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Oceans and the law of the sea

Note verbale dated 5 August 2025 from the Permanent Mission of Greece to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of Greece to the United Nations has the honour to communicate the following regarding the note verbale dated 20 June 2025 from the Permanent Mission of Libya to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General ([A/79/960](#)).

The Government of the Hellenic Republic, following ministerial decisions No. 37580/896 dated 4 April 2025, No. 40694/967 dated 11 April 2025 (*Government Gazette* No. 1823/B/11.04.2025) and No. 46430/1073 dated 30 April 2025 (*Government Gazette* No. 2104/B/30.04.2025), has proceeded, through a notice published in the *Official Journal of the European Union* (C/2025/3335 dated 12 June 2025) and accompanied by a map and exact geographical coordinates, to the announcement of an international call for tenders for granting and using authorizations for the exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbons in maritime areas to the south of the Peloponnese (blocks “A2” and “South of Peloponnese”) and to the south of Crete (blocks “South of Crete 1” and “South of Crete 2”).

The above-mentioned blocks are located within the Greek continental shelf/exclusive economic zone. They thus lie exclusively within areas of Greek jurisdiction, in accordance with the international law of the sea, and do not infringe Libya’s sovereign rights. In particular, the external boundaries of the offshore areas “South of Crete 1” and “South of Crete 2” have been determined with reference to the equidistance line between Greece and Libya and in accordance with the Agreement between the Government of the Hellenic Republic and the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt on the delimitation of the exclusive economic zone between the two countries, done at Cairo on 6 August 2020.

This being so, the allegations of the Libyan side as reflected in the above-mentioned note verbale with respect to the above offshore areas are groundless, devoid of any legal basis and disregard the fact that Greece has ipso facto and ab initio sovereign rights over the continental shelf and its resources in the said areas.

The same applies to the issue of the licences already granted by the competent Greek authorities for the exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbons, as well as the issue of relevant surveys in the maritime areas south-west and west of Crete. Those areas lie exclusively within areas of Greek jurisdiction in accordance with the



international law of the sea, and the said licences do not infringe Libya's sovereign rights. The Permanent Mission underlines in this respect that the Greek authorities have issued notices for an international tender for hydrocarbon exploration and exploitation licences already in 2014 and 2017, accompanied by maps and exact coordinates. These notices were published both in the *Greek Government Gazette* (No. 2186/B/8.8.2014 and No. 2848/B/11.08.2017) as well as in the *Official Journal of the European Union* (No. 2014/C400/03 and No. 2017/C411/04), without, at the time, any objection by the Libyan side.

Greece has repeatedly informed the United Nations that, in the absence of maritime delimitation agreements, the outer limits of the Greek continental shelf and the exclusive economic zone (once declared) are the median line, every point of which is equidistant from the nearest points on the baselines (both continental and insular) from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured, as already stressed in the letter dated 29 September 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Greece to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General ([A/75/375-S/2020/958](#)).

Turning to the purported "border line that separates Libya and its neighbour, Greece", referred to in annex I to the note verbale of the Permanent Mission of Libya, and depicted in maps 1 and 2 of that annex, Greece would like to underline that this "border line" is legally unfounded and has been drawn up in total disregard for the international law of the sea, as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. It is thus rejected in its entirety.

First, the very eastern segment of this "border line" appears to be coincident with the purported delimitation line in the "Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of National Accord-State of Libya and the Government of the Republic of Turkey on Delimitation of the maritime jurisdiction areas in the Mediterranean", signed on 27 November 2019. That memorandum, among others, totally disregards the presence of numerous Greek islands, such as Crete and the Dodecanese islands, and violates their right to generate maritime zones beyond the territorial sea. It has no legal consequences and creates no effect whatsoever, either for its purported parties or for Greece or any other third State. The Permanent Mission kindly refers, on the issue, to the letter dated 9 December 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Greece to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary General, which is annexed to her letter dated 14 February 2020 ([A/74/706](#)), as well as to the letters of its Permanent Representatives dated 19 March 2020 ([A/74/758](#)), 20 April 2020 ([A/74/819](#)), 1 June 2020 ([A/74/872](#)), 17 November 2022 ([A/77/604](#)), 24 April 2023 ([A/77/865](#)) and 17 January 2024 ([A/78/718](#)), and its note verbale dated 2 September 2020 ([A/74/1006](#)).

In addition, Libya's purported "border line" has been measured from the straight baselines established by Libya in 2005, as well as from a closing line across the Gulf of Sirte, all of which are unlawful and not justifiable under the international law of the sea, as recalled in the letter dated 17 January 2024 from the Permanent Representative of Greece to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General ([A/78/718](#)).

Libya's purported "border line" has also been drawn up in complete disregard of all Greek islands and their entitlements to maritime zones (including the continental shelf and exclusive economic zone). As Greece has repeatedly stressed (see the letter dated 11 August 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Greece to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General ([A/74/988-S/2020/795](#)) and her letter dated 29 September 2020 ([A/75/375-S/2020/958](#))), islands, irrespective of their size, generate, according to article 121 (2) of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and customary international law, maritime entitlements beyond their territorial sea in the same way as any other land territory.

The Permanent Mission of Greece notes Libya's reaffirmation in the note verbale of its "steadfast commitment to constructive dialogue and negotiation". It recalls in this respect that Greece and Libya were engaged, some years ago, in bilateral negotiations with a view to reaching a maritime delimitation agreement. The Greek side welcomes the indication, in the note verbale of the Permanent Mission, of Libya's readiness to recommence such negotiations at the earliest opportunity.

The Permanent Mission of Greece would be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 75, 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*.
