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Greece

Greece: Mobilisation for the environment, a key issue

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Greece is one of Europe's worst examples of environmental policy. The most well-known damage is caused by fires, but recent industrial and energy policy, particularly under Prime Minister Mitsotakis, has been a disaster, also in democratic terms.

The huge annual fires have given rise to few preventive programmes. On the contrary, the Right has refused to extend the contracts of 5,000 temporary firefighters. As if the winter months were not useful for training in studying and fighting megafires, when this summer the flames reached the Athenian suburbs. The same goes for floods: while in 2023 the region of Thessaly was ravaged, with 17 deaths and lasting consequences affecting this agricultural region, the government is content to blame climate change, without any overall reflection or emergency measures.

Polluting industries without filters

In the industrial sector, every effort is being made to impose dangerous extraction facilities. The best-known example is the Skourières gold mines in the north of the country, where, despite resistance from the local population, the Ellinikos Chryssos company is able to continue its activities, after violent repression in the past, manipulation of the miners by management and a recent lawsuit against a news website. Today, in the north of the island of Chios, the government is trying to impose a project for an antimony mine, a material that is highly dangerous to health and whose dust is likely to cover the whole island with the frequent northerly winds.

Voltaic power and wind turbines, a smoke and mirrors approach

Voltaic and wind farms are everywhere in Greece. This is in line with a project whose stated aim is for green electricity to reach 80% of total production, instead of the current 30%. But behind this virtuous objective, it is a catastrophic capitalist project that Mitsotakis wants to impose in the hope that in the medium term, Greece will become an exporter of green energy. We're right in the middle of this offensive, with plans for floating voltaic farms in the Gulf of Ambracique, which has been classified as a national park and Natura 2000 site. Faced with this project, fishermen are joining forces with environmental organisations and scientists to organise resistance.

Organising resistance

Resistance is much more widespread when it comes to opposing wind turbines: without exaggeration, it can be said that all the mountains are under threat (70 200-metre wind turbines are planned for the mountains of the eastern Peloponnese), and you only have to follow the road from Thebes to Delphi to see the mess. There is, of course, the aesthetic issue, which deserves to be debated, but which is obvious for a country that could develop a form of 'soft tourism' that is hardly compatible with these giant parks. Above all, they have an immediate impact on fauna - in regions where livestock farming is under threat - and flora, with roads cut into the mountains right up to the summits, which, contrary to what the Ministry of the Environment and Energy (YPEN) claims, increases the risk of landslides and fires.

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The same is true of proposed offshore parks, as is planned for Samothrace: efforts to protect the necessary 'sustainable fisheries' would be ruined by the implementation of such projects. Faced with this situation, local residents are all the more determined to organise their refusal because they are generally not consulted and are aware that these projects are designed solely for the energy companies and their export plans. There is coordination in various places, and many initiatives of resistance. It might be time to prepare a new national initiative, as in December 2023.

[L'Anticapitaliste](#), 30 January 2025

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