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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

46th meeting
Strasbourg, 7-11 December 2026

Bureau of the Standing Committee

22-24 September 2026
Strasbourg

Open File: 1995/06

Akamas Peninsula (Cyprus)

-GOVERNMENT REPORT-

*Document prepared by the Ministry of Agriculture,
Rural Development and Environment, Republic of Cyprus*

**Update for the Autumn Bureau Meeting
August 2026**

**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).

The Republic would like to thank the SC for recognizing that Points 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13 of the Recommendation are fully implemented, as mentioned in letter by the Secretary of the Convention dated 19.12.2025.

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)

Point 1: Regarding the declaration of the whole of the Akamas peninsula as a national park or as a protected area, as it has been debated and explained both in our reports and during the SC meetings, it is considered that the designated Natura 2000 area, along with the National Forest Park (enclosing 80% of the Natura 2000 site) is adequate for achieving our goals towards protecting the habitats and species and meeting our legal obligations under relevant EU law.

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: 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. Wardens and rangers will also be

employed to monitor the area and deal with illegal activities.

The relevant authorities will prepare reports on their findings which then will be reviewed by an 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

With regards to the referral of Cyprus to the Court of Justice of the EU for failing to designate SCIs as SACs and for failing to establish conservation objectives and measures for these sites, it is noted that all 37 SCIs have been designated as SACs and by the end of 2026 all of them will have conservation objectives and measures established.

As of August 2026, 15 Ministerial Decrees for 15 SACs have been published and the rest are under preparation with publication goal by the end of 2026. 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.

The SC and the Bureau will be kept updated on any progress made.

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. The Environmental Authority

has appropriately assessed the possible impacts and has concluded that with the implementation of specific mitigation measures the project 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.

We take this opportunity to assure you of the efforts undertaken by the Government of Cyprus to protect the Akamas area and its habitats and species.

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

AUGUST 2026



REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE,
RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT



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9th March, 2026

URGENT – VIA EMAIL

Mrs. Grazia Alessandra Siino
Secretary of the Bern Convention
Council of Europe

Dear Mrs. Siino,

Complaint No. 1995/6: case-file open on “Cyprus: Akamas Peninsula”

Referring to your letter dated 19.12.2022 regarding the aforementioned subject we would like to express our content for the acknowledgement to the efforts of the Cyprus Government towards the protection of the turtles and of Akamas.

Regarding the declaration of the whole of the Akamas peninsula as a national park or as a protected area, as it has been debated and explained both in our reports and during the SC meetings, it is considered that the designated Natura 2000 area, along with the National Forest Park (enclosing 80% of the Natura 2000 site) is adequate for achieving our goals towards protecting the habitats and species and meeting our legal obligations under relevant EU law.

The Natura 2000 area of Akamas, has a Management Plan in place, and although is not legally binding, the competent authorities implement conservation and monitoring actions continuously. Additionally, as was also mentioned in our last report, the area will have a Ministerial Decree that establishes management plans, conservation objectives and measures by the end of 2026.

With regards to the referral of Cyprus to the Court of Justice of the EU for failing to designate SCIs as SACs and for failing to establish conservation objectives and measures for these sites, it is noted that all 37 SCIs have been designated as SACs and by the end of 2026 all of them will have conservation objectives and measures established.



The Sustainable Development Plan for the Akamas Forest Park does not include activities and developments (i.e upgrade of the road network), but it does include improvements of the road network to accommodate the use of the area as a National Forest Park. These improvements have been appropriately assessed and an AA report was issued. As the works progressed some adjustments were made to further decrease the environmental impact of the improvements.

Illegal activities, including the illegal removal of protective poles preventing vehicle access however the competent authorities take all the threats and ensure protection of the vious reports, rangers from the Department sting beaches regularly to ensure nests are not disturbed in any way.

As far as the possible need for the expansion of the quarry adjacent to the Natura 2000 area in Androlikou gorges, all relevant procedures set out by Union law for appropriate assessment will be followed before any decisions are made.

The SC and the Bureau will be kept updated on any progress made.

We take this opportunity to assure you of the efforts undertaken by the Government of Cyprus to protect the Akamas area and its habitats and species.

Sincerely,



Despo Zavrou
for Deputy Director

