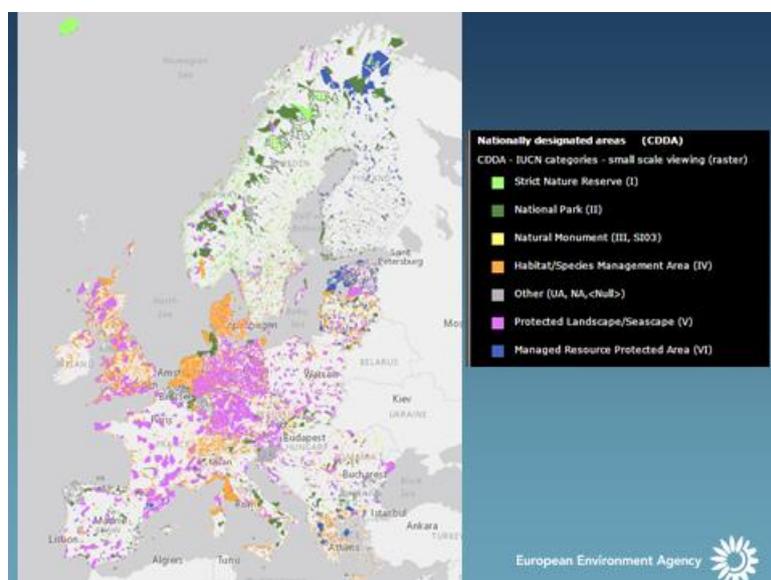


As one tries to approach the theme of the conference – cultural landscapes in Natura 2000 sites - at the European scale, one may soon realise that the words culture, landscape, protected areas are used within semantically different contexts in national policies across European countries. We need to recognise that there is a variety of administrative and political cultures in relation to protected areas across Europe, which are evolving in time and as much as anything else, have their roots to historically different socio-economic and land use conditions. For example, nature protection is implemented as an environmental policy in some countries, while in others it is part of the rural policy or the land planning system. Fortunately, we are now in a position to support our communication on the given theme with data at the European scale.

The European Environment Agency has been systematically collecting, analysing and disseminating information on nationally designated areas in Europe, over the 20 years of its existence. In analysing the information reported by countries, we were at a certain point faced with the challenge of the diversity of designation types existing in national legislation, as well as with the realisation that the same term, e.g. National Park, would have an entirely different meaning in terms of management objectives, amongst different countries.

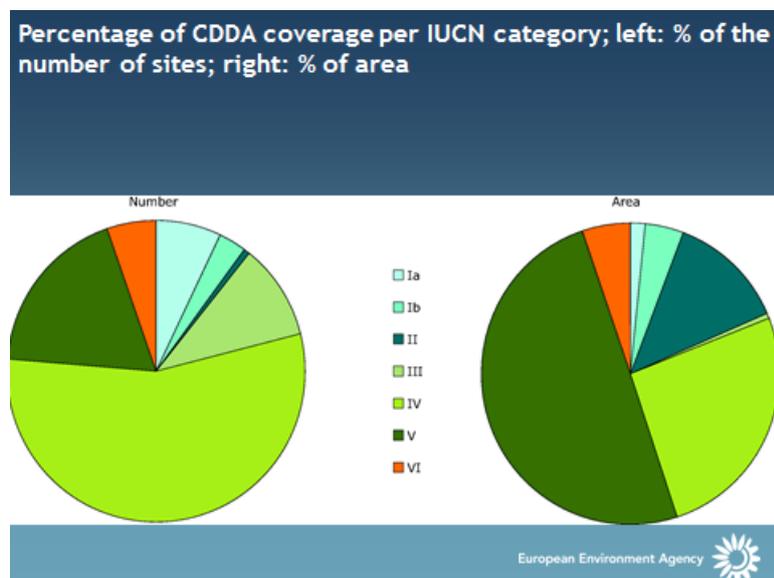
To overcome this challenge, we have agreed with countries that they provide us with the equivalent IUCN management category, a globally agreed standard, to characterise each protected area in Europe. The result is shown in the map below, where it is obvious that in each country concepts for the establishment and management of protected areas are applied differently, thus national borders can be identified as an underlying pattern in the map.

Of the 5 IUCN protected areas management categories, category V is dedicated to landscape/ seascape protection, including both cultural and natural aspects.

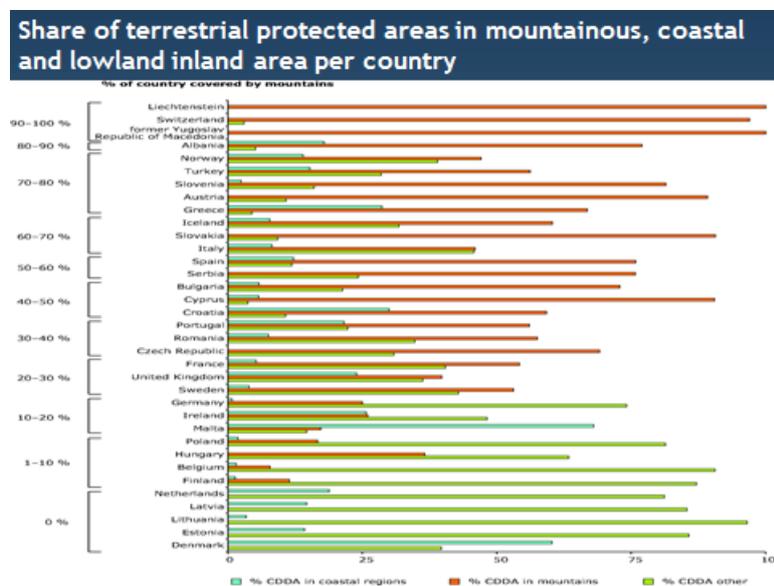


We were thus able to carry out some analysis using the CCDA [Common Database of Designated Areas], which was published in 2012 in the report titled [“Protected areas in Europe: an overview”](#), some of which I will present in the following maps and graphs.

The highest number of nationally designated areas are corresponding to IUCN category IV: habitat/ species management area, however when taking into account the area coverage of the sites, about half of the nationally designated sites in Europe correspond to landscape/ seascape protection.

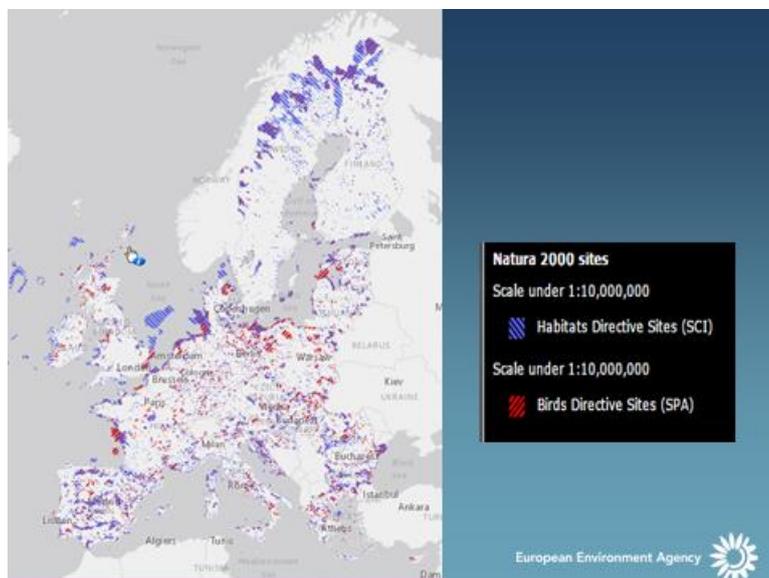


Trying to answer the question on which ecosystems are protected the most by the designated areas in Europe we have constructed the graph below. Even though there is no commonly overriding pattern, it is worth mentioning that the majority of protected areas are established in the mountainous terrain of Europe, even in countries with a low percentage coverage of mountains.

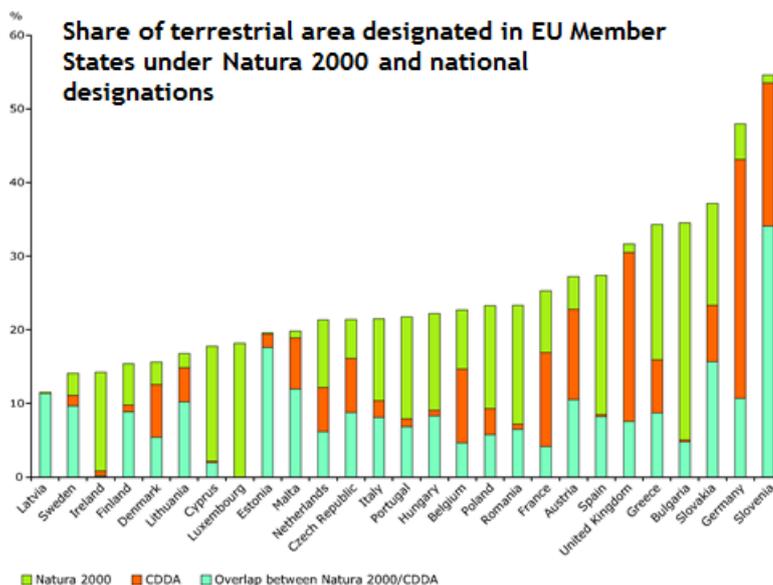


The EEA has also been supporting the EU members States and the European Commission in setting up of the Natura 2000 network since 1992. The Natura 2000 network is a concerted effort made to establish the most appropriate sites in order to ensure the long term favourable conservation status of a number of protected species - including birds- and a number of protected habitat types agreed by all EU member states. It is important to note that these protected species or habitat types are distributed unevenly across Member States and that the principle of subsidiarity which aims at determining the level of intervention that is most relevant in the areas of competences shared

between the EU and the Member States, had given a certain freedom for countries to design their contribution to the network. A map of the sites of the Natura 2000 network is shown below.



By using these two types of information we were able to calculate the share of terrestrial area designated in EU Member States for the nationally designated areas (CDDA) and the Natura 2000 sites, and their complementarity, shown in the graph below.

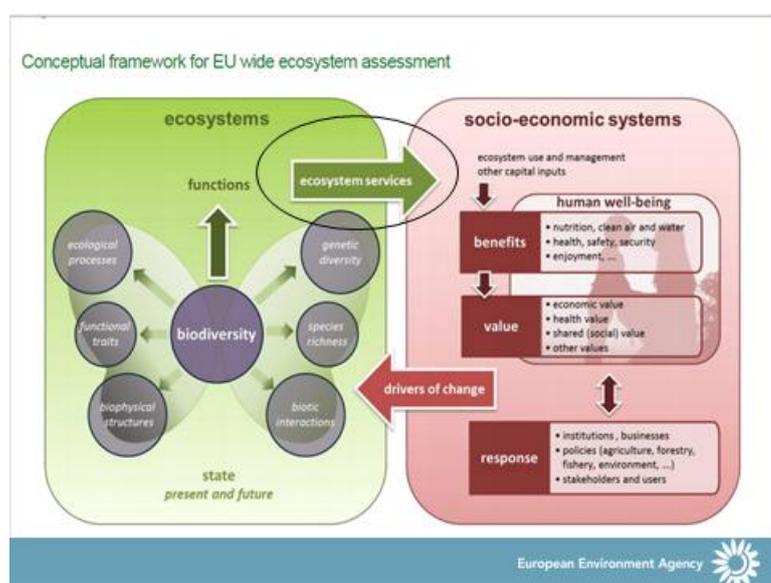


This graph demonstrates that the total share of terrestrial area covered by protected areas ranges from 12 % at the lowest (Latvia) to more than 50% (Slovenia). It also demonstrates that the spatial overlap/ complementarity of the nationally designated protected areas and Natura 2000 sites vary considerably across countries.

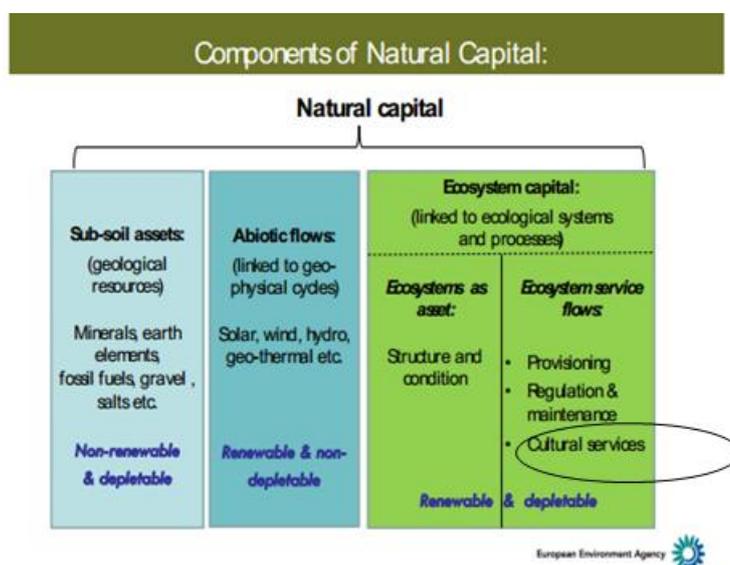
As an example: Greece and the United Kingdom have a similar share of total terrestrial area designated, which is between 32% and 35% of their land. They also have a similar share of overlap - that is designated both as a Natura 2000 and as nationally designated areas – which is around 8% of their land. However they are very different in that for Greece, the remaining Natura 2000 sites

account for 15% of the total share of land protected , while for the UK, it's the remaining nationally designated areas that account for more that 20% of land protected. Thus, for these two countries, and in fact for any country, perceptions on integrating EU policies for Natura 2000 sites may be very different.

In 2010, the global biodiversity community went through a serious brainstorming by the so called [TEEB process -The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity](#) , where it was recognised that “ we cannot manage what we do not *measure*”. The findings of these studies helped in shaping the development of the 2020 global biodiversity targets and subsequently [the EU biodiversity targets](#) for 2020. The central concept of ecosystem services was consequently introduced in policy frameworks, and not mentioning this in today's discussion would be a missed opportunity. Ecosystem services feature in the Conceptual Framework for EU wide ecosystem assessment as a bridge between ecosystems and socio-economic systems.



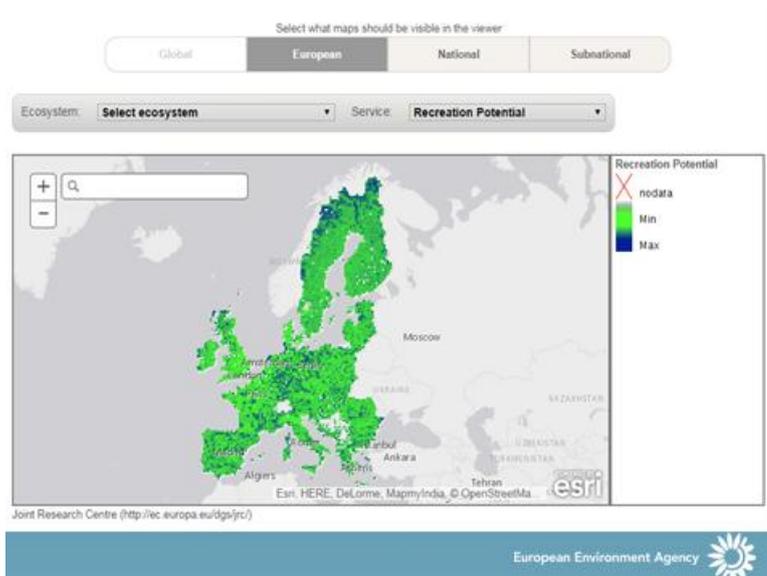
One of the first approaches to define natural capital was led by the European Environment Agency, where cultural services were recognised as parts of the ecosystem services flow, as seen in the diagram below.



Since then, a growing number of terms related to cultural services have been identified and some of these are mentioned in the box below, which reflect current approaches on the topic.



A number of research projects are focusing on these issues and work undertaken by the EU Joint Research Center in the framework of [MAES – the “Mapping and assessment of ecosystems and ecosystem services”](#) process has produced a map of the recreation potential of European ecosystems, based on Corine land cover and protected areas data, which is shown below



In conclusion, what our results can offer as input to today's discussion can be summarised in the following points :

1. Protected landscapes/ seascapes, which include both the natural and cultural aspects, are already designated as protected areas in several European countries

2. Policies related to Natura 2000 sites are implemented within a variety of national contexts of protected areas, therefore the cultural aspects of managing Natura 2000 sites will have a different priority in each country and in each site, depending on national policy set ups.
3. The concept of cultural services provided by ecosystems is not limited to protected areas; in fact it contributes to the natural capital of each country and should be accounted for the whole territory. The contribution of protected areas cultural services has been used as one of the main attributes to estimate the potential of ecosystems for recreation.

References – related links

<http://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/biodiversity/protected-areas>

<http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/protected-areas-in-europe-2012>

<http://biodiversity.europa.eu/topics/protected-areas>

<http://biodiversity.europa.eu/topics/ecosystem-services>

<http://www.teebweb.org/#>

<http://biodiversity.europa.eu/maes>

<http://biodiversity.europa.eu/maes/maes-digital-atlas>

<http://biodiversity.europa.eu/policy>

<http://biodiversity.europa.eu/policy/biodiversity-strategy-plan>