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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

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Open File: 1995/06

Akamas Peninsula (Cyprus)

-GOVERNMENT REPORT-

*Document prepared by department of Environment,
Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment*



REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE,
RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT

**Complaint No. 1995/6: Case-file open on Cyprus: Akamas Peninsula
Government Report**

SCOPE

The purpose of this Report is to provide information on the progress of the implementation of Recommendation No.191 (2016), as well as on the points raised in Bureau Decision (8-10 April 2025) sent on 19.5.2025.

The Republic considers that Points 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11 and 12 of the Recommendation are fully implemented, as described in previous reports.

Points 9 and 13 are also considered implemented, since the legal procedures have been put in motion to achieve the closing down of the restaurants and the amendment of the Local Development Plan for Polis Chrysochou will be environmentally evaluated under relevant laws (i.e. undergo SEA and AA procedures) before its finalized.

As for points 1 and 3, the Republic's explanation on why they cannot be implemented as proposed is provided below.

REMAINING POINTS OF RECOMMENDATION No. 191 (2016)

The remaining points included in the Recommendation are quoted and the actions taken towards their implementation is stated in this section.

Point 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;»:*

The state forest area of the Akamas peninsula (consisting of almost 80% of the Natura 2000 area), along with most of the state land, has been declared as a National Forest Park.

Additionally, an action plan with measures for the protection of the whole Natura 2000 site is currently being implemented.

The same consistent and coordinated conservation measures are being implemented in all nesting beaches of Akamas Peninsula and Polis-Gialia. Through the activities of the yearly Marine Turtle Conservation Program, it is ensured that there is a coordinated management and protection of the sea-turtle nesting beaches around Cyprus.

The declaration of the state forest land as a National Forest Park is considered as an adequate tool to facilitate the protection of the whole peninsula.

The Republic considers that the current protection regime is adequate for the Natura 2000 site “Periochi Polis-Gialia”.

Point 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;»*

At this point no such entity will be established, since the management and protection of Akamas is under the consistent and coordinated efforts of the Department of Environment, Department of Forests, Department of Fisheries and Marine Research and the Game and Fauna Service. Monitoring and surveillance of the area is currently performed by personnel of these departments.

The departments involved in the management of the area have qualified staff to perform these duties and responsibilities and thus a separate entity is neither needed nor will it provide any added value to the protection regime. Also, with the operation of the National Forest Park additional personnel will be assigned to the area. The Forest Park will be staffed with Park Rangers, with relevant authority and duties to implement protection and operation measures.

When the National Forest Park is fully established and operational the relevant authorities will be responsible for monitoring habitats and species in order to review the effectiveness of the environmental management. The reports will be then reviewed by the Advisory Management Committee which is made up by governmental departments and the Scientific Committee which in turn is made up by relevant departments, Environmental NGO's, Union of Cyprus Municipalities, Union of Cyprus Communities, Cyprus Hunting Federation and environmental experts. This ensures participation of all stakeholders. If a report shows a negative change or trend to the species and habitats, relevant actions will be taken in order to eliminate the threat and/or pressure exerted.

NATIONAL FOREST PARK SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The sustainable development plan for the National Forest Park has undergone appropriate assessment.

The sustainable development plan's budget has been approved by the Council of Ministers for the improvement of the road network, the construction of the nodes and the hiring of personnel for the management of the park.

The concerns raised by local NGOs regarding the construction of the road network have been taken into consideration and refinements have been made on the final design and construction methods.

Meanwhile, refinement of other key aspects of the park are ongoing including operational rules, other conservation actions, local community involvement as well as surveillance and monitoring of species and habitats.

LEGALLY BINDING MANAGEMENT

The EC has published a press release for its decision to refer Cyprus to the ECJ for non-compliance with Directive 92/43/EEC, stating that Cyprus has officially designated 37 sites as special areas of conservation, but has not yet adopted the necessary conservation measures for 28 of them and also lacks sufficient conservation objectives.

37 SCI have been designated as SAC and management priorities have been established for all of them. The competent authorities are working towards completing the legal framework for the management of the N2k sites. As of August 2025, 11 Ministerial Decrees for 11 SACs have been published and 4 more are under preparation with publication goal by the end of 2025. The Decrees include site specific conservation objectives and conservation measures.

By the end of 2026 all 37 SAC will have a Ministerial Decree that establishes management plans, objectives and measures for each SAC.

QUARRY IN ANDROLIKOU AND GOLF COURSES IN LIMNI

The possible expansion of the quarry in the area of Androlikou, is in an area outside the boundaries of a "satellite" of the Natura 2000 site of Akamas. Before permitting any expansion of the quarry, the Environmental Authority will appropriately assess the possible impacts and proceed with environmental approval only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site.

For the Limni Resort golf projects, as was previously stated, the proponent has sold their rights (permit and land) to a local bank to eliminate debts. No further building permits or requests for construction have been submitted up to now. No construction or other works have commenced. The project is not expected to move forward. Any possible renewals of the permits will be reevaluated environmentally.

MARINE TURTLE INITIATIVE

With regards to our participation in the Marine Turtle Initiative, we would like to inform the SC that the project has not been active since the issues raised by Turkey and their refusal to recognize the Republic of Cyprus as an established state, internationally recognized and a member of the EU.

The Akamas file has been open since 1995. It is now the longest standing file in the SC. The initial complaint was for the protection of the Akamas peninsula and in particular of the nesting beaches of the loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*) and the green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*). The main ones are Lara, Toxeftra and Limni, which show the highest numbers of nesting, making the north-western shores of Cyprus some of the most important nesting sites for sea turtles in the Mediterranean.

The on-the-spot appraisals that have been carried out through the Convention have identified potential threats to the nesting beaches, including light pollution, development of the golf complex, beach visitation and illegal activities causing disturbance of the beach and nests. Through our reports and presentations over the last few years we have successfully tackled these issues and continue to implement our turtle conservation program with great success.

Taking into consideration that we have been implementing one of the oldest and most successful turtle conservation programs in Europe, with the species showing positive trends and are evaluated to be in excellent conservation status, and that the progress achieved in the matters of the Akamas peninsula and its protection since 2016 (when the Recommendation was issued) was quite significant, especially considering the long history and the difficulties the authorities had to face over the years, we ask that this progress is reflected in future Reports and acknowledged by the Standing Committee.

**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT
OCTOBER 2025**