



PERMANENT MISSION OF GREECE TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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VERBAL NOTE

The Permanent Mission of Greece to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations in his capacity as depositary of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (1982) (“the Convention”), and has the honour to state the following:

On 27 April 2012, the Government of the Republic of Turkey published in its Official Gazette Decisions 2012/2974 and 2012/2968 of the Turkish Council of Ministers granting hydrocarbon exploration and exploitation licenses to the Turkish Petroleum Corporation (TPAO) in Eastern Mediterranean, in areas falling within Greek continental shelf (see “blocks” 5033, 5034, 5035 and 5028). In particular, “block 5033” lies in close proximity to the insular group of Castellorizo almost touching upon its current 6 n.m. territorial sea limit as well as to the island of Rhodes at a distance of 11,22 n.m. A similar exploration and exploitation license was granted to TPAO in 2008 with respect to “block 4512”, which also falls within areas of Greek continental shelf, by Decision 2008/14004 of the Turkish Council of Ministers published in the Official Gazette on 16 July 2009. Therefore, all these licenses are in clear violation of international law, both customary and conventional, including existing agreements.

Greece having protested strongly to Turkey for there unilateral acts which attempt to deprive the Dodecanese islands of their legitimate maritime zones, *inter alia*, through verbal notes dated 24.7.2009, 27.11.2011, 30.4.2012 and 12.7.2012, wishes to reiterate the following:

- In accordance with the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (1982) and customary international law, all Greek islands, including the island of Rhodes and the insular group of Castellorizo, enjoy, beyond their territorial waters, maritime zones as any other land territory. This is enshrined in article 121(2) of the Law of the Sea Convention and confirmed by jurisprudence.

*His Excellency
the Secretary-General of the United Nations
New York*

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- Therefore, Turkey's contention that the "above-mentioned permit areas decreed by the Council of Ministers fall entirely within the Turkish continental shelf", as stated in the annex to the letter dated 5 September 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations (see A/66/899), is totally unfounded.
- Greece exercises *ab initio* and *ipso facto* sovereign rights for the exploration of its continental shelf and the exploitation of its natural resources. These rights cannot be prejudiced by unilateral acts and actions by Turkey, such as the granting of permits to TPAO, which are contrary to international law and as a result bear no legal consequences.
- The outer limits of Greece's continental shelf are clearly defined by Article 2(1) of Law No. 2289/1995, as amended by Law No. 4001/2011, which has been transmitted to the Secretary-General by verbal note No.974 of 8 May 2012.

In concluding, the "permits" granted to TPAO by the Turkish Council of Ministers in areas of Greek continental shelf in Eastern Mediterranean are in violation of international law and are, therefore, *null* and *void*.

The Permanent Mission of Greece to the United Nations would highly appreciate it if the Secretary-General in his capacity as depositary of the Convention could circulate the present verbal note to all States Parties to the Convention and publish it in the next "Law of the Sea Bulletin".

The Permanent Mission of Greece to the United Nations avails itself to this opportunity to renew to the Secretary-General of the United Nations the assurances of its highest consideration.



New York, February 20, 2013