

## **ASSESSMENT OF TWO DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO CONSERVATION OF BIODIVERSITY**

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### **EXTENDED ABSTRACT**

The emergence of the term biodiversity in the middle eighties has greatly affected the attempts for integration of the approaches for conservation of the natural environment. Biodiversity is a complex term that refers to the diversity that characterizes all levels of organization of life, such as the level of the genes, the species, the ecosystems and the landscapes. The conservation of biological diversity, which gained capacity in the World Conference for the Environment and the Development, held in Rio in June 1992, demands the conservation of every level of organization of the natural world. In the context of the conservation of biodiversity, two major approaches have been implemented, which present many differences and are strongly related to the application and the effectiveness of conservation measures. The first one emphasizes the conservation of the biological species and uses the traditional lists of endangered species as a basic tool. The second one emphasizes the conservation of the ecological habitat and uses lists of habitat types as a basic tool. Every approach is represented in a series of legal provisions for the conservation of the natural environment. Regarding the European level, the most important such legal provisions are: the directive 79/409/EC “for the conservation of the wild birds” and the directive 92/43/EC “for the conservation of the natural habitats and the wild fauna and flora”. The first one follows the species – emphasis approach, while the second one follows the habitat – emphasis approach. This paper examines the advantages and disadvantages of the two different approaches and also of the two legal provisions, in the context of the weak environmental social dynamics, in a country like Greece. The approach that emphasizes the conservation of the biological species is considered to have significant advantages. Moreover, the 79/409/EC directive incorporates the principle of prevention and includes specific regulations for the conservation of the species. This directive only concerns bird species, but it could be used as a model for the legal protection of other species or levels of biodiversity.

**Key words:** conservation, species, habitat, bird directive, habitat directive.