Appendix 1. Case study countries.

Finland is a northern European country and Greece a southern one, with, accordingly, different species, habitats, and ecosystems. However, the two countries share a loss of biodiversity, mainly due to non-sustainable and intensive productive activities such as agriculture, stock farming, and forestry (Auvinen et al. 2007, NCESD 2008). In both countries, the expansion of protected areas has been both remarkable, and significantly driven by EU conservation policy, over the last two decades. In addition, both countries have seen similar changes in line with the new public management (NPM) policies and neoliberalization processes in environmental governance (including biodiversity) occurring throughout the EU in recent decades (Sairinen 2000, Apostolopoulou and Pantis 2010, Apostolopoulou et al. 2012*a*, 2012*b*). In principle, biodiversity-governing structures have the same elements: environmental administration is structured through national, regional, and local authorities, where the dominant expertise tends to be in natural sciences. However, both countries have taken steps toward multilevel and networked governance arrangements through the establishment of various multilevel and multi-sector cooperation networks and public-private partnerships.

On the other hand, the economic context is different at present, with a recession in Finland and a crisis in Greece, resulting, inter alia, in limiting of resources for conservation. In Greece, the latter, in combination with the chronic absence of a conservation strategy (Apostolopoulou and Pantis 2009), has led to a situation wherein biodiversity governance focuses mainly on establishment of a national network of protected areas whereas on-the-ground integration of biodiversity objectives into other policies has been rather limited. In Finland, where a strategy does exist, policy integration has made more progress, with attempts to integrate biodiversity issues into land uses, planning, and sectoral policies, e.g., for forestry and agriculture (Paloniemi and Varho 2009), however conflicting interests still exist.

The aim in arranging focus groups in two EU member states was to explore the variety of discourses on biodiversity conservation and thus get a fuller general picture of the current scale challenges in European biodiversity policy and governance.

We should note that this qualitative study is part of a wider research project focusing on five case study countries, including Greece and Finland, triangulating and integrating both qualitative and quantitative material and methods (on such mixed methodology see Johnson et al. 2007, Denscombe 2008, Tapio et al. 2011). When designing the study, selecting its theoretical perspectives, and operationalizing the questions and arguments for the discussions, we benefited from detailed document analysis of national biodiversity policies and policy instruments for generating themes for focus groups and interpretation of the results to reflect dominant policy discourses in both Finland and Greece.

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