



# General Assembly

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## Seventy-fourth session

Agenda items 74 (a) and 83

### Oceans and the law of the sea: oceans and the law of the sea

#### The rule of law at the national and international levels

## Letter dated 14 February 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Greece to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex, which contains my letter dated 9 December 2019, could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 74 (a) and 83, and published on the website of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea and in the next edition of the *Law of the Sea Bulletin*.

(Signed) Maria Theofili  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative



## **Annex to the letter dated 14 February 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Greece to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

### **Letter dated 9 December 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Greece to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

The Greek Government has been informed that a “Memorandum of understanding between the Government of the Republic of Turkey and the Government of National Accord-State of Libya on delimitation of the maritime jurisdiction areas in the Mediterranean” was signed on 27 November 2019. This agreement blatantly violates the rules of the international law of the sea on maritime delimitation because, first and foremost, Turkey and Libya have neither overlapping maritime zones nor common boundaries and, consequently, there is no legal basis to lawfully conclude a maritime delimitation agreement. Likewise, the agreement disregards the presence of the Greek islands in that maritime area, including the island of Crete, and violates their right to generate maritime zones as any land territory, as article 121 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea clearly stipulates.

Furthermore, the boundaries of the purported “continental shelf and exclusive economic zone”, as they are defined in the text of this agreement, are fictitious, unlawful, arbitrary and provocative, and openly infringe on Greece’s sovereign rights in that maritime area, thus seriously endangering regional peace and stability.

What is also striking in the above agreement is that, in spite of the declared position of Turkey that Greek islands in the Eastern Mediterranean have no weight for the determination of the maritime boundaries in that area, the drafters of this agreement have used Turkish islands and rocks as base points for the construction of the purported “equidistance line”, as stated in article I, paragraph 3, of the agreement and shown in the annexes thereto. This shows the hypocritical and contradictory stance of Turkey concerning maritime delimitation in the Eastern Mediterranean.

In addition, this agreement is null and void since it was not endorsed by the House of Representatives of Libya, as required by article 8, paragraph 2 (f), of the Libyan Political Agreement of 2015, approved by the United Nations Security Council through its resolution [2259 \(2015\)](#). Likewise, this agreement was unequivocally rejected by the President of the House of Representatives of Libya, Aguila Saleh Issa, in a letter sent to the United Nations Secretary-General. Consequently, this agreement should not be registered under Article 102 of the Charter of the United Nations nor published by the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea in any way.

Given that the agreement is in clear violation of the letter of the Libyan Political Agreement and, as was mentioned above, it endangers regional peace and stability, its conclusion should be urgently brought to the attention of the Security Council. In this respect, it should be recalled that, according to paragraph 19 of resolution [2259 \(2015\)](#), the Secretary-General is requested to report to the Security Council, as appropriate, on the implementation of the Libyan Political Agreement, including acts that disrupt or prevent its implementation.

The Greek Government expresses its strong opposition to the unlawful delimitation aimed at by the above agreement, which illegally overlaps on zones of legitimate and exclusive Greek sovereign rights, and rejects it in its entirety as null and void and without any effect on its sovereign rights.

On this occasion, Greece wishes to reiterate its strong commitment to resolve any delimitation issue with neighbouring countries in the Eastern Mediterranean by peaceful means, in good faith and in accordance with the international law of the sea. It was in that spirit that Greece and Libya started some years ago to negotiate, in line with the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, a maritime delimitation agreement, which, however, was disrupted because of the unfortunate events in that country. Negotiations are also currently taking place between Greece and other neighbouring States regarding the delimitation of their common maritime boundaries.

*(Signed)* Maria **Theofili**  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative

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