

Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats



Standing Committee

Recommendation No. 63 (1997) on the conservation of the Akamas peninsula, Cyprus, and, in particular, of the nesting beaches of *Caretta caretta* and *Chelonia mydas*

(Adopted by the Standing Committee on 5 December 1997)

The Standing Committee of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, acting under the terms of Article 14 of the Convention;

Having regard to the aims of the convention to conserve wild flora and fauna and their natural habitats;

Recalling that Article 3 of the Convention provides that each Contracting Party shall take steps to promote national policies for the conservation of the habitats of wild flora, wild fauna and natural habitats, with particular attention to endangered and vulnerable species, especially endemic ones, and endangered habitats;

Recalling that Article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention provides that each Contracting Party shall take appropriate and necessary legislative and administrative measures to ensure the conservation of the habitats of the wild fauna species, especially those listed in Appendix II to the Convention;

Recalling that Article 6 of the Convention provides that each Contracting Party shall take appropriate and necessary legislative and administrative measures to ensure the special protection of the wild fauna species listed in Appendix II to the Convention, particularly by prohibiting damage to or destruction of breeding sites;

Noting that *Caretta caretta* and *Chelonia mydas* are strictly protected species listed in Appendix II to the Convention;

Drawing attention to Recommendation No. 7 (1987) on the protection of marine turtles and their habitats;

Congratulating the Government of Cyprus for the protection measures taken in the beaches of Lara and Toxeftra, given their high interest as nesting sites for *Caretta caretta* and *Chelonia mydas*;

Noting that the beach of Limni has also an extraordinary value for nesting of *Caretta caretta*;

Referring to the report by Dr Jean Lescure on the visit to Akamas (document T-PVS (97) 21);

Referring to the field study (or conservation management plan) carried out by the World Bank;

Welcoming the willingness of the Government of Cyprus to ensure the long-term conservation of the Akamas peninsula through the protection of the area as a “National Park” or other appropriate designation;

Recognising the high natural value of the Akamas peninsula, both in its terrestrial and marine parts, specially as a little disturbed coastal area and an excellent nesting area for the marine turtles *Caretta caretta* and *Chelonia mydas*;

Recommends that the Government of Cyprus:

1. Declare the Akamas peninsula a national park, comprising a marine and a terrestrial part following as far as possible the suggestions of the World Bank study and giving to the beach of Limni and its surrounding land a similar status to the Akamas core area;
2. Freeze planning permission in the whole area covered by the World Bank study (and the area around the Limni beach) – except the villages – till the appropriate conservation measures have been decided, this to avoid the further degradation of the area which is intended to become a national park;
3. Reinforce the littoral and other relevant laws so as to avoid the establishment of buildings close to the sea line in any part of Akamas and giving priority to development near the villages and “in depth”, at suitable distances from the sea in the areas where some development is foreseen by the World Bank report;
4. Give, as a matter of urgency, protection status to the beach of Limni and its surroundings by giving it a similar protection as to the Lara-Toxeftra Reserve and the Akamas core area;
5. Avoid the construction of any new building, road, parking or other facilities in the neighbourhood of the beaches of Lara, Toxeftra or Limni;
6. Abolish the tourist zone near Toxeftra, including it in the neighbouring conservation area, so as to avoid its likely damaging impacts on this area of extraordinary value for green turtle nesting;
7. Regulate access of people and vehicles to the beaches of Lara and Toxeftra, avoiding in particular the disturbance caused by mass tourism through “Safari” tours;
8. Close down illegal restaurants in the neighbourhood of the beaches of Lara and Toxeftra (including Aspros river restaurant);
9. Ensure that lights at the recently built Thanos hotel complex avoid photopollution of the beach; ensure that no chairs or parasols are set in the beach which may disturb turtle nesting; avoid water sports and mechanical cleaning of the beach;
10. Give protection to the seagrass communities in the Akamas-Limni area on which *Chelonia mydas* feeds.