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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

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**SPORT AND RECREATION FACILITIES IN ÇIRALI
KEY TURTLE NESTING BEACH (TURKEY)**

REPORT BY THE COMPLAINANTS

*Document prepared by
Ulupinar – Çirali Community*

8th June 2012

SPORT AND RECREATION FACILITIES IN ÇIRALI KEY TURTLE NESTING BEACH

We, undersigned, on behalf of the community lives in Ulupınar-Çıralı, request you to accept our complaints against the authorities in Turkey who are responsible for appropriation of a 1st degree natural site bordering to a turtle nesting beach, where has been kept undeveloped until now. Çıralı beach is very well known as one of the well protected and monitored nesting beaches of turtles in Turkey. This land allocation is going to result with some constructions, even for daily usage, and increased human activities on the most favored part of the nesting beach that has the greatest number of nests each year.

Çıralı is a cove and settlement in Ulupınar village at the central south coast of Turkey. The beach at this cove is among the 20 nesting areas of turtles in Turkey, declared as 1st degree natural site and situated within the Olimpos-Beydağları National Park. The area is very well known by turtle conservation community world wide. Ulupınar village has also gained reputation being among the pioneering places where eco-agriculture has been practiced in Turkey. The local cooperative is not only active in eco-agriculture but also in nature conservation & management of the area. The Cooperative even performs scientific monitoring on the nesting turtles annually. With this respect Çıralı is a place which is conserved by its locals. This can be accounted in top of the reasons why nesting turtles still returned to this beach every year and the number of nests has even increased since the monitoring & conservation started in 1994, in contrast to the fact that it is a settled area where both agriculture and tourism are practiced.

An area of 18ha at the northern most part of this beach, where it's the widest and the most favored part by the nesting turtles, was appropriated to Orman Spor ("forest sport" football team) in December 2011. This 18ha. land is within the 397 nr. forest lot which is in possession of Ministry of Forest, and includes 75% of the beach.

This appropriation for the benefit of Orman Spor was acted by local directorate of Ministry of Forest to establish football grounds. In addition, by application of Orman Spor, this 18ha area is permitted to be used as "C Class" excursion area by decision of the Ministry of Environment and Urban Planning's Regional Commission for Conservation of Natural Assets. Orman Spor has hired this area to its sponsor Mr. Hüseyin Gedik, a tourism investor who owned a hotel in Çıralı. Mr. Gedik is ready to turn this area in to a recreation ground with buffets and picnic tables.

Following these developments, settlers of Ulupınar-Çıralı, including local civil societies, cooperatives and community leadership (muhtar) upraised with objection against appropriation, hiring and usage of the said area. Objection and reasons of the community was forwarded to authorities. Demonstrations performed and construction tried to be prevented even against gendarmerie protection. Community leadership has put the case in court and stay of execution was demanded.

As result of local resistance, gained some national support via national press and dedicated facebook page, Governor of Antalya asked the investor to halt any further action and ordered the gendarmerie to retreat from the site. He declared that the state authorities were going to wait for the judgment.

Mentioned area borders to the northernmost section of a turtle nesting beach called Çıralı, within Ulupınar village of Kemer/Antalya, south Turkey. The beach is the widest in this part and has the greatest number of turtle nests each year. The turtle species *Caretta caretta* is known nesting in this beach since many years. Monitoring has been continued since 1994 regularly and yielded a good collection of data about nest distribution and concentrations. Upon result of studies performed in between 1994-2009, mean nest concentrations for each four quadrennial are 31.5, 40.0, 65.0 and 109.5, in succession.

The allocated area subject to complaint is continued geographically by a beach towards seaside. This part of the beach of Çıralı has the greatest number of turtle nests in nesting season. Nesting turtles

beach in the night, dig their nesting holes, lay their eggs and return back to the sea by dusk. Eggs in nests stay in the beach for X days and hatchlings find their way to beach surface first and than to the sea. This happens all through the night until first lights of the morning and the moon guides the hatchlings to the sea.

All through this breeding process of the turtle any human activity on and near the nesting beach can scare matures seeking for a safe nesting place and can destroy eggs buried in the beach. Any artificial light source in the night acts as a fake guide for hatchlings calling them away from the sea.

Allocation of this land and given permission to establish sport and recreation facilities will turn this area in to an attraction point and will surely cause a considerable increase in human activities on this part of the turtle nesting beach.

21 August 2012

UPDATED INFORMATION

Dear Ms D'Alessandro,

I'd like to inform you about the progress in lawsuit process regarding Cirali case.

As you may recall, a lawsuit has been opened by Hamza Demir, Habib Altinkaya, Mikail Yorukoglu (local residents, on behalf of the village) and the Bar Association of Antalya against the Ministry of Environment and Development, in the 2nd Administrative Court of Antalya, file nr. E:2011/1730.

Complainants requested

1. cancellation of the decision of Cultural Assets and Museums Gen. Dir. that approves use of the conflicted area as "in-forest recreation area", in 15.07.2011 and,
2. cancellation of the decision of Forest Gen. Dir. that allocates the area to "Ormanspor".

In 29.03.2012, the 2nd Administrative Court of Antalya decided on for cancellation of the land allocation of the Forest Gen. Dir. but rejected the complainants' request for the cancellation of the decision of the Cultural Assets and Museums Gen. Dir. that makes the area legally suitable to be used for recreational purposes.

Against this partial rejection decision of the Court, the complainants applied to a higher court, Antalya Regional Administrative Court, file nr. 2012/880.

In 15.06.2012, the regional court recognized the claim of the complainants and decided for cancellation of the rejection decision of the Antalya 2nd Administrative Court.

The higher court supported its decision with the arguments that

- the conflicted area is a 1st degree Natural Site (Dogal Sit),
- In "sit" areas decisions for land uses and developments should depend on a development plan to be prepared in accordance to the characteristics of the area by the Conservation of Natural Assets Gen. Dir. of the Ministry of Environment and Development,
- It is obvious that the conflicted area has no conservation physical plan since it was cancelled by a court decision earlier.

Following this "cancellation of the rejection" decision of the regional court, the Antalya 2nd Administrative Court have to re-consider its regarded judgment and establish a new decision.