

NATURA 2000 & EU ENLARGEMENT

The lists of species and habitats requiring protection in the two nature directives as originally adopted were based on the species and habitats present and their conservation status in the European Union (or its predecessors) at the time of adoption. With each successive enlargement the directives have been examined and where needed adapted, with either new species or habitats added or perhaps geographical exemptions for species which are of conservation interest in the former EU but which may be pest species in a country about to join.

Candidate countries are asked to propose additional habitats and species for the annexes and these are then discussed with DG Environment and the member states with ETC/BD giving scientific advice. The discussions use the criteria given in the two directives when assessing the proposals, for example a habitat has to be :

- (i) in danger of disappearance in their natural range;
- or
- (ii) have a small natural range following their regression or by reason of their intrinsically restricted area;
- or
- (iii) present outstanding examples of typical characteristics of one or more of the seven following biogeographical regions:
Alpine, Atlantic, Boreal, Continental, Macaronesian, Mediterranean and Pannonian.

to be considered eligible to be added to the annex.

Table 1 : EU enlargements since the adoption of the Birds Directive in 1979

Year	Countries joining
1981	Greece
1986	Spain, Portugal
1995	Austria, Finland, Sweden
2004	Czech Republic, Estonia, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia

With each expansion of the European Union (Table 1) the annexes of the Birds Directive have changed and since 1992 those of the Habitats Directive as well. For instance the 1995 expansion resulted in the addition of a Boreal biogeographical region and 28 new habitats to Annex I and 68 species to Annex II of the Habitats Directive, and 7 birds to the Annex I of the Birds Directive.

For the 2004 enlargement, 13 species or subspecies were added in the Annex I of the Birds Directive, 20 habitats to the Annex I and 165 species to the Annex II of the Habitats Directive together with a new biogeographical region (the Pannonian).

In many cases habitats proposed as new by a candidate country are very similar to existing Annex I habitats and in such cases the description given in the [Interpretation Manual](#) has been modified. For example several alpine habitat descriptions were amended in 2004 to cover very similar habitats found in the Tatra.

Negotiations are already well advanced with Bulgaria and Romania and it is likely that 16 habitats will be added to Annex I and 23 species to Annex II of the Habitats Directive when they join the EU together with two new biogeographical regions (Black Sea & Steppic).