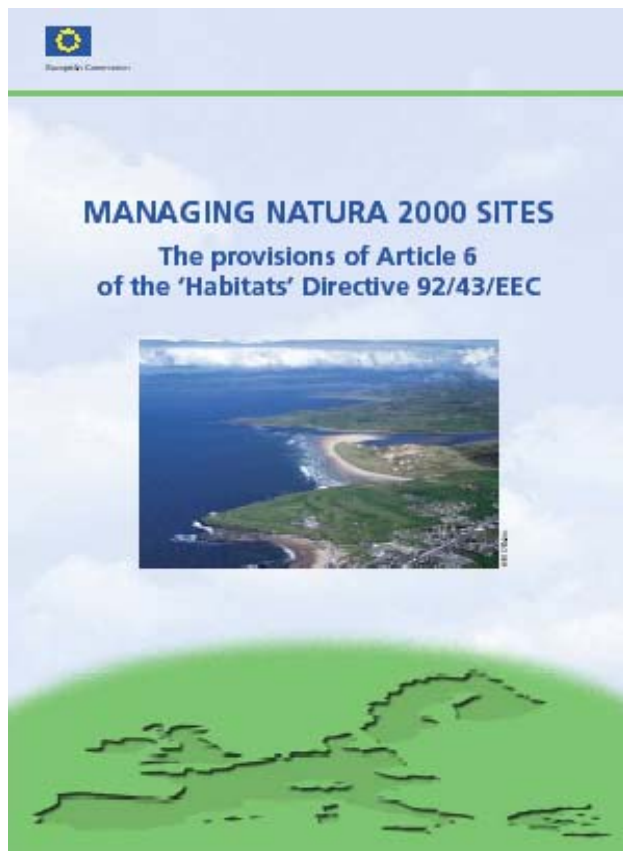
# Problems encountered with applying Article 6.3/6.4 (extensive established ECJ case law!)

- no or inappropriate nature impact assessments including poor expert input)
- negative results of assessments not respected
- No/insufficient alternatives considered
- no or inadequate mitigation / compensation measures
- no designation or proposal of a qualifying site: provisions apply nevertheless (for SPAs even stricter rules!)

# How to avoid conflict?

- integration of N2000 considerations into other sectors
- early planning of projects
- good scientific assessments of state of environment and impacts
- transparency: early involvement of stakeholders

# Proactive approaches of Commission - Guidance documents



+ important guidance on compensation (Art. 6 (4))

# Sectoral guidance documents in preparation

## ■ On ports and estuaries

- Working group established in 2006, guidance document to be finalized by summer 2009

## ■ On non-energy extractive industries

- Working group established in 2008, activity linked to the Raw Material Initiative
- Clarification of provisions of N2000 assessment requirements as regards extraction of sand, gravel, industrial minerals, metal ore
- Aim to finalize by April 2009

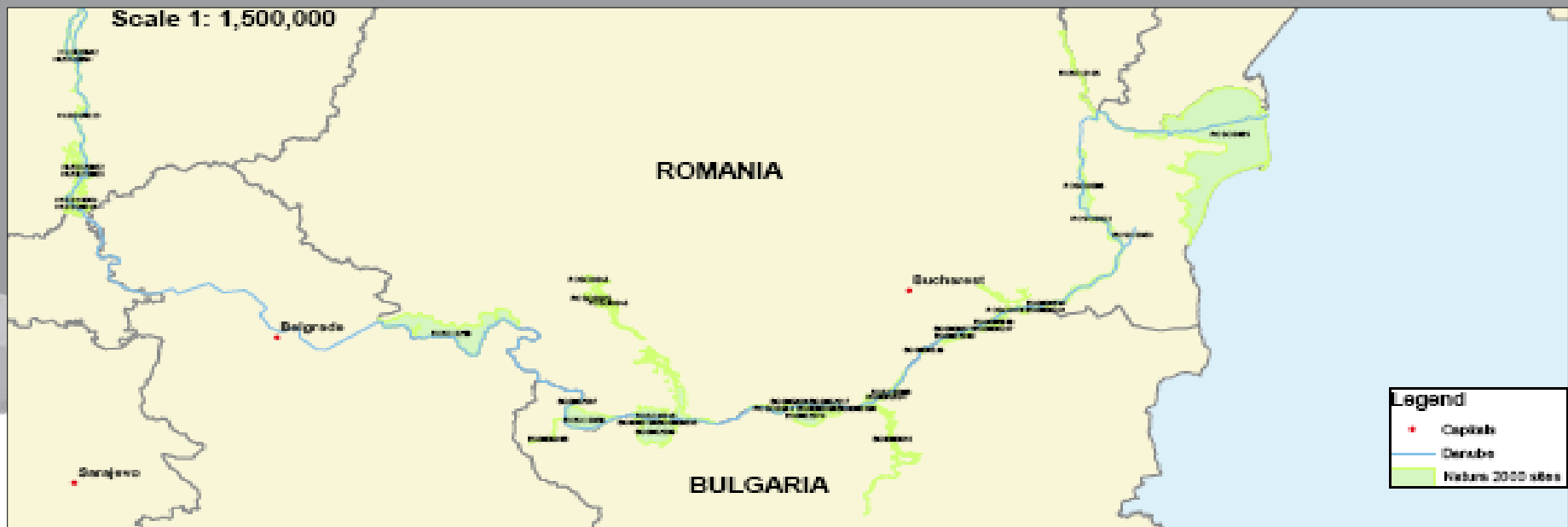
## ■ On wind energy and nature conservation

- Working group co-chaired by DG TREN and ENV set up in 2007?
- Several international MEAs also working on guidance
- Final draft planned for summer 2009



# What about Natura 2000 sites on the Danube?

Very large part of the river in the network



**Legend**

- Capitals
- Danube
- Natura 2000 sites



# Future Technical guidance on Rivers and Inland Waterways

- **work to start in 2009, co-chaired by DG TREN and DG ENV**
- **bottom-up approach, wide stakeholder participation**
- **build on existing initiatives and ongoing work of international conventions and the WFD guidance**
- **outputs:**
  - Web-based guidance documents on management and protection of Natura 2000 rivers
  - 1st meeting on 19 February, finalization in 2010

## What does the European Commission hope from the Joint Statement about the Danube as regards Natura 2000?

- A very good opportunity for promoting the integrated approach to management of riverine Natura 2000 sites
- Further opportunity for strengthening the synergies between the Water Framework Directive and the EU nature directives
- Excellent vehicle for trans-boundary cooperation with the neighbouring non-EU countries





**For more information, please consult:**

[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/index_en.htm)

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment>