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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

36th meeting
Strasbourg, 15-18 November 2016

RECOMMENDATION
ON THE CONSERVATION OF THE AKAMAS
PENINSULA AND THE SEA TURTLE NESTING
BEACHES OF CHRYSOCHOU BAY (CYPRUS)

Document
prepared by
the Directorate of Democratic Governance



Convention on the Conservation
of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats

Standing Committee

Recommendation No. 191 (2016) of the Standing Committee, adopted on 18 November 2016, on the conservation of the Akamas peninsula and the sea turtle nesting beaches of Chrysochou Bay (Cyprus)

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;

Recognising the high natural value of the Akamas peninsula, both in its terrestrial and marine parts, especially as a largely undisturbed coastal area, a well-preserved forest and an extraordinary nesting area for the marine turtles *Caretta caretta* and *Chelonia mydas*;

Noting that the future of *Caretta caretta* and *Chelonia mydas* populations in the Mediterranean are largely dependent on the maintenance of conservation activities, including those in Akamas Peninsula and Chrysochou Bay;

Noting that the beach of Limni and the rest of the Natura 2000 area “Periochi Polis-Gialia” have also an exceptional value for nesting of *Caretta caretta*;

Recognising the study carried out by the World Bank in 1995 and its important outcomes and underlining the need to take into consideration further developments concerning the management of the area of Akamas peninsula;

Recalling its 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* and noting that parts of that recommendation are still appropriate and pertinent;

Noting with satisfaction that, the Government of the Republic of Cyprus has not yet authorised any development in the vicinity of the beaches of Lara and Toxeftra, and has *de facto* followed, the last nineteen years, much of the guidance offered by the World Bank study and has taken positive steps towards the sustainable development of the villages of Akamas;

Concerned that a golf project and a large development in the immediate vicinity of the Natura 2000 site “Periochi Polis-Gialia”, including a hotel and 792 villas, may negatively affect the value of Limni beach for marine turtle nesting;

Referring to the report by Dr Paolo Casale on the visit to Akamas [document T-PVS/Files (2016) 44],

Recommends that the Government of the Republic of Cyprus:

1. Declare the whole of the Akamas peninsula a national park, a biosphere reserve or a protected area with comparable international protected status, including in the protected area the Natura 2000 area. “Periochi Polis-Gialia” (CY 4000001), aiming to facilitate a coordinated management of sea-turtle nesting beaches in NW Cyprus, and to ensure that the Akamas Peninsula, as a whole, including a terrestrial and a marine part, be managed in a sustainable, integrated way;
2. Achieve the objective above by protecting adequately the area without undermining the existing good conservation status of the habitats and species of the designated Natura 2000 area “Chersonisos Akamas” and by ensuring a harmonious coexistence with the neighbouring communities;
3. Establish an entity, with scientific staff and wardens, which would be responsible for the sustainable management of the protected area and the neighbouring communities, facilitating an effective implementation of protection measures;
4. Ensure that the protected area, through appropriate management measures, remains one of the most significant marine turtles nesting sites in Cyprus and continues to show positive trends;
5. Maintain and, where appropriate, improve the nature protection-oriented provisions of the existing and future development plans, especially in the areas adjacent to Lara and Toxeftra beaches where building is to be avoided, so as to prevent negative impacts on nesting sites from tourist and/or housing developments;
6. Promptly commence the implementation of the protection measures of the newly formulated management plan through appropriate and adequate funding, as to preserve the good conservation status of the habitats and species of the Natura 2000 area, as well as to maintain the strict protection provided, so far, in the areas of Lara and Toxeftra;
7. Continue to manage access of people and vehicles to the beaches of Lara and Toxeftra, avoiding in particular the disturbance caused by tourism;
8. Continue and strengthen the integrated and coordinated management of the nesting sites, though the Turtle Conservation Project which is implemented in the areas of the Republic of Cyprus under the effective control of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus, and especially in the areas of Akamas Peninsula and “Periochi Polis-Gialia”, so as to maintain positive trends;
9. Close down illegal restaurants in the neighbourhood of the beaches of Lara and Toxeftra (including Aspros river restaurant);
10. Continue to offer protection to the seagrass communities in the Akamas and Limni areas on which *Chelonia mydas* feeds;

On the golf course and associated housing development in Limni:

11. Ensure, by an appropriate assessment that the golf project will not affect the Natura 2000 site “Periochi Polis-Gialia” and especially the exceptional nesting beach of Limni; in this context, avoid housing and establish a zero-lighting zone in an area of at least 200 meters south of the boundaries of the Natura 2000 site;
12. Take appropriate measures to avoid light pollution impacts on the beach from the planned road that will be connecting the golf development with the existing coastal road and protect the beaches from light pollution in the entire coastal length of the Natura 2000 site;

13. Revisit the local development plan of the Polis Gialia so as to ensure, through Strategic Environmental Assessment, that it will not affect the integrity of the nesting habitats of marine turtles;
14. Keep the Standing Committee regularly informed about the progress in the implementation of this Recommendation.