

# GREEK ARGO PROGRAMME

## PRESENT STATUS AND FUTURE PLANS

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### 1. Background and organization of GREEK ARGO activities and implementation status

Greece established national contribution to the ARGO project through national funding to the Greek Argo programme (2012-2015). The programme was co-financed by Greece and the European Union. Through the national programme Hellenic Integrated Marine Inland water Observing Forecasting and offshore Technology System (HIMIOFoTS) [www.himiofots.gr](http://www.himiofots.gr) (2018-2021), HCMR has established further contribution to the ARGO project. Since November 2021, when HIMIOFoTS finished, there is not any existing national funding for Greek Argo.

#### 1.1 Floats deployed and their performance

During 2024, one (1) Argo float was deployed in the Greek Seas under the framework of the Greek-Argo RI activities, and the Euro-Argo ERIC cooperation activities. The float was an Arvor-I of the Italian Argo fleet and was deployed by the Greek Argo team under the field activities co-operation framework in the Mediterranean Sea. The float was deployed on 10/3/2025 in the Libyan Sea, at the Cretan Passage during the Greek WFD spring period sampling. Further information on these missions are available in the Euro-Argo fleet monitoring tool (<https://fleetmonitoring.euro-argo.eu/dashboard?Status=Active>).

**Table 1.** Active floats and new deployments performed from Greek Argo team during 2024

A/A	Float type	WMO	SERIAL NUMBER	Deployment Date	Deployment time	Deployment Latitude	Deployment Longitude	Available profiles	Status
1	ARVOR I	2903898	AI2632- 23EU016	10/03/2024	04:40	35.11	23.92	72	Active

All floats have been integrated in the MedArgo project. The raw data of the Greek float are delivered at the Coriolis data Centre where the real time quality control takes place while the delayed mode quality control of the data will be processed by the MedArgo Centre at OGS.

#### 1.2 Floats recovered

No float recoveries were performed within 2024.

#### 1.3 Technical problems encountered and solved

Based on previous experience on platform monitoring systems, HCMR has been utilizing an automatic alerting system (<http://poseidonsystem.gr/alerts/?m=2>) for the monitor of basic parameters of the floats' location and data transmission. This system has been partially updated

to enhance the operational monitoring needs of the Euro-Argo RISE coastal deployment needs for the 6903288 float deployed in 2020. The automatic alerting system incorporated additional features for the real-time monitoring of crucial parameters that described the float's operation. Such are the bathymetry and the maximal depth reached by the float in order to keep track of grounding events. The alerting system is based in pre-defined thresholds and an alert message is transmitted in cases the monitored parameters overcome these thresholds. Thus, similar to the alerting messages whether there are delays or major differences in the transmission time, alert messages were sent to the PI when profiling or parking pressure was recorded to be less than 155.0 dbar or in cases the float is approaching towards the shore.

### **1.3 Status of contribution to Argo infrastructure, data management and delayed mode quality control process**

HCMR has run an extended network of buoys within the Aegean and Ionian Seas including the multi-parametric M3A observatory of the Cretan Sea and a deep sea (2000 m) bottom platform which is part of the EMSO network and has been deployed in the Ionian Sea (POSEIDON & POSEIDON-II monitoring, forecasting and information systems). HCMR also operates the Hellenic National Oceanographic Data Centre (HNODC) established in 1986, as part of the National Centre for Marine Research (NCMR). HNODC operates as a National Agency and is responsible for processing, archiving and distributing marine data. HNODC is also developing techniques for oceanographic data processing and data base maintenance. Furthermore it promotes the International Exchange of Data in the frame of its cooperation with the "Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission IOC) of UNESCO as it is responsible for the coordination of International Data Exchange (IODE) in Greece.

HCMR operates a large-scale integrated infrastructure that includes all marine observational systems together with ocean engineering infrastructures. Regarding the delayed mode data processing HCMR has a capability of a delayed-mode quality control for the Greek Argo data. The delayed mode quality control of the data delivered from the Greek Argo float are currently processed by the MedArgo data centre. HCMR considers the possibility of further developing a delayed-mode data processing for ARGO profiles collected within the Eastern Mediterranean region. HCMR may also contribute to the improvement of the delayed mode quality control processing conceding CTD data collected through several HCMR research cruises. HCMR operates the Med Sea data portal that was set up for the needs of Copernicus CMEMS services. Within this framework HCMR is in charge of validating biochemical data from Argo floats that are operating in the Mediterranean.

## **2. Present level and future prospects for national funding for Argo including a summary of the level of human resources devoted to Argo**

### **2.1 Existing funding for Greek Argo**

The procurement, deployment and operation costs of the first Greek float launched in 2010/2011 were covered by HCMR internal funds. During 2012, Greece established national funding to the Greek Argo programme through the General Secretariat of Research and Technology (GSRT), Ministry of Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs (funding agency). A major achievement is that Greece participates to the European infrastructure E-A ERIC as a full member. Until recently, the only existing national funding for the Greek Argo was through HIMIOFoTS national RI through which the purchase of 6 floats is finalized and covered the deployment needs for 2021 and 2022.

## **2.2 On the future funding, organization and planning for Greek Argo**

Efforts from the Institute of Oceanography of HCMR for further national funding for the long-term sustainability of Greek Argo are ongoing. Since HIMIOFoTS RI has ended in 2021, several actions have been undertaken by the Greek Argo team towards the General Secretariat of Research and Innovation (GSRI) in order the latter to contribute for the Greek Argo programme continuation and sustainability. Within 2023, a small national funding to cover the basic needs of operational oceanographic activities was expected, postponed for 2024 but until now it has not been released. HCMR has asked budget for BGC floats from structural-recovery funds through the Ministry of Environment, these funds will be allocated mainly for MSFD and WFD monitoring capacity. The purchase of 9 BGC floats is envisaged on behalf of HCMR whilst, 2 more BGC floats are required by the Greek Fisheries Institute.

As part of the Euro-Argo, HCMR has undertaken all necessary efforts and managed to establish long term national funding for the E-A ERIC infrastructure and to meet the standards of a full member. Regarding the Greek Argo RI annual contribution to Euro-Argo RI an indicative estimation is the following:

Personnel committed/dedicated to Euro-Argo activities (person months/year):

- National representation, member commitments: 2.5
- Float preparation, deployments, procurements: 1

Personnel committed/dedicated to Greek-Argo activities (person months/year):

- Greek Argo coordination and management: 2
- Float preparation, deployments, procurements: 2
- Monitoring of the fleet performance: 2
- Data management and analysis: 3

## **3. Summary of deployment plans**

Greece has deployment capabilities for the Aegean, the Ionian Sea and the central Levantine basin. Float deployments in 2025 will be performed according to the plans of the Greek-Argo research infrastructure. The main goal within 2025 is to continue the efforts for a sustainable funding scheme for the Greek-Argo infrastructure in accordance with the Euro-Argo infrastructure. In 2025, a new tender is envisaged for the purchase of 9 BGC floats. Future deployments are a function of the operational needs of the Greek Argo network and the current coverage of areas of interest. Although the final decisions for the areas that floats will be deployed may change, the plan for 2025 includes:

- 1 float deployment in the South Aegean
- 1 float deployments in the North Aegean
- 1 float deployment in the Ionian Sea

## **4. Summary of national research and use of Argo data**

### **4.1. Operational and scientific use of Argo data**

An important part of the Greek-Argo activities is the exploitation of Argo data for operational forecasting as well as for research applications. Along this direction, HCMR established a network of relevant Greek scientific groups mainly from Universities and Research Institutes which constitute the Greek Argo Users group/network. These different groups are already using or will be using ARGO data in ocean/atmospheric forecasting, climate studies and for educational purposes. It is expected that the Greek Argo Users Group will further grow and expand its activities concerning the scientific exploitation of Argo data and the cooperation among Greek scientists. The next step will be the expansion of the Greek Argo network in more members. The network is already in contact with many organizations / agencies / institutions and it is foreseen that the establishment of the Euro-Argo ERIC will increase the interaction of the Greek Argo Users Group with the European and international ARGO scientific community in the near future.

Additionally, Argo data are used for educational purposes in some Greek University Departments. Due to HCMR initiatives within Euro-Argo, Greek Argo, Euro-Argo RISE, and SIDERI programmes to contact potentially interested Greek and other scientists from the eastern Mediterranean region and inform them about the benefits of Argo programme. An increasing demand for Argo data along the Aegean and Ionian Sea for both scientific and educational purposes has been registered.

#### **4.2. Dissemination activities of the Greek Argo– links with Euro-Argo infrastructure**

During 2019 the Greek Argo RI hosted the 7th Euro-Argo Science Meeting that took place in Athens on 22-23 October. The meeting has been successful and managed to bring together users of Argo data providing an opportunity for high-level science interactions. Similarly, HCMR Argo team organized the 1<sup>st</sup> Mediterranean and Black Seas Argo workshop (<https://www.euro-argo.eu/News-Meetings/Meetings/Others/Mediterranean-and-Black-Seas-workshop>), under Euro-Argo RISE activities, in April 2021, and is further preparing a follow-up to the workshop special session in the upcoming HCMR's Marine and Inlands Waters Symposium in September 2022 (<https://symposia.gr/special-sessions/>). Within 2019 several dissemination activities were carried out by the Greek Argo RI such as the participation of Greek Argo in the 2019 Researchers Night and the educational activities for high school students throughout the year. However, during 2020, similar activities were cancelled due to the Covid-19 situation. In 2021, presentations of the Greek Argo and the Euro-Argo activities have been made at high schools of Athens during 2021, and at the University of Aegean (Marine Sciences department) in November 2022 following the previous in November of 2016. Within 2022, several activities were performed mainly under the Euro-RISE H2020 project that ended in December 2022. More specifically, in January 2022, a report was published from the meeting organized by HCMR in collaboration with the Euro-Argo Office within the framework of the 9th EuroGOOS International Conference 2021 Marine Research Infrastructures Side Event 5th May 2021 "Cooperation Framework between Marine RIs".

In September 2022, the Greek infrastructure organized a special session entitled "Argo floats contribution to the marine research and operational monitoring of the Mediterranean Sea – Evolution, Achievements, and Future Needs" within the framework of the Marine and Inland Waters Research Symposium, Argolida, Greece. In the session, scientists specializing in Argo activities in the Mediterranean were invited and hosted, while the several papers were also presented.

In October 2022, the Greek Infrastructure participated in the 7th Argo Science Workshop, Brussels, Belgium, October 2022 where the work "An update of North Aegean hydrography derived from autonomous profiling floats" was presented.

Several educational and outreach activities were also performed targeting high school teachers and students. In February 2022 a presentation of Greek Argo activities was given to students and teachers of the 6th General Lyceum of Egaleo. In May 2022 a presentation of Greek Argo activities was given to students and teachers of the 7th High school of Nikaia. In July 2022 a presentation of Greek Argo was given in an educational activity that took place by the municipality of Derveni, Corinthia. During November-December 2022, two more presentations and dissemination of material took place in high schools of Attica.

By the end of 2013 Greek Argo has launched its web page: [www.greekargo.gr](http://www.greekargo.gr) that demonstrates and promotes Greek-Argo and Euro-Argo activities. At the end of 2014 Greek-Argo web portal was upgraded providing information and data access from all floats operating in the Mediterranean and presenting all Greek Argo activities, news and data from Greek Argo floats. A continuous upgrade is ongoing integrating more images and videos from Greek Argo deployment activities. Furthermore, new education material has been released and a school visit programme has been established since 2015.

The Greek Argo and Euro-Argo Research Infrastructures, along with the Euro-Argo RISE project, are demonstrated on the POSEIDON updated web page, <https://poseidon.hcmr.gr/components/observing-components/argo-floats>. The POSEIDON system is the operational monitoring and forecasting system for the Greek Seas and many of its forecasting components use T/S Argo profiles for data assimilation purposes. The POSEIDON web page is also hosting the links to the Euro-Argo educational web site as well as to the floats from each European country. The above links along with other informative material (Euro Argo leaflet, focused questionnaire) were forwarded directly to all active and potential users of Argo data in Greece. Many research groups filled and sent back the questionnaire providing valuable feedback to HCMR team. Furthermore, the Euro-Argo poster and leaflet translated in Greek and they are hosted in the POSEIDON website.

## **5. Greek Argo contribution to Argo bibliography**

### **5.1 Operational oceanography and ocean forecasting**

Med-Argo data have been already used as independent data in order to assess the impact of remote sensed and Ferry-box SSS data assimilation into the Aegean Sea hydrodynamic model component of the POSEIDON system running operationally at HCMR within the framework of POSEIDON system.

Med-Argo data are routinely assimilated (using localized Singular Evolutive Extended Kalman filtering techniques) on a weekly basis in three different modelling forecasting components (Mediterranean 1/10° resolution, Aegean Sea 1/130° resolution and Ionian – Adriatic Sea at 1/50° resolution) of the POSEIDON operational system.

Some of the results of the works described above are included in the following scientific publications:

Ntoumas, M.; Perivoliotis, L.; Petihakis, G.; Korres, G.; Frangoulis, C.; Ballas, D.; Pagonis, P.; Sotiropoulou, M.; Pettas, M.; Bourma, E.; Christodoulaki, S.; Kassis, D.; Zisis, N.; Michelinakis, S.; Denaxa, D.; Moira, A.; Mavroudi, A.; Anastasopoulou, G.; Papapostolou, A.; Oikonomou, C.; Stamataki, N. The POSEIDON Ocean Observing System: Technological Development and Challenges. *Journal of Marine Science and Engineering*. 2022, 10, 1932. <https://doi.org/10.3390/jmse10121932>

Bourma E, Perivoliotis L, Petihakis G, Korres G, Frangoulis C, Ballas D, Zervakis V, Tragou E, Katsafados P, Spyrou C, Dassenakis M, Poulos S, Megalofonou P, Sofianos S, Paramana T, Katsaounis G, Karditsa A, Petrakis S, Mavropoulou A-M, Paraskevopoulou V, Milatou N, Pagonis P, Velanas S, Ntoumas M, Mamoutos I, Pettas M, Christodoulaki S, Kassis D, Sotiropoulou M, Mavroudi A, Moira A, Denaxa D, Anastasopoulou G, Potiris E, Kolovogiannis V, Dimitrakopoulos A-A, Petalas S, Zissis N. The Hellenic Marine Observing, Forecasting and Technology System—An Integrated Infrastructure for Marine Research. *Journal of Marine Science and Engineering*. 2022; 10(3):329. <https://doi.org/10.3390/jmse10030329>

Petihakis, G., Perivoliotis, L., Korres, G., Ballas, D., Frangoulis, C., Pagonis, P., Ntoumas, M., Pettas, M., Chalkiopoulos, A., Sotiropoulou, M., Bekiari, M., Kalampokis, A., Ravdas, M., Bourma, E., Christodoulaki, S., Zacharioudaki, A., Kassis, D., Potiris, E., Triantafyllou, G., Tsiaras, K., 2018: An integrated open-coastal biogeochemistry, ecosystem and biodiversity observatory of the eastern Mediterranean-the Cretan Sea component of the POSEIDON system. *Ocean Science*, 14(5), 1223-1223.

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Kassis, D., Korres, G., Konstantinidou, A., Perivoliotis, L., 2017. Comparison of high-resolution hydrodynamic model outputs with in situ Argo profiles in the Ionian Sea. *Mediterranean Marine Science*, 0, 22-37. doi:10.12681/mms.1753

Kassis, D., Konstantinidou, A., Perivoliotis, L., Korres, G., 2015. Inter-comparing numerical model simulations in the Ionian Sea with Argo T/S profiles for the period 2008-2012. In proceedings of the 11th Panhellenic Symposium on Oceanography and Fisheries, p.945-948, ISBN 978-960-9798-08-2

Kassis D., Perivoliotis L. & G. Korres, 2014. Greek Argo: Towards monitoring the Eastern Mediterranean - First deployments preliminary results and future planning. In proceedings of the 7th International Conference on EuroGOOS, Lisbon – Portugal, 28-30 October 2014

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## **5.2 Ocean science and environmental studies**

Med-Argo data are currently used by a small group of researchers in Greece for studies of water mass characteristics and climatic signals of the different deep basins of the Mediterranean Sea. The continuous record of T/S characteristics provides insight in the seasonal and inter-annual variability of the Mediterranean Sea and its sub-basins. A number of publications and scientific results have been released regarding the Greek Argo acquired data during the last 4 years.

### **Publications in scientific journals and conferences proceedings:**

Potiris, M., Mamoutos, I. G., Tragou, E., Zervakis, V., Kassis, D., & Ballas, D. (2024, August). Dense water formation variability in the Aegean Sea from 1947 to 2023. In *Oceans* (Vol. 5, No. 3, pp. 611-636). MDPI.

Potiris, M., Mamoutos, I. G., Tragou, E., Zervakis, V., Kassis, D., & Ballas, D. (2024). Dense water formation in the North–central Aegean Sea during winter 2021–2022. *Journal of Marine Science and Engineering*, 12(2), 221.

Ntoumas, M., Perivoliotis, L., Petihakis, G., Korres, G., Frangoulis, C., Ballas, D., ... & Stamataki, N. (2022). The POSEIDON Ocean Observing System: Technological Development and Challenges. *Journal of Marine Science and Engineering*, 10(12), 1932.

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Kassis, D., and G. Korres, 2021. Recent hydrological status of the Aegean Sea derived from free drifting profilers. *Mediterranean Marine Science*, 22(2), 347-361.  
<https://doi.org/10.12681/mms.24833>

Kassis, D., and G. Varlas, 2020: Hydrographic effects of an intense “medicane” over the central-eastern Mediterranean Sea in 2018. *Dynamics of Atmospheres and Oceans*, 2020, 101185, ISSN 0377-0265, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dynatmoce.2020.101185>

Kassis, D., and G. Korres, 2020: Hydrography of the Eastern Mediterranean basin derived from argo floats profile data. *Deep Sea Research Part II: Topical Studies in Oceanography*, 171, 104712, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dsr2.2019.104712>

Zervakis, V., Krauzig, N., Tragou, E., Kunze, E., 2019: Estimating vertical mixing in the deep North Aegean Sea using Argo data corrected for conductivity sensor drift. *Deep Sea Res Part I Oceanogr Res Papers* 154. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dsr.2019.103144>

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Kassis, D., Krasakopoulou, E., Korres, G., Petihakis, G., Triantafyllou, G.S., 2016. Hydrodynamic features of the South Aegean Sea as derived from Argo T/S and dissolved oxygen profiles in the area. *Ocean Dyn.* 1–18. doi:10.1007/s10236-016-0987-2

Kassis, D., Korres, G., Petihakis, G., Perivoliotis, L., 2015. : Hydrodynamic variability of the Cretan Sea derived from Argo float profiles and multi-parametric buoy measurements during 2010–2012. *Ocean Dynamics*, 15-00058. doi: 10.1007/s10236-015-0892-0

#### **Doctorate theses:**

Kassis, D., 2017: Operational in - situ monitoring of the Greek seas as a tool to describe hydrodynamic variability and its effect on the biochemical distribution, National Technical University of Athens (NTUA),  
<https://www.didaktorika.gr/eadd/handle/10442/40700?locale=en>

#### **Scientific Sheets in Greek Argo web page:**

"Use of Lagrangian methods in optimizing Argo float deployment locations in the Mediterranean Sea" Summary of the scientific report of the University of Aegean in the framework of the Greek Argo Project.

"The integration of Argo floats in numerical weather prediction" Summary of the scientific report of the Harokopio University in the framework of the Greek Argo Project.

"Use of Argo data in ocean numerical simulations" Summary of the scientific report of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki in the framework of the Greek Argo Project.

"Evaluation of climate and biochemical models using Argo data" Summary of the scientific report of the University of Crete in the framework of the Greek Argo Project.

#### **Scientific Sheets in Euro-Argo web page:**

Kassis D., Konstantinidou A., Perivoliotis L. and Korres G., 2014: Comparison of Argo profiles observations against numerical model simulations in Ionian Sea. Euro Argo RI web page <http://www.euro-argo.eu/Main-Achievements/European-Contributions/Science/Regional-Seas/Med-Black-Seas/>

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Kassis D. "ARGO FLOAT MISSIONS IN TARGETED COASTAL AREAS OF THE AEGEAN SEA" Proc. Mar. & Intl. Wat.Res.Symp. 2022 ISBN: 978-960-9798-31-0 ISSN: 2944-9723

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Kassis D., Von Schuckmann K., Korres G., 2013: Hydrographic properties of Cretan Sea derived from Argo float's profiles and buoy data measurements during 2010-2012. In proceedings of the 4th Euro-Argo Science Meeting and Workshop, June 2013, Southampton, UK <http://www.euro-argo.eu/News-Meetings/Meetings/Users-Meetings/4th-Users-meeting-June-2013>