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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE  
AND NATURAL HABITATS

**Standing Committee**

35<sup>th</sup> meeting  
Strasbourg, 1-4 December 2015

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**Complaint on stand-by**

**Presumed large-scale exploitation and  
marketing of protected marine shelled molluscs  
in Greece**

**- *REPORT BY THE GOVERNMENT* -**

*Document prepared by  
Ministry of Reconstruction of Production, Environment & Energy, Greece*



**URGENT**

**HELLENIC REPUBLIC**  
**MINISTRY of RECONSTRUCTION OF PRODUCTION, ENVIRONMENT &  
ENERGY**  
**DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY**

Directorate of Biodiversity Protection,  
Soil and Waste Management  
Biodiversity & Protected Areas Department  
147, Patission St, GR 112 51 ATHENS  
tel: +30 210 8645125, fax: +30 210 8662024

Inf: Dr C. Ververis (ch.vevris@prv.ypeka.gr)  
Mr C. Chryssomallis (ch.chryssomallis@prv.ypeka.gr)

Athens, 21.7.2015

Our ref: 32266/1401

- To: The Bern Convention Secretariat  
Biodiversity Unit  
F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex
- CC: 1. Minister's Office  
Deputy Minister's Office  
Secretary General Office  
General Director's Office  
Ministry of Reconstruction of Production,  
Environment and Energy  
17, Amaliados St., 115 23 Athens
2. International and EC Affairs  
Department  
15, Amaliados St., 115 23 Athens
3. General Secretariat of Sustainable Fisheries,  
Division of Fishery Policy and Resources,  
150, Sygrou Av. GR 176 71, Athens
4. Permanent Representation of Greece to the  
CoE, Strasbourg

**Subject: Response to the letter of 7-5-2015 of the Bern Convention Secretariat in relation to the Complaint 2014/6 Presumed large-scale exploitation and marketing of protected marine shelled molluscs in Greece**

**Related documents:**

1. Your letter of 7-5-2015 (our ref. 29144/1290/30-6-15)
2. Our document no. 29144/1290/2-7-15 to the General Secretariat of Sustainable Fisheries, Division of Fishery Policy and Resources
3. The document of the General Directorate of Sustainable Fisheries, Division of Fishery Policy and Resources no. 4234/74509/16-7-2015

In response to your letter of 7-5-2015, and taking into account related document no (3), we would like to inform you that neither our Division nor the Division of Fishery Policy and Resources did receive any information concerning the above complaint in the past. We have been informed about the content of the Complaint 2014/6 from our research in the web.

The concerned species and specifically *Lithophaga lithophaga* are protected in Greece and also by the Habitats Directive 92/43 EEC (listed in Annex IV). The research paper mentioned in the complaint is to our opinion, misleading as the results of the paper depend on the representative choice of the localities. Greece has pioneered in specific species protection, since the early 1970's. Detailed reference of exhaustive national legislative provisions, made in the mentioned research paper, namely the ministerial decision ref. no. 1750/32219/2015 (Gov. Gazette B475/2015) in compliance with the Union's regulations 1379/2013, 1380/2013, 1967/2006, 1005/2008, is providing the controlling authorities with the right to impose really deterring sanctions to infringements observed in retail.

Moreover, Port Police Authorities are continuously inspecting mollusc-fishing vessels and fishermen in certain few localities where still the consumption is considered to be high. In any case, in the research paper referred in the complaint, it is mentioned that "even rare date mussels are served in relatively high proportion of 22.8%, across Greece." We firmly disagree with that conclusion, regarding the widespread exploitation and marketing of date mussel across Greece. The phenomenon unfortunately, despite our efforts, is existent but only in localized sites of the country during a certain time period.

We intend to closely cooperate with all the stakeholders (fishermen, traders, horeca units and research community), and take all the necessary measures and actions to eliminate this unacceptable situation.

As far as the measures taken on the implementation of Recommendation No. 85 (2001) of the Standing Committee on the conservation of *Lithophaga lithophaga* are concerned, and especially:

- a) adapting the legislation urgently so as to prohibit the exploitation of the species;
- b) stopping any trade in *Lithophaga lithophaga*.

We would like to inform you that these obligations are included in the paragraphs 4 and 5 of article 2 of Presidential Decree 86/1998, as it modified by article 1 of Presidential Decree 227/2003.

cc Division

NEM Section  
Dr C. Ververis  
C. Chrysomallis

Yours sincerely,

N. MANALIS  
Director General of Environmental Policy