

Chapter 6

Political Landscapes of Mediterranean Islands

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All islands are part of the European Union

6.1 Introduction

What is meant by political landscapes?

All landscapes, because they have been moulded by human action, are to some extent political. This is particularly evident in the Mediterranean Basin, a crossroad where civilisations have coalesced and often clashed. Although the larger of the

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Mediterranean Islands have been the home centres of great civilisations (Chapters 3 and 5) during prehistoric times, they have been unable to resist the repeated invasions of mainland-based powers that battled successively for political and commercial authority. The strategic location of the islands meant that they were ideal for defence, trade and exploitation of natural resources and therefore an attraction to outsiders. The Mediterranean Islands discussed herein have been used as temporary and/or permanent bases of world powers, a practice that continues today given that the USA and the UK still retain military bases there. For most of their histories the larger Mediterranean Islands have been in a position of political subservience to an outside power. Some remain powerless in political terms because they have little autonomy from mainland governments (Royle 2001).

During the course of history Mediterranean Islands have changed hands among emerging powers or as a result of conflicts and subsequent international treaties. All of the islands discussed in this book fought for independence with two, Malta and Cyprus, gaining independence from Britain as recently as the 1960s. Following independence, the majority of islands became part of their respective mainlands (Table 6.1). For some of the islands, notably Crete, Sardinia and Sicily joining the motherland has been a voluntary act, while for others unification was imposed by armed conflict as in the case of the Balearics and Corsica. Island exchange has continued to take place even during the last 100 years. For example, Greece lost the islands of Imvros and Tenedos islands to Turkey (in Turkish these are the Gökçeada and Bozcaada islands) following the Lausanne treaty in 1923 while the Dodecanese islands joined the Greek state after secession from Italy in 1947. Cyprus was the battlefield of armed conflict in 1974 which left the island divided in two parts: northern Cyprus is under Turkish control while southern Cyprus is an independent state recognised by the UN. The islands of the Dalmatian coast following World War II and the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia in the early 1990s are now part of Croatia.

During the last century the limiting resources of the islands in conjunction with geopolitical events (mostly conflicts) have led to a variety of demographical patterns. Generations of islanders responded to the problems of peripherality/isolation

Table 6.1 Important dates in the islands' recent political history

	Period as Independent State	Year of Independence or Joined Mainland	Accession year to the European Union
Sicily		1860	1958*
Sardinia	1848–1860	1861	1958*
Cyprus		1960	2004**
Corsica	1755–1769	1769	1958*
Crete	1898–1913	1913	1981
Balearics	1276–1344 (Mallorca) 1287–1344 (Minorca)	1802	1986
Malta		1964	2004

*The French and Italian islands effectively entered the then called European Economic Community. **Applies only to the southern part of the island under the UN-recognised Republic of Cyprus.

(Chapter 1, Table 1.3) by migrating. Sicilians left en masse to the USA between 1900 and 1914, with Kalymnians going to Australia, and Sardinians to Germany and France. Different scale migrations occur even today; islanders migrate to the mainland or internally from the mountainous interiors to the large coastal cities, while in archipelagos the larger islands draw people from the smaller islands. In very few cases have the islands received migrants from other places. Examples include the larger Greek islands which received Greek migrants from Asia Minor after the 1922 conflict with Turkey and Corsica (see Chapter 9) which received French expatriates and their personnel following the French decolonisation of northern Africa in the early 1960s. Many Mediterranean Islands have been sufficiently close to the African coast to have been the stepping stones for illegal immigrants to Europe in the last decade.

The way by which Mediterranean Islands are administered by their mainland governors varies, depending on country, often reflecting island size, resources and population. Mediterranean Islands which are parts of a country are affiliated to many different organisational and political frameworks. Nevertheless, the majority are predominantly under the economic and political influence of the European Union (EU). The political and administrative relations of the Mediterranean Islands with each other and with their respective states and the EU are complicated. All these cultural, geopolitical and administrative layers, both historical and recent, have shaped their distinct landscapes. This chapter reviews the recent historical and political factors and processes that have shaped Mediterranean Island landscapes and examines the place of 'landscape' as a reflection of cultural, ecological and economic factors in the political agenda.

6.2 Islands, Resources and Administration

The administration of islands is problematic and challenging for the administrators, usually the mainland state, and the islanders themselves. Worldwide islands are economically, socially and physically vulnerable by their very nature. Land area and often water, are the main limiting factors which affect the islands' capacity to provide the goods and services to meet domestic needs and thus the islands become dependent on imports. The social, economic, administrative and political fabric of the Mediterranean Islands is as diverse as the islands themselves. Industrial development is limited in the islands the majority of which rely on tourism to generate income which, in turn, balances this demand for imported goods and services (Morey and Martinez-Taberner 2000). Tourism which was encouraged particularly in the 1960s and 1970s has transformed island landscapes and brought new pressures which have caused environmental change. The kind of tourism developed in the majority of the Mediterranean Islands is 'product-led' which means that, economic growth through the development of new and maintenance of existing products prevails over environmental issues (Kousis 2001). Thus not all political decisions are directly related to the environment

but still have an environmental impact. Space constraints have an effect not just on agricultural production but also on housing, infrastructure, waste disposal, and industrial development. Groups of islands in the Mediterranean (archipelagos) are usually faced with double insularity. This concept involves the difficulties imposed by a small population spread out over a number of small islands (EURISLES 2002). In addition islands, particularly the smaller ones, are at risk from many environmental hazards, such as earthquakes, coastal-, river- and rain-induced flooding. The region in which the Ionian Islands (north-west Greece) lie is the most seismically active area in the whole of western Eurasia (i.e. from Gibraltar to China) while Crete is situated where the African and the European tectonic plates collide. Sicily is home to Etna with Stromboli off its north-eastern coast; these are two of the most active volcanoes in the world.

Although the presence of resources on islands is constrained by their physical setting the use of these resources is influenced mainly by political decision-making. A major problem is that island scale (i.e. the unit of resource production) may coincide with three different administrative levels (Fig. 6.1) and therefore is a heterogeneous unit shaped by varying weight of political influence and decision-making. Consequently, while physical constraints might impose similar resource restrictions on the majority of the Mediterranean Islands the extent, ability and effectiveness to which islanders are managing their resources depends on the status of their island.

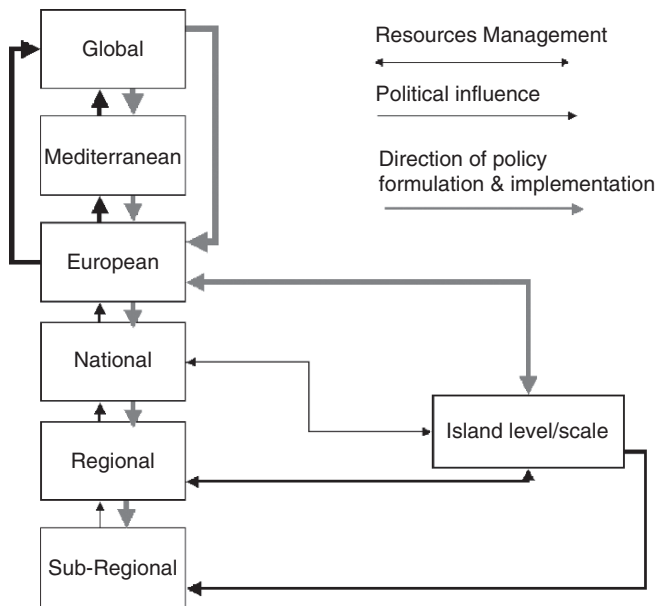


Fig. 6.1 The levels of policy formulation, administration and resource management in the Mediterranean Islands. The thickness of the arrow indicates the strength of the link

Decision-making occurs at regional level for most countries with islands, and most of the islands in the Mediterranean are off-shore parts of a mainland state. Therefore they fall below the regional administrative level with little or no political influence in national capitals or Brussels, the EU power centre. The same applies to policy formulation with islands being distant from this process, unless they are island states. Policy formulation usually takes place at the National and European level and is inevitably influenced by events on a larger geopolitical scale such as regional, e.g. Mediterranean or global. This is sometimes considered a unidirectional process (Fig. 6.1). For the island states, i.e. Malta and Cyprus, there is a distinct advantage over other Mediterranean Islands since they are members of the UN Small island Developing States Initiative. Therefore they can benefit, financially and through the exchange of information and best practices while at the same time have their voices heard on a range of issues (Hopkins 2002). Another organisation that comprises EU islands is the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (C. P.M.R.) an independent body set-up to tackle the disadvantages of EU's periphery. Within this organisation the Island Commission is working specifically on EU-islands related issues (EURISLES 2002).

Some of the Mediterranean countries have in place special measures for their islands within the national government and central administration (Table 6.2). For example, Greece has a ministry for the Aegean and has established three island regions: northern Aegean (7 islands), southern Aegean (50 inhabited islands), Ionian (13 islands) while Crete is a separate administrative region. Currently it seems that France is the only country within Europe with no representation for small islands or special status for Corsica which continues to be a controversial issue.

It has been argued that past policies of negligence in combination with the belief by many islanders in their special origin and character have resulted in frequent clashes between the mainland and its offshore islands. For example, Cretans have a long and proud tradition of resistance to regulations imposed from outside the island (such as interdiction of firearms), while the foundation of the *Cosa Nostra* in Sicily has been partly attributed to local mistrust for the central, usually north

Table 6.2 Level of autonomy in the Mediterranean Islands of the European Union (From Hache 2000)

Islands	Autonomy granted by the National			Common law
	Constitution	Legislation power	Administration power	
Sicily	√	√	√	
Sardinia	√	√	√	
Corsica			√	
Crete				√
Balearics	√	√	√	
North Aegean islands				√
South Aegean Islands				√
Ionian Islands				√

Italian dominated, administration. Sardinia and Corsica have also been home to notorious bandits.

6.3 European Union and the Islands

In the last 50 years with the establishment of the European Community (now the European Union) the political and administrative framework of Europe’s member states has changed significantly. The place of islands has also changed from being just a part of a Nation State, into being the strategic fringes of continental Europe. As a result policies for the majority of economic sectors such as agriculture, transport, energy but also environment are now dictated by the EU. The extent to which islands have been able to influence the negotiations of adhesion by their Member State was partly dependent on the level, if any, of their autonomy status.

Entry to the EU (Table 6.1) marked many changes on the islands (Fig. 6.2). These changes are still a source of controversy amongst politicians and environmentalists. Agriculture, the major pressure in the islands, is now manipulated via the European Union’s (EU) Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). EU subsidies have been responsible for the transformation of landscapes in many islands. They have intensified agricultural development to the point of overproduction while in some islands they have been diverted towards other inappropriate, sometimes conflicting and sometimes even damaging activities (Chapter 11). Traditional

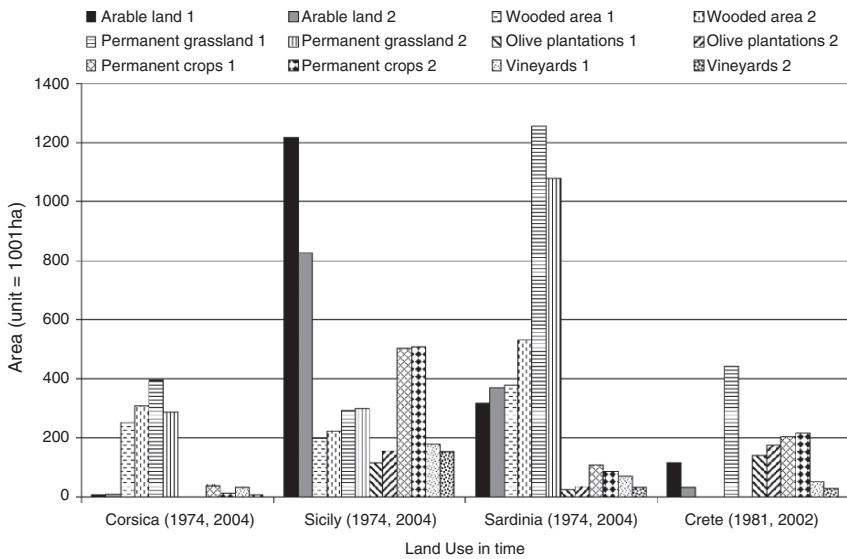


Fig. 6.2 Land-use changes in four Mediterranean Islands following entry to the European Union (From EUROSTAT 2006)

agricultural activities have declined or ceased in many islands (Chapter 8) while intensive agriculture has continued where investments in irrigation were made, as in Sicily, Sardinia and Crete. As the most recent entries, Malta and Cyprus will have to adjust their national agricultural policy to match the CAP.

The majority of island members have so far benefited from specific EU incentives, laws, tax arrangements or structures, be it at regional or national level. In recognition of island 'poverty' compared to the EU average, due mainly to their marginalisation, islands were placed under the categories Objectives 1 and 2 which denote the highest priority category for receiving EU structural funds. These include programmes such as INTERREG for promoting transnational co-operation on spatial planning, LEADER, which finances projects for rural development, and others (European Commission 2006).

The Treaty of Amsterdam (European Union 1997) introduced a number of important provisions to the EC treaty relating to islands:

- Article 158 mentions reducing the backwardness of least-favoured island regions.
- Declaration No. 30 defines the EU obligations in respect of island regions.
- Article 299 (2) requires the EC council to adopt specific measures for areas with special constraints such as insularity.
- Article 154 deals with trans-European networks between islands and central regions of the Community.

Despite what might seem a favourable legislative framework at the European level, critics of EU policies suggest that in many cases these special benefits are given also to any continental area that meets the necessary economic criteria/thresholds and that insularity has not been accounted for in these measures (EURISLES 2002). As a result EU policy fails to accept the islands' special conditions and adapt its policies accordingly or what a recent IUCN report refers to as the phenomenon of 'northern sunshades' (Hopkins 2002). The majority of consumers of Mediterranean Island summers are from northern Europe and include people who lead and shape EU environmental policies. Despite this, they appear reluctant to support islands and their problems in EU fora. For example, an extremely important issue – is that the EU does not recognise sufficiently the need to connect the islands with the mainland, through subsidised marine or aviation transport networks, in the name of free-market economy and competition. Moreover, the recent EU enlargement and any future enlargement plans, mean that the EU will be even more continental in nature. Thus there is cause for concern that islands will be neglected politically and financially as attention is turned to the new member countries.

Another issue emerging in the last decade as central to island policy is human immigration, that is, islands acting as stepping-stones to human movement from other continents, mainly Africa and Asia, into Europe. This is acute in the case of the Canaries, a European but not Mediterranean archipelago, but is also demonstrated by the cases of Malta and Lampedusa sparking the political debate about immigration and the borders of the EU. At the centre of this debate the Mediterranean Islands will inevitably be the protagonists demanding increased attention by the European mainland and its power centre.

6.4 Islands, Landscapes and Biodiversity

6.4.1 *How Important is Landscape on the Political Agenda?*

The development of protected landscapes by IUCN since the early 1970s recognised that effective conservation could not be achieved by focusing on traditional eco-centric approaches alone and that it was necessary to involve humans and cultural landscapes. The UNESCO (1972) convention on World Natural and Cultural Heritage was the first major initiative to place cultural landscapes on the worldwide political agenda. However, cultural landscapes were inscribed in the World Heritage List much later in 1993; this included a number of sites designated in the Mediterranean Islands (Chapter 5). Although protected landscapes/seascapes belong to IUCN Category V in the Mediterranean there are many different names used to denote a protected landscape/seascape (IUCN 1994a). Protected landscapes are advocated as an effective way of achieving holistic conservation and sustainable rural development. The definition of a Protected Landscape/Seascape, that is, a protected area managed mainly for landscape/seascape conservation and recreation is:

Area of land, with coast and sea as appropriate, where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinct character with significant aesthetic, ecological and/or cultural value, and often with high biological diversity. Safeguarding the integrity of this traditional interaction is vital to the protection, maintenance and evolution of such area.

The Mediterranean Landscape Charter (also known as the Sevilla Charter) was the first document to cover specific issues on the management and protection of the Mediterranean landscape (1993) and to stress the need for protection of the natural and cultural landscapes of the area as a whole. This was followed by the IUCN publication Parks for Life: Actions for Protected Areas in Europe (IUCN 1994b) which advocates an international convention on rural landscape protection in Europe, involving the Council of Europe. The European Landscape Convention was the first international charter aimed at ensuring improved management of Europe's landscapes (Council of Europe 2000).

Landscape must become a mainstream political concern, since it plays an important role in the well-being of Europeans who are no longer prepared to tolerate the alteration of their surroundings by technical and economic developments in which they have had no say. Landscape is the concern of all and lends itself to democratic treatment, particularly at local and regional level (European Landscape Convention)

The Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (PEBLDS) was the first approach to address all biological and landscape initiatives under one European approach. This meant that the conservation of landscapes would be incorporated in the major initiatives dealing with biodiversity and that biological and landscape diversity would be integrated adequately into all social and economic sectors (Council of Europe/UNEP and ECNC 1996). At the national level there is a variety of legislation that indirectly affects island landscapes including legislation on historic monuments, protection of the environment and land use and planning.

However, national landscape initiatives in Europe are relatively new and many have not been implemented (Wascher 2001) although this is bound to change due to PEBLDS and the European Landscape Convention. However, because implementation takes place at the national and/or regional level the true effects of these conventions might still be several years into the future.

The shift in ecological thought on the influences of landscape processes on biodiversity (Forman and Godron 1986) was followed by the notion that landscape scale approaches are also fundamental to the understanding of past and present cultural processes (Aalen 2001). The landscape scale is now considered to be the appropriate spatial framework for the analysis of sustainability. Despite attempts at landscape classification at the European level (Meeus 1995; Wascher and Jongman 2003) and its wide use in north-west Europe as a tool for landscape planning, the development of a landscape typology for Mediterranean countries has been limited. Exceptions include Portugal (Pinto-Correia et al. 2002), Spain (Mata Olmo and Sanz Herráiz 2003) and Slovenia (Marušič and Jančič 1998). Certainly the Slovenian typology is more complete than others since it incorporates cultural landscapes. Such approaches are now advocated by international and national organisations to summarise pressures and threats and to develop policies for sustainability (Hopkins 2002). For example, Integrated Coastal Management is one of the approaches to the planning and management of coastal resources which attempts to overcome previous sectoral approaches and tackle development and conservation in a holistic manner (Cassar 2001). Such plans have been formulated in a few Mediterranean Islands by UNEP (UNEP 1994a, b, c). At the same time UNEP is evaluating landscape character assessment and its potential for coastal zone management (Vogiatzakis et al. 2005).

6.4.2 Biodiversity Protection

The importance of Mediterranean Islands' biodiversity (reviewed in Chapter 4) at a global level, points to the need for an extensive network of protected areas to safeguard vulnerable species and habitats. The number and extent of protected areas in the Mediterranean countries are very diverse (Vogiatzakis et al. 2006) something that reflects at the regional level upon the designations on islands of the area. Information on the extent and distribution of protected areas in the Mediterranean Islands is arduous to find since none of the existing databases can pull out islands as separate entities (Hopkins 2002). This would be a useful conservation tool, especially as islands generally are more vulnerable to environmental change than the mainland. As is the case for other sectors (Section 6.3) for most of the Mediterranean Islands EU policies are those which shape Biodiversity and Landscape Protection particularly in the last 20 years although there have also been other wider geographical initiatives (Table 6.3). It must be noted, however, that in the majority of these initiatives islands (other than island states) are not treated separately from their mainland state.

Table 6.3 Summary of the main policy and legislation instruments in the Mediterranean Basin

Instrument	Year	Scale	Focus
Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP)	1975	Mediterranean	Marine environment
Barcelona Convention	1976	Mediterranean	Marine environment
Nicosia Charter	1990	Euro-Mediterranean	Sustainable development
Sevilla Charter	1993	Mediterranean	Landscape
Alghero Convention	1995	Mediterranean	Coastal and marine biodiversity
Mediterranean Wetlands Strategy	1996	Mediterranean	Wetlands
Natura 2000 network	1992	European Union	Species and habitats
European Landscape Convention	2000	Pan-European	Landscape
PEBLDS (Pan-European Biodiversity and Landscape Strategy)	1996	Pan-European	Landscape, biodiversity
Convention on Biological Diversity	1992	Global	Biodiversity
UNESCO declaration on cultural diversity	2001	Global	Cultural diversity
UNESCO World Heritage Convention	1972	Global	Cultural heritage and Cultural landscapes

In the last three decades in Europe there has been a proliferation in the number of protected areas. This is due to the widespread interest in conservation, increased public awareness and in some cases the result of a new legislative framework, e.g. European Natura 2000 or in Spain after the establishment of the Autonomous Communities. The designation of Natura 2000 network is particularly important. Its development is illustrated in Figure 6.3 which shows that it has relatively long-term formulation to implementation time frame. In 1995 individual states recommended SCIs on the basis of existing knowledge although full time management will not be in place until after 2010. Prior to Natura 2000 some islands had already a good network of protected areas in place such as Sardinia, Corsica and the Balearics. Corsica (Chapter 10) and the Balearics (Chapter 12) are a special case since c.40% of the islands' territory is under some form of protection. For those islands, the Natura 2000 network will enforce what is already in place while for other islands such as Crete the number of protected areas will increase significantly following Natura 2000 designations. Sicily despite its size and considerable biodiversity (Chapter 7) has very few protected areas, either in the Natura 2000 network or more generally (Hopkins 2002). A past trend regarding protected sites was their designation on mountains far from areas of conflict with tourist or agricultural activities. This is bound to change with Natura 2000 network since many sites as exemplified by the cases of Sardinia (Chapter 8) and Crete (Chapter 10) are located along the coastal zone.

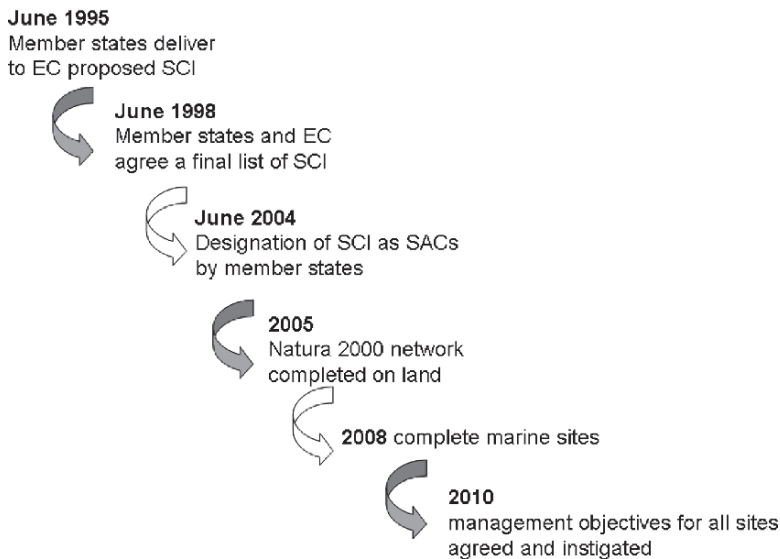


Fig. 6.3 The road map to biodiversity conservation in the European Union (Duke 2005)

Although any differences in the extent and size of protected areas between islands reflect the islands' characteristics (see Chapter 4), it is also clear that there are different attitudes regarding conservation approaches and their implementation by individual countries. For example, Italy and France have been condemned in the past by the EU Court of Justice for failing to designate all their most suitable territories as SPAs. Moreover, significant information gaps for Spanish SPAs remain (European Commission 2003). Another common problem for landscape and nature conservation in the Mediterranean as pointed out by individual researchers and international organisations alike is the lack of legislation or the ineffective enforcement of existing legislation (Delanoë et al. 1996; Vogiatzakis et al. 2006). Stakeholder participation in protected area management varies considerable from one country to another (see Papageorgiou and Vogiatzakis 2006). This is reflecting partly local attitudes towards conservation but also existing legislation.

The effects of the wider countryside are recognised in the Habitats Directive. Nevertheless the EU Natura 2000 network of protected areas is based on species and habitats (Council of Europe 1979, 1992) rather than landscapes. The designation of the Natura 2000 network of protected sites has sparked a debate all over Europe (WWF 1999; Hiedanpää 2002) regarding its adequacy and effective site selection but also regarding the criteria used for selection. One problem with the Natura 2000 designations, and one which is not specific just to islands, is the overlap with existing designations prior to Natura 2000 (Papageorgiou and Vogiatzakis 2006). To date, there has not been an assessment of the adequacy of the network for islands or Europe.

One of the recent controversial but potentially effective pieces of legislation at the European level which will also strengthen the protection of island environments is the Environmental Liability Directive. Adopted on 21 April 2004 the directive should be incorporated into national legislation by 30 April 2007 (European Union 2004). The underlying principle is to ensure that operators (potential polluters) give appropriate priority to avoiding environmental damage that can result from their activities, by holding them financially liable for damage prevention and remediation costs. It covers environmental damage to:

- Species and natural habitats, whether protected at EU or national levels
- Waters covered by the Water Framework Directive
- Land contamination, which creates a significant risk of harming human health

Their physical setting renders small islands highly sensitive to external shocks and highly vulnerable to natural disasters and therefore climate change. The IPCC report (2001) states that islands will be affected disproportionately by climate change since they contribute very little compared to mainlands. Mediterranean countries and particularly their islands face pressing socio-economic concerns (e.g. poverty, unemployment, health and education) which might be exacerbated by climate change. Consequently climate change receives lower priority in the national political agenda. Nevertheless, the majority of the Mediterranean countries have signed and ratified the Kyoto Protocol with the exception of Libya, Turkey, Lebanon, Yugoslavia and Bosnia Herzegovina who have no position on the document while ratification is pending for Croatia (UNFCCC 2006).

6.5 Conclusions

Despite the similarities in their resource base and character, the Mediterranean Islands are heterogeneous politically. Malta and Cyprus are nation states while the other islands discussed are controlled politically by mainland states. Nevertheless the political landscape is nowadays dominated by the relationship between islands and the EU. This relationship is dynamic and constantly evolving. In the island states there is one less tier of administration. This is also demonstrated by the political status of EU island territories further a field, such as Guadeloupe, which despite the similarities with the Mediterranean Islands have chosen in the past different arrangements with the EU (CPRM 2000).

The most important environmental issues relevant to islands as identified by the Small Island Developing States Network of the UN are: biodiversity loss, climate change, coastal and marine resources, renewable energy, sustainable tourism, trade. Most of these themes are relevant to Mediterranean Island landscapes and are recurrent in the individual island chapters (7–13) in this book. However, resolving the problems of islands cannot rely on the intervention of the EU alone though it is beyond any doubt that these problems are influenced directly or indirectly by EU policies and some of those problems have arisen as

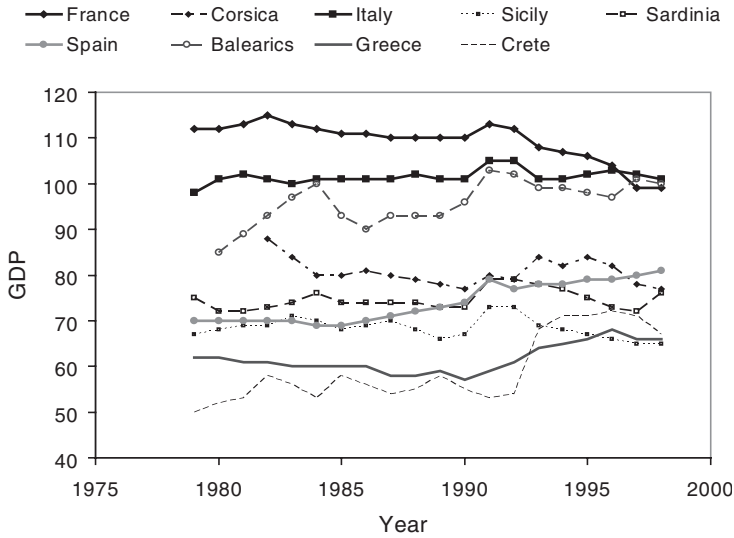


Fig. 6.4 A comparison of GDP between islands and their mainlands (From EUROSTAT 2006)

a result of those policies. The challenge is to formulate and implement policies that reconcile island particularities with free-market economy and competition. The great diversity of the islands in terms of socio-economic characteristics has been the main argument against a uniform islands EU policy. So far this has been measured simply by comparing the islands' unemployment rates and GDP per head with the EU average (Fig.6.4). However a report by EURISLES (2002) advocates the use of evaluation parameters to provide a more accurate reflection of the capacity or otherwise of the islands to benefit from EU policies. These parameters may include degree of accessibility, extent of the natural or human resources available, size of the local market and environmental vulnerability (EURISLES 2002).

A number of proposals have been put forward by the EURISLES commission for improved island development policy. These include (EURISLES 2002):

- The need for EU legislation to evolve (i.e. article 158)
- Differentiation of islands in the statistical nomenclature
- Maintaining the solidarity effort of the structural policies,
- Reshaping of the State aids regime
- New forms of governance resting upon consultation, coordination and innovation

However, these policies should not ignore the importance of the landscape as the fabric that meshes socio-economic and ecological processes. There any future policy has to be based on a holistic strategy as discussed in Chapter 14.

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