

EN  
E-004154/2017  
Answer given by Ms Crețu  
on behalf of the Commission  
(6.9.2017)

Areas included in the Natura 2000 network, established by the Habitats Directive<sup>1</sup>, should indeed be seen as an asset for Western Greece, rather than an impediment to local and regional development. This was confirmed in a recent study carried out for the Commission<sup>2</sup> and highlighted in its recently adopted "Action Plan for nature, people and the economy"<sup>3</sup>. Investments should be made paying particular attention to the preservation of natural resources and be tailored accordingly. Besides the allocations of the regional and national Operational Programmes and the financial instruments set up at national level, the region of Western Greece can count on the opportunities offered by the European financing programmes such as LIFE, COSME and InnovFin, together with the resources made available by the European Investment Bank in the framework of the Investment Plan for Europe<sup>4</sup>. The Prioritised Action Framework prepared by Greece<sup>5</sup> in accordance with the Habitats Directive, identifies opportunities for financing the management needs of Natura 2000 through available EU funds.

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<sup>1</sup> Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (OJ L 206, 22.7.1992)

<sup>2</sup> "Natura 2000 and Jobs", [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/financing/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/financing/index_en.htm)

<sup>3</sup> COM(2017) 198 final

<sup>4</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/jobs-growth-and-investment/investment-plan\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/jobs-growth-and-investment/investment-plan_en)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.ypeka.gr/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=bZfp%2BbTXoYU%3D&tabid=539&language=el-GR>