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# Protected Areas. Isn't that old-fashioned?

## *EEA mission*

*'The EEA aims to support sustainable development and to help achieve significant and measurable improvement in Europe's environment through the provision of timely, targeted, relevant and reliable information to policy makers and the public'*

# The European Environment Agency (EEA)

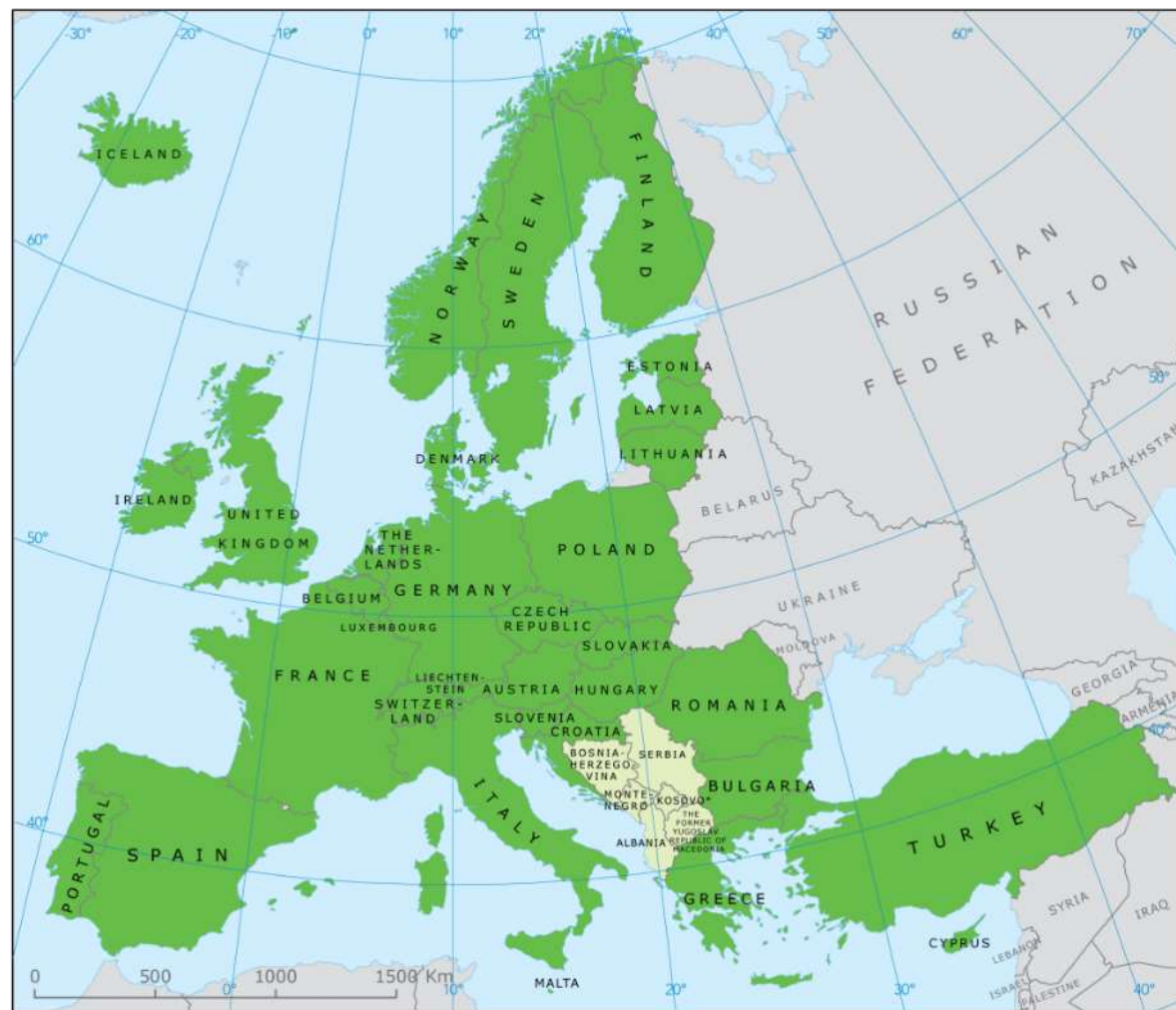
## The EEA is

- An independent agency of the European Union
- Analysing, assessing and providing information
- An interface between science and policy
- Dependent upon strong networks to carry out its work

## The EEA is not

- Formulating or proposing new legislation
- An executive body implementing environmental measures
- A funding body

# EEA and EIONET



## EIONET

European Environment Information and Observation Network

- 32 Member countries
- 7 Cooperating countries
- European Topic Centres
- Cooperation under the European Neighbourhood Policy: South & East

### EEA coverage



Member countries



Cooperating countries

\*Kosovo under UNSCR 1244/99



- Protected areas in Europe: a bit of history, values
- Overview of PAs: facts & figures
- State of Nature in EU / Biodiversity status
- Are PAs old-fashioned or not?

# Protected Areas in Europe



Photo: Europarc España

from

1087 - New Forest (game-keeping)

passing by

19<sup>th</sup> century civil society initiatives

1820s PAs in Germany

and

20<sup>th</sup> century 'national parks' &  
'nature reserves'

Civil society & state-owned

- 1905 Dutch Society for Preservation of Nature
- 1909 Ligue Suisse pour la protection de la nature
- 1909 German Nature Park Society
- 1909 1<sup>st</sup> state owned NPs in Sweden
- 1914 1<sup>st</sup> state owned NPs in Switzerland



# Protected Areas in Europe

and

'boom' of NPs after 1<sup>st</sup> World War

Spain 1918, Italy 1922, Iceland 1929, Poland 1936, Finland & Greece 1938

1<sup>st</sup> trans-border park PL/SK 1932 (Pieniny Mountains)

more PAs after 2<sup>nd</sup> World War

until

1970s-1990s

International conventions (Ramsar, World Heritage, Bern – Emerald, ...)

Including marine (Barcelona, Helsinki, Ospar, Bucharest)

EU directives (Natura 2000)

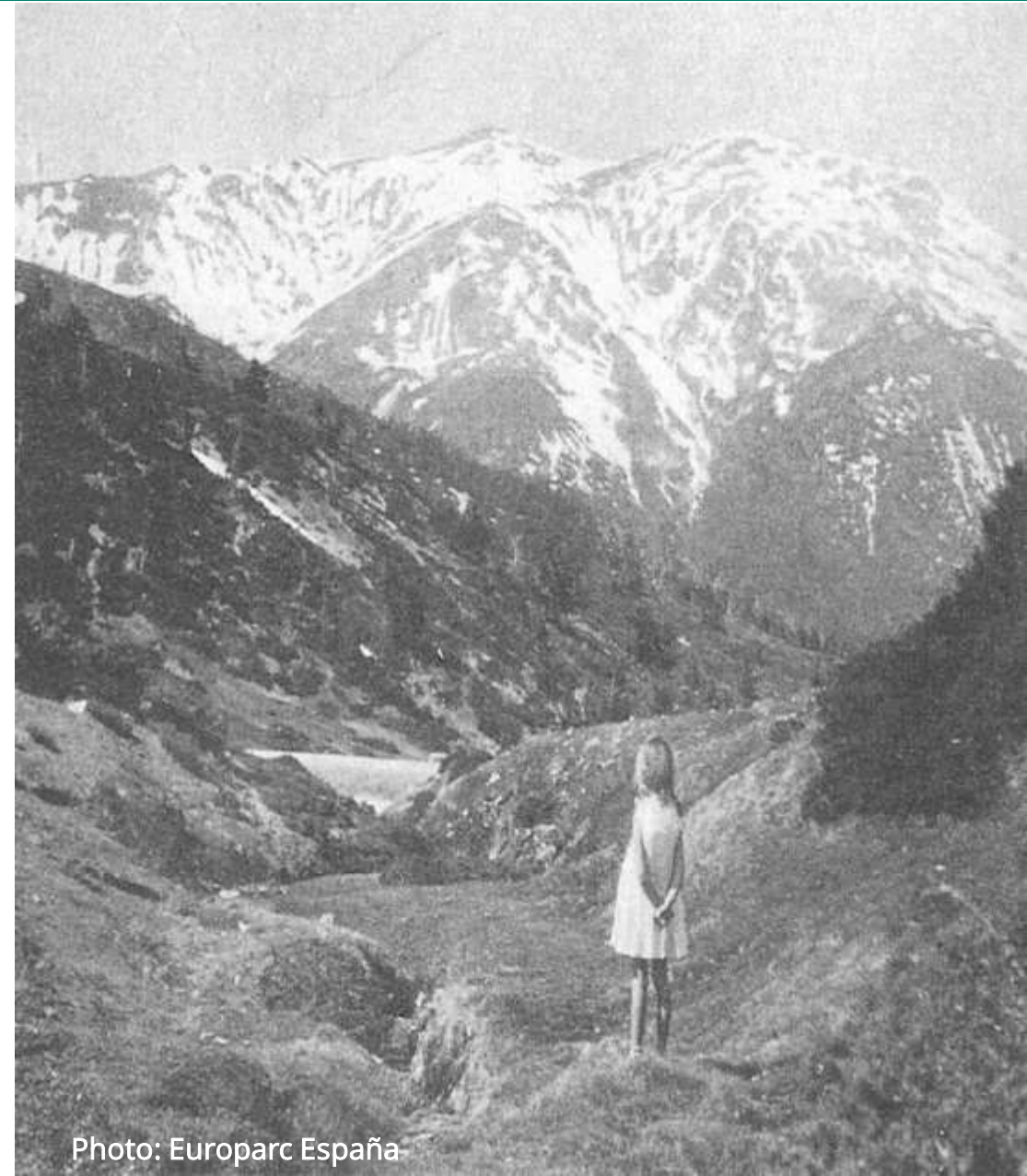
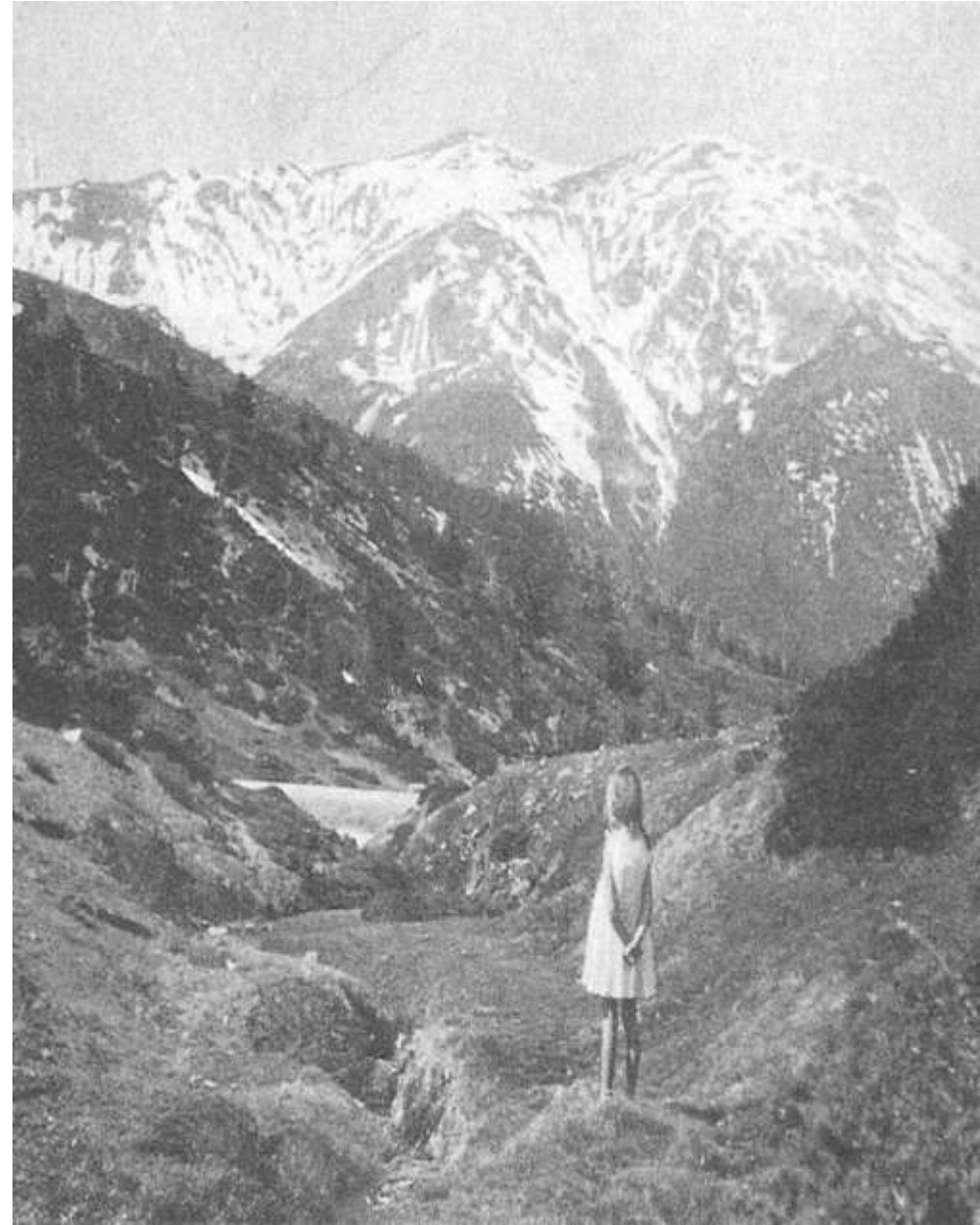


Photo: Europarc España

# Protected Areas in Europe



So,  
isn't  
this  
old-  
fashioned?





The short & closed answer is



**NO!**



# Changes in role and perception of protected areas



Game & timber

‘Jewels of the crown’



Photo: Keystone/Getty Images

Nature, People  
Multifunctional  
Services  
Network

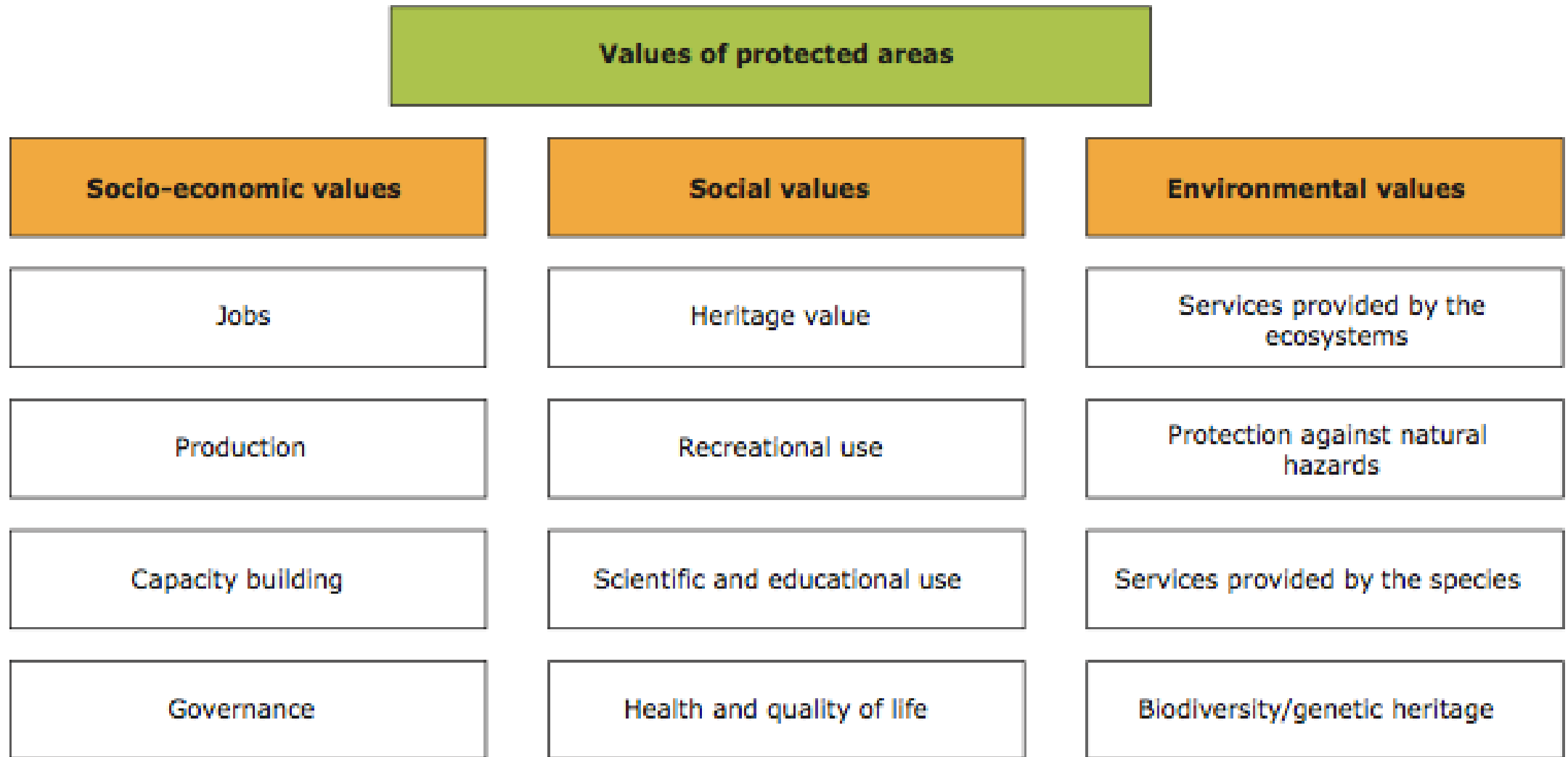


Aesthetics  
Natural beauty



Photo: Gordon McInness

# Protected Areas today's values



Source: Adapted from Dujin et al., 2008.





# Overview of protected areas in Europe



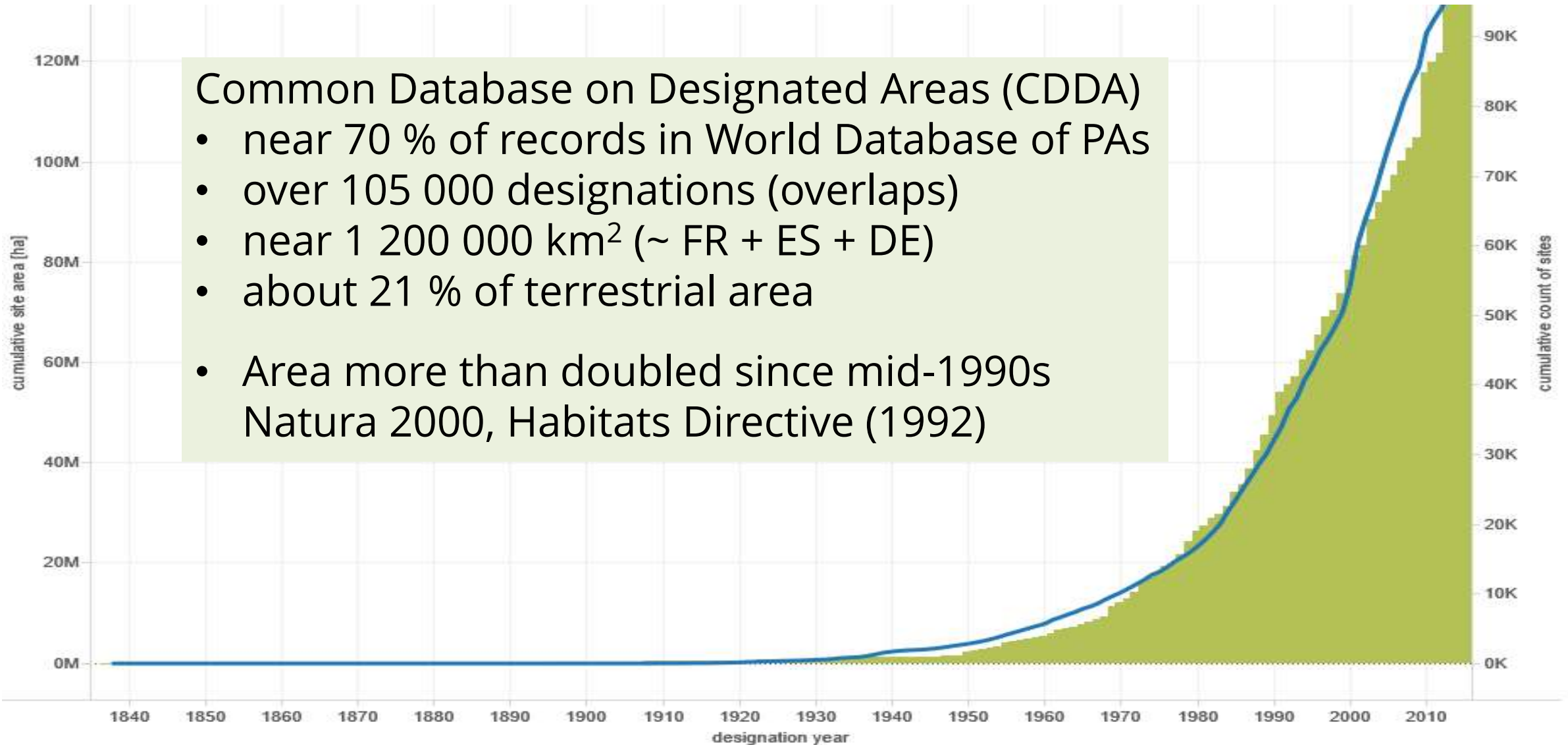
**Common Database on Designated Areas (CDDA), v.14, 2015**  
**Natura 2000 sites database, end 2015**  
**Emerald sites, end 2015 (CH)**



# (Nationally) Protected areas in 39 EEA countries

## Common Database on Designated Areas (CDDA)

- near 70 % of records in World Database of PAs
- over 105 000 designations (overlaps)
- near 1 200 000 km<sup>2</sup> (~ FR + ES + DE)
- about 21 % of terrestrial area
- Area more than doubled since mid-1990s  
Natura 2000, Habitats Directive (1992)



# Complementarity nationally designated areas & Natura 2000

## Land area

- EU28 + CH  
1 120 000 km<sup>2</sup>
- 70 % is Natura 2000
- 30 % is only nationally protected
- Including 35 % both nationally protected & Natura 2000 (Emerald)
- Terrestrial Natura 2000 over 18 % of EU28 land
- PAs over 21 % of EEA39 land

CDDA and Natura 2000 /Emerald sites:



**Note:**

Sites which are restricted for dissemination by the data providers are not shown on the map

Sites in overseas regions are not shown on the map

# Complementarity nationally designated areas & Natura 2000

More than 50 % of all sites are

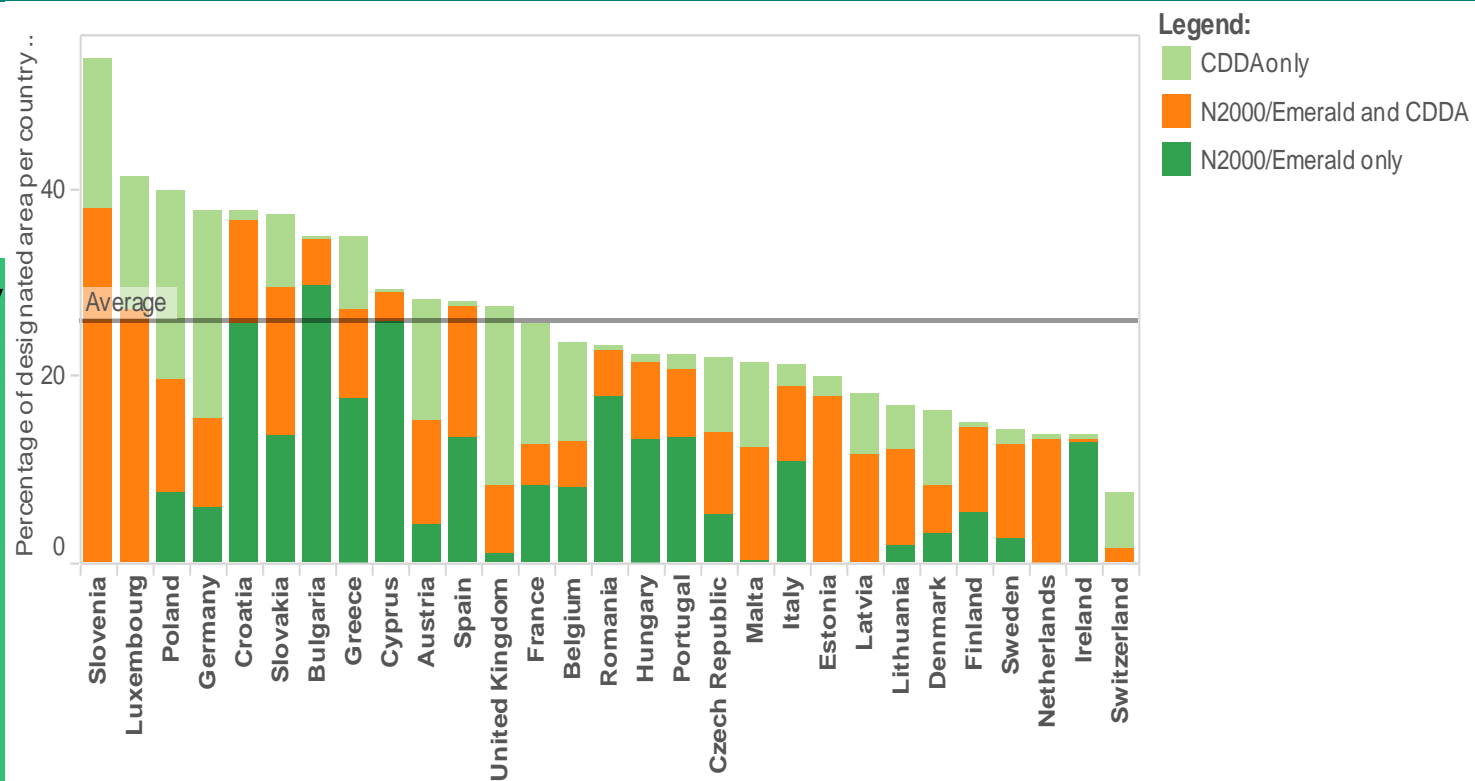
**Natura 2000/Emerald & 'nationally protected'**

- NL – 95 %
- EE – 90 %
- SI – 70 %
- SE – 70 %
- LU – 66 %
- LV – 64 %
- FI – 62 %
- LT – 61 %
- MT – 57 %

**Natura 2000 only**

- IE – 94 %
- CY – 88 %
- BG – 85 %
- RO – 77 %
- HR – 68 %
- PT – 60 %
- HU – 59 %
- IT – 51 %
- GR – 50 %

Most protected area in these countries is due to Natura 2000



**'Nationally protected' only (CDDA)**

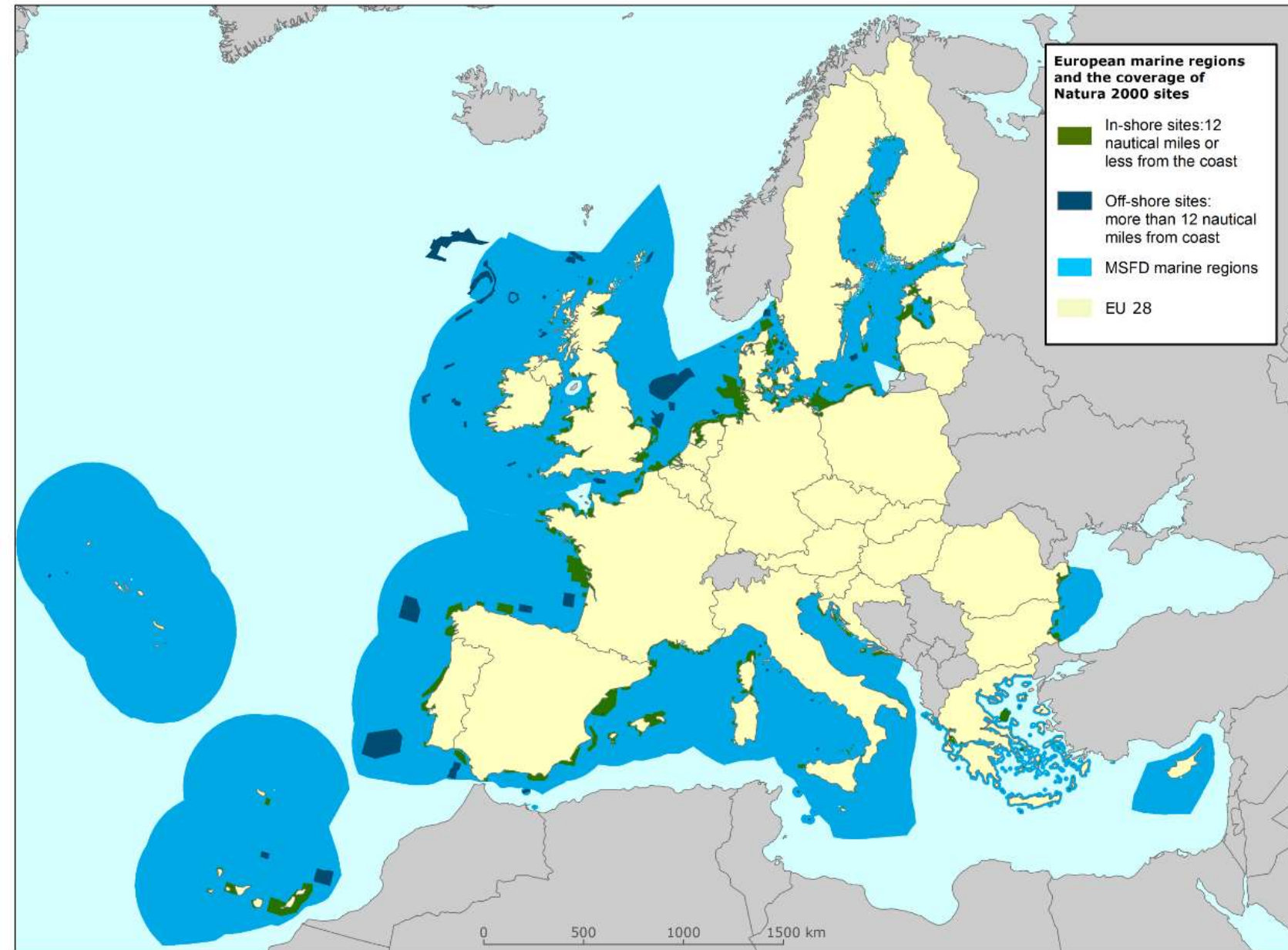
- CH – 79 %
- UK – 70 %
- DE – 59 %
- PL – 51 %
- FR – 50 %

e.g. Switzerland

2 387 km<sup>2</sup> only nationally protected  
683 km<sup>2</sup> both Emerald & nationally  
7 km<sup>2</sup> only Emerald



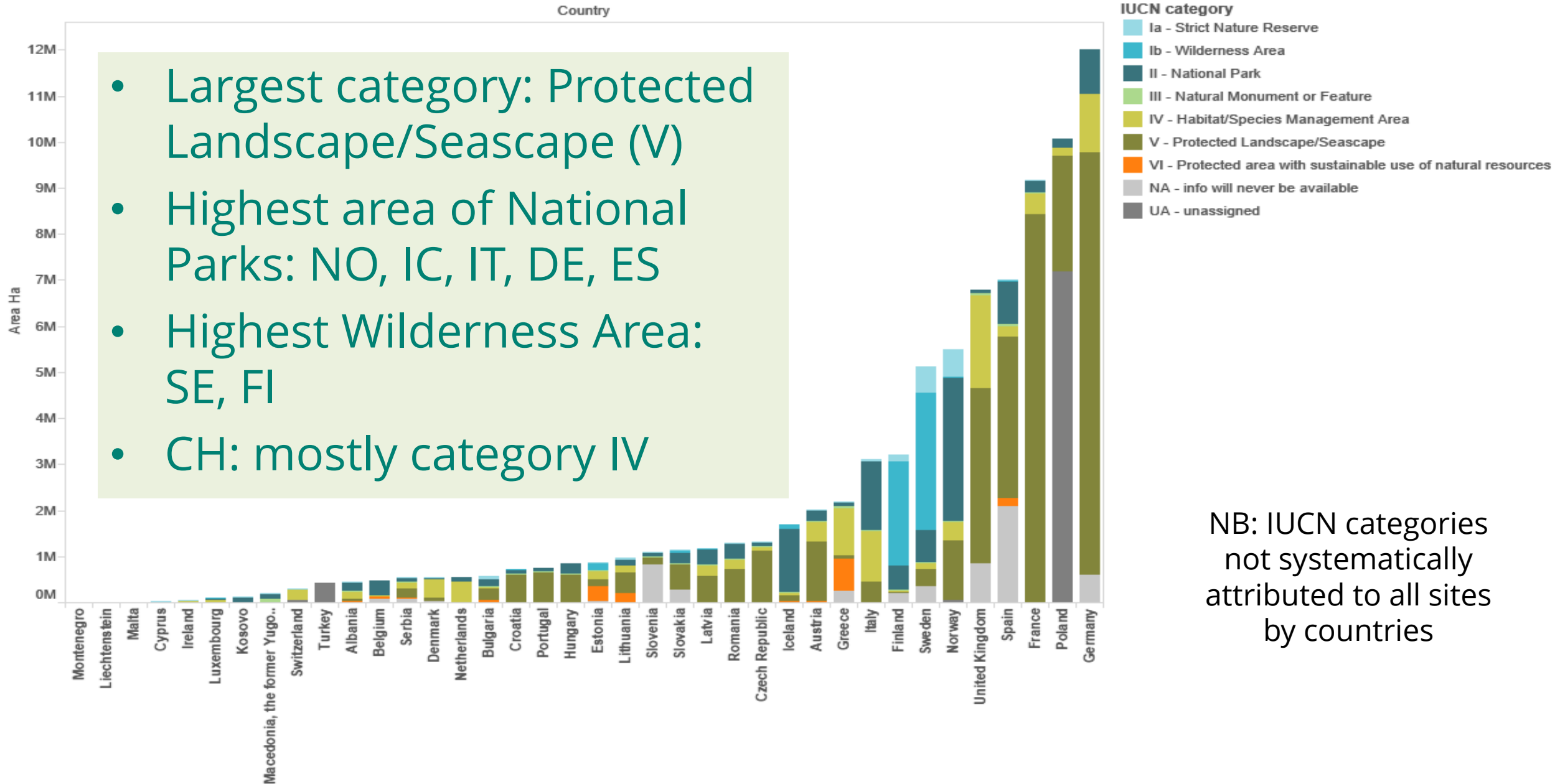
# Marine Natura 2000 sites



- 360 330 km<sup>2</sup>
- Near 6 % EU marine area
- Better coverage in-shore (<12 nm), than off-shore
- Still in 'construction'

# IUCN management categories

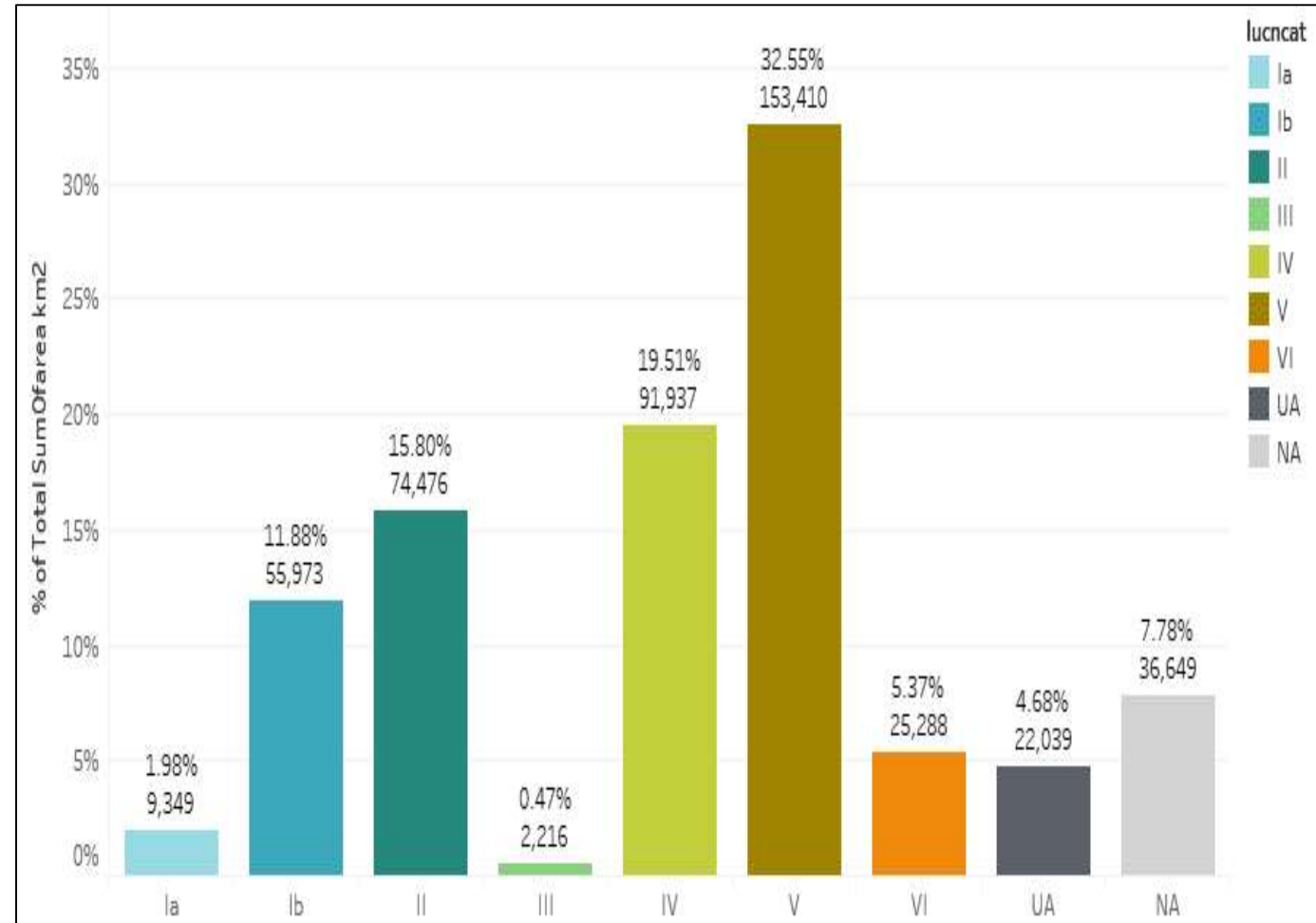
- Largest category: Protected Landscape/Seascape (V)
- Highest area of National Parks: NO, IC, IT, DE, ES
- Highest Wilderness Area: SE, FI
- CH: mostly category IV



NB: IUCN categories not systematically attributed to all sites by countries

# IUCN management categories of Natura 2000

- 50 % under categories I to IV
- 38 % under categories V & VI
- 12 % not known

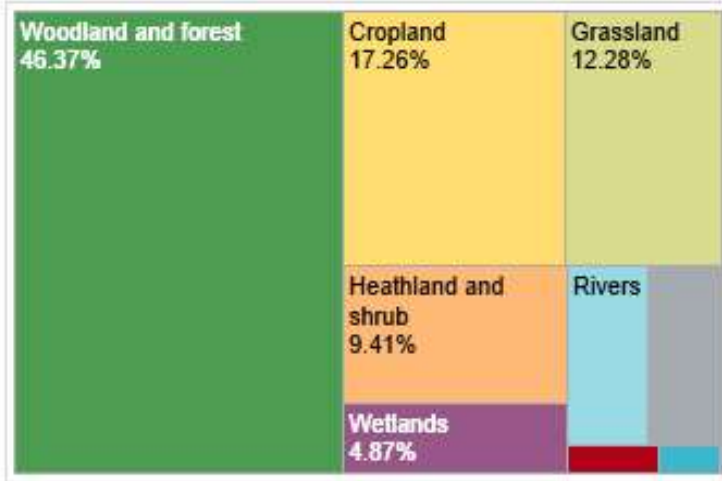


- Based on overlap with CDDA sites
- IUCN categories not systematically attributed to sites by countries



# Share of 'ecosystems' inside & outside Natura

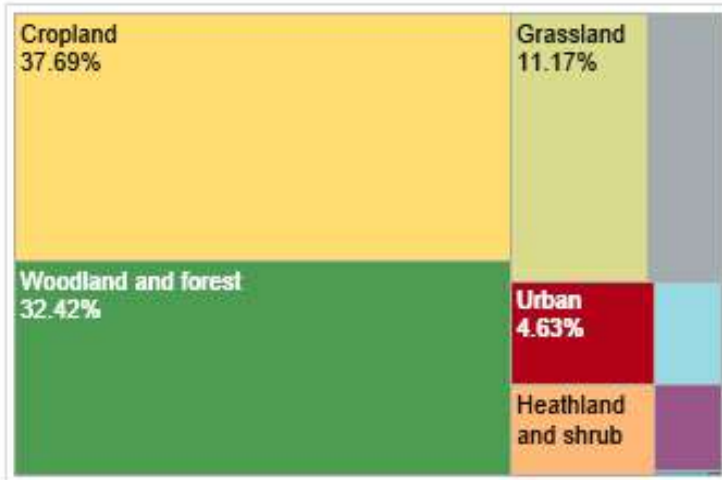
Inside Natura2000



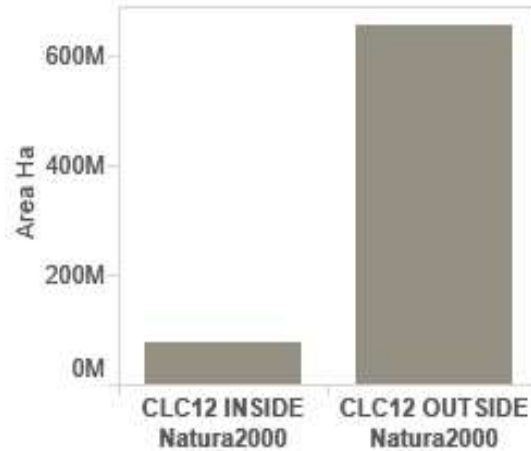
MAES ecosystem types



Outside Natura 2000



Total area inside and outside the Natura2000 network



- ## Natura sites
- Near 50 % forest
  - Close to 1/3 related to agriculture

# State of Nature in the EU



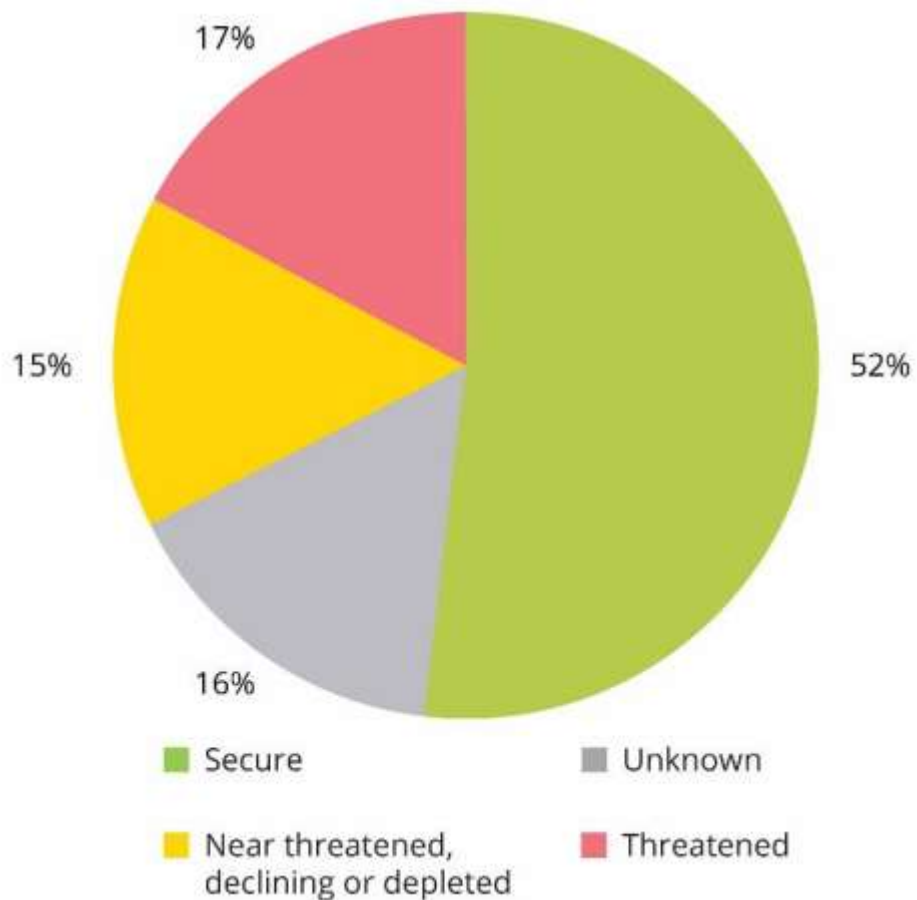
## State of Nature in the EU:

Photo: Otars Opermanis

Results from reporting under the nature directives 2007-2012, EEA 2015  
The mid-term review of the EU Biodiversity strategy, EU 2015

# EU population status of (447) bird species

Trends (breeding)  
49 % increasing/stable  
30 % decreasing

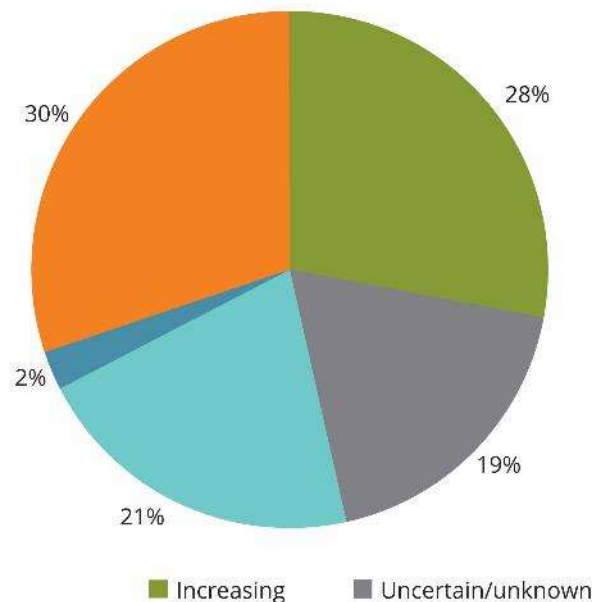


## Status

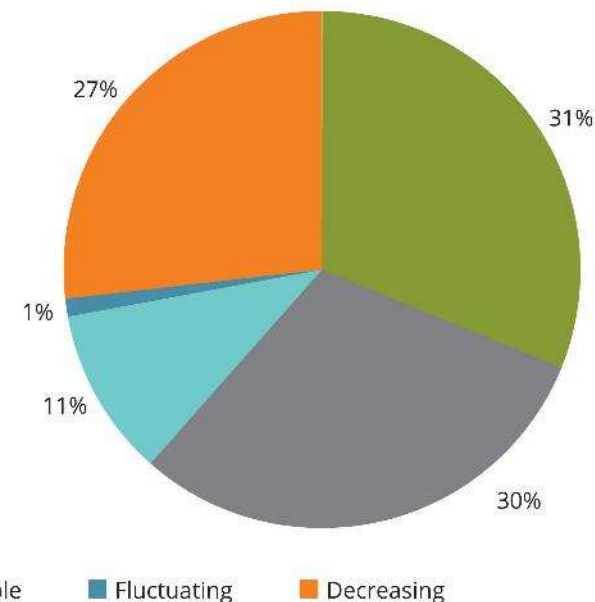
52 % secure

32 % not secure

a) Short-term breeding population trends (n = 454)



b) Long-term breeding population trends (n = 455)





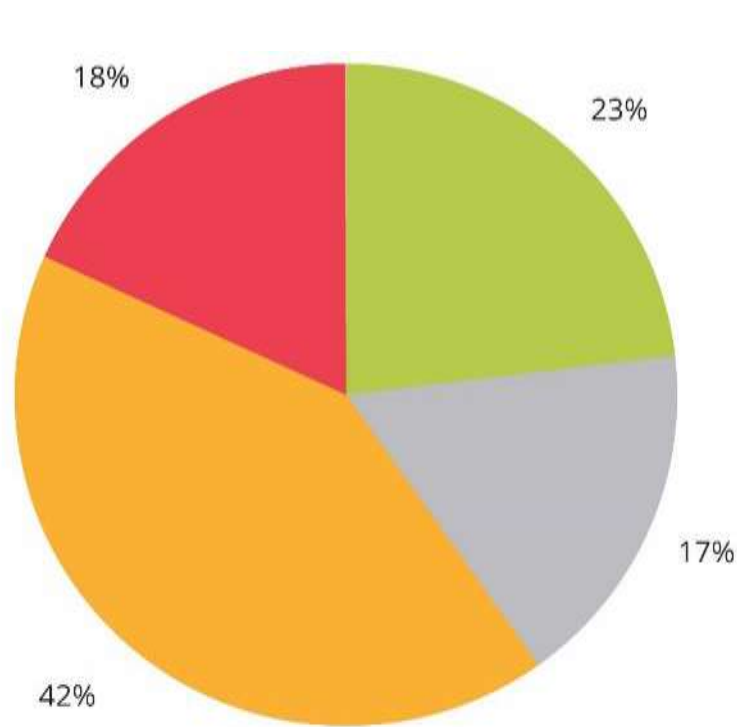
# EU conservation status of (1250) species fauna & flora

Proportion of assessments (2 665)

23 % favourable

60 % unfavourable

One assessment for each  
biogeographical & marine regions



Favourable

Unknown

Unfavourable-inadequate

Unfavourable-bad

Trends of unfavourable assessments

- 4 % improving
- 20 % stable
- 22 % declining
- 14 % unknown



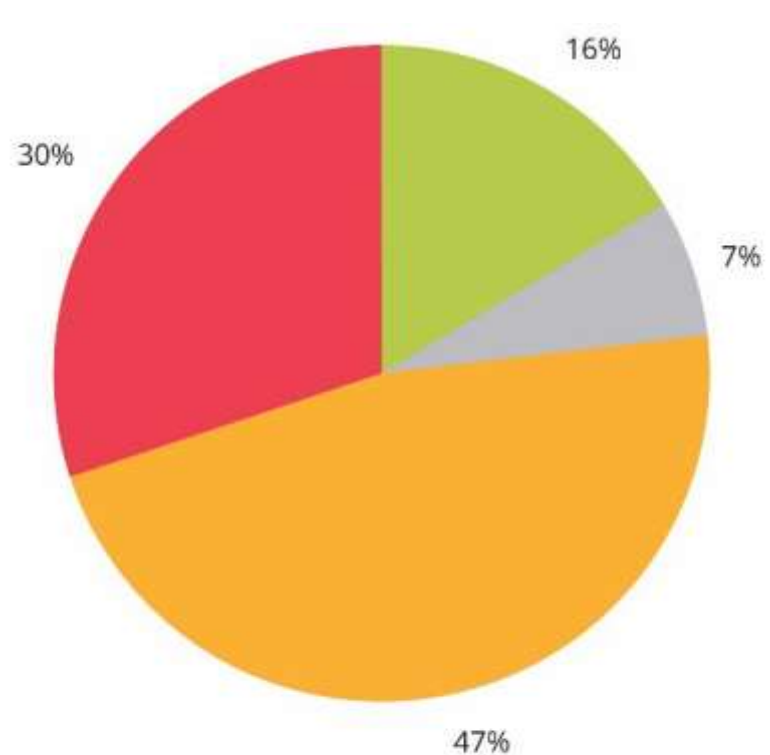
# EU conservation status of (233) habitat types

Proportion of assessments (804)

16 % favourable

77 % unfavourable

One assessment for each  
biogeographical & marine regions

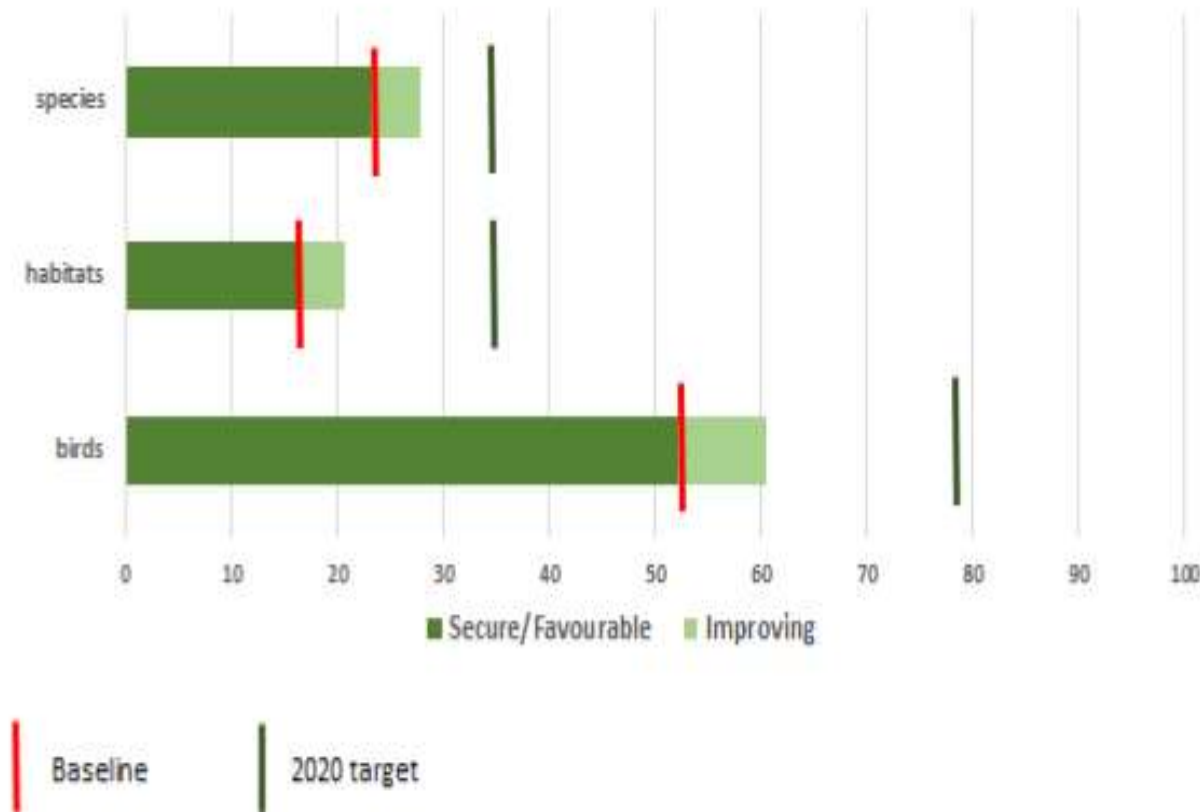


## Trends of unfavourable assessments

- 4 % improving
- 33 % stable
- 30 % declining
- 10 % unknown



# Distance to 2020 targets in 2015 (mid-term review)



Slow progress!

More habitats and species deteriorating than improving!

Semi-natural habitats (mostly related to agricultural practices) particularly unfavourable & further deteriorating



# Wait a minute!

We have in Europe

- A long tradition of designating protected areas!
- Over 21 % of land is protected!
- Large areas protected at sea!
- A EU network, with 'sticks & carrots'!
- Strategies & conventions!
- (We even have Europarc!)

And

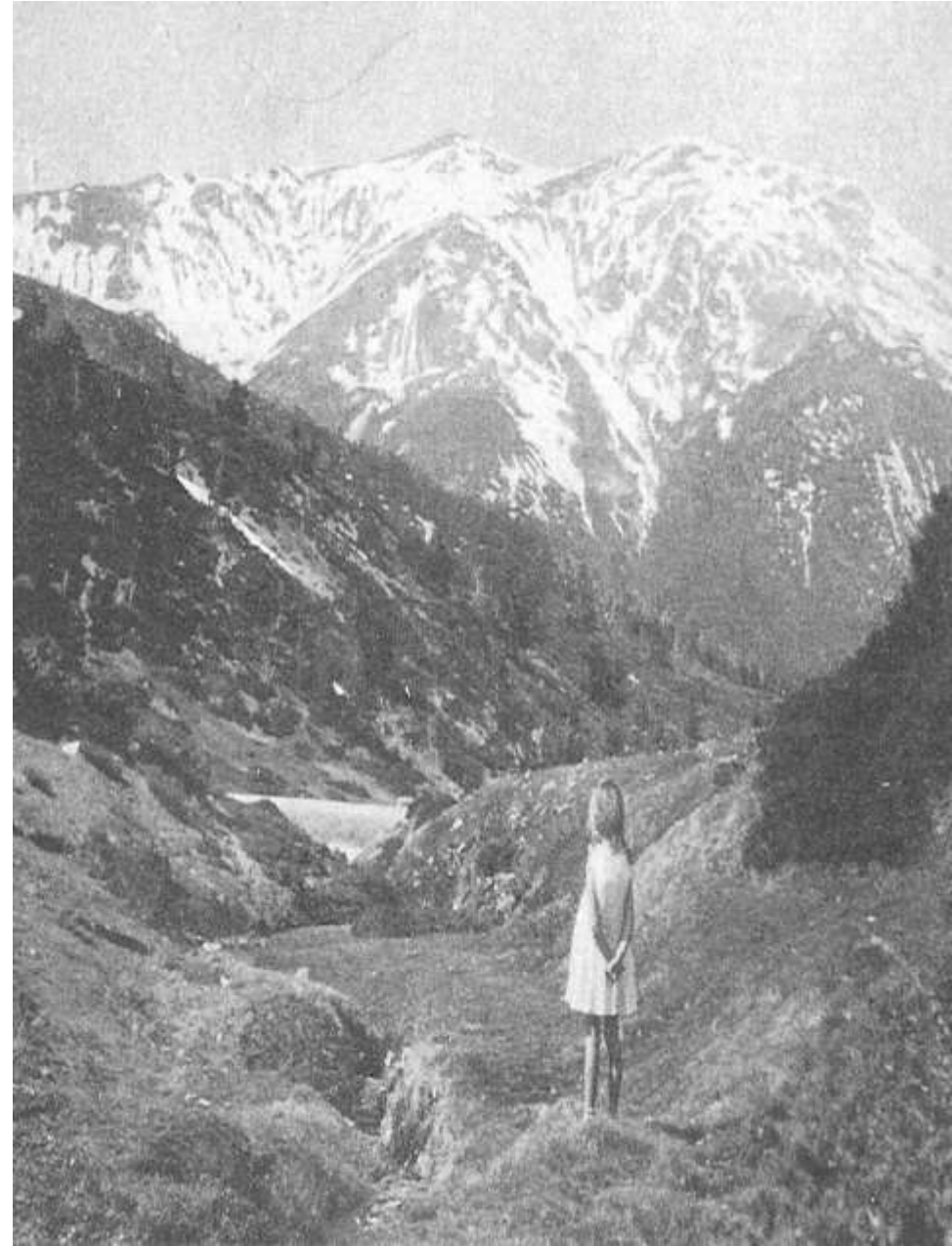
- We still are loosing biodiversity?
- Missing the targets?...



# Protected Areas in Europe



So,  
isn't  
this  
old-  
fashioned?





The answer I suggest is



**NO!**

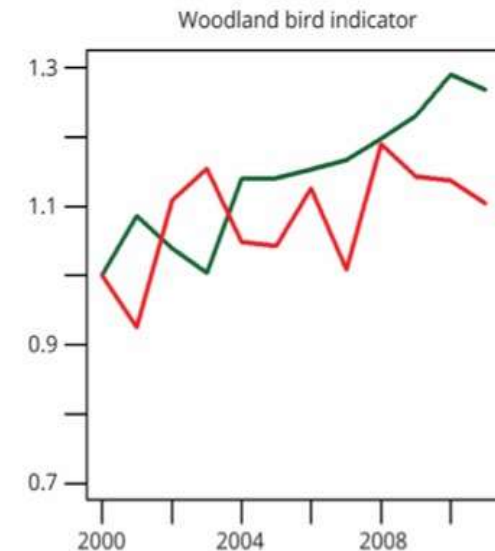
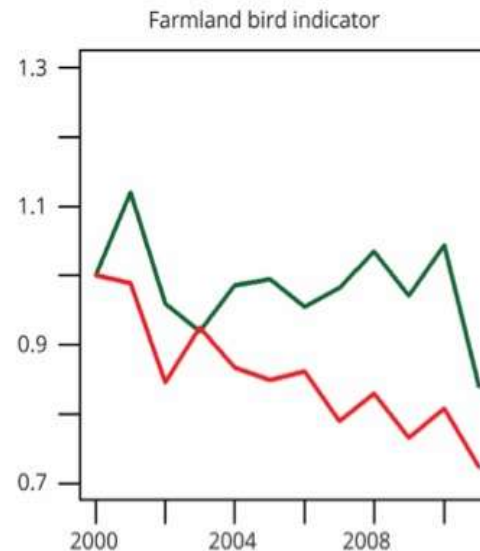
and...



# ... there is evidence that (i)

- Species and habitats better covered by Natura 2000 are improving significantly more than those with a lower coverage
- Farmland birds: steeper decrease outside than inside
- Woodland birds: similar trend inside and outside
- Birds: more specialist species and richer communities inside than outside Natura 2000

**Red** - outside  
**Green** - inside Natura 2000



## ... there is evidence that (ii)

- Protected areas, Natura 2000, deliver conservation benefits for 'common biodiversity' not just for the target species and habitats
- Good amount of research on gap analysis (how much is covered by PAs) and conservation status analysis
- Almost no research on 'management effectiveness'
- Scientific literature more 'interested' in conservation problems than in successes

Ok, ok, got it...



**BUT**



# But...

- Significant pressures remain, particularly on
  - Semi-natural habitats (e.g. most grasslands)
  - Farmland related species (e.g. birds, butterflies)
  - Freshwater habitats, fish, and invertebrates
  - Marine habitats
- Clear benefits of many protected areas only visible at a local scale

# PAs are (should be) the backbone of nature conservation

- But there are still many 'paper parks' (including N2000 sites)
- Investment in PAs as sustainable development and multifunctional 'infrastructure' needs to be increased
- Conservation outside PAs/Natura lacks appropriate instruments and/or implementation  
(further greening the CAP?)
- Payment for 'ecosystem services' may help
- Real implementation of green and blue-infrastructures should complement role of PAs

# One big challenge...

- ... European biodiversity is largely the result of socio-ecological processes of the last thousands of years
- Many of the species and habitats we value in Europe (reflected in regional, national, EU, and European law) depend on human activities that are being abandoned
- Many conservation successes can only be achieved through societal changes at local, regional, national, European and global levels...



**Therefore...**

**You are parks!**

**And you are not alone!**

**Thank your for your attention  
Merci pour votre attention**

