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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE  
AND NATURAL HABITATS

**Standing Committee**

42<sup>nd</sup> meeting

Strasbourg, 28 November – 2 December 2022

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**Open file: 1986/08**

**Recommendation No. 9 (1987) on the protection of  
Caretta Caretta in Laganas bay, Zakynthos  
(Greece)**

**- REPORT BY THE GOVERNMENT -**

*Document prepared by  
the Ministry of Environment & Energy, Greece*

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**Ministry of Environment & Energy**  
**General Directorate of Environmental Policy**  
**Directorate of Natural Environment Management & Biodiversity**  
**Department of Biodiversity**

Athens, 29 July 2022

**To the Secretary of the Bern Convention**

Dear Ms Sticker,

**Subject:** File 1986/8: Greece: Follow-up to Recommendation No. 9 (1987) on the protection of *Caretta caretta* in Laganas Bay, Zakynthos

Greece would like to provide the following information concerning the open Case File No. 1986/8 to the attention of the Bureau of the Bern Convention in view of the September 2022 Bureau meeting.

**A. Clarification on the protection status of the beach in Sekania**

Pursuant to the Ministry's follow-up report of October 27, 2021 (point A), to the Secretariat of the Bern Convention, we would like to reiterate that the qualification of the beach in Sekania as an absolute nature protection area was provided by Presidential Decree (PD) no. 906/Δ/22.12.1999 (art. 3, par. Γ, point 3) and not by law no. 4782/2021 as referred to in the Committee's concerns as expressed in December 2021. Law no 4782/2021 (art. 218, par. 1) does not deal with absolute nature protection zones or areas at all; to the contrary, it excludes these zones and areas from any development projects and activities. For the rest of the protected areas, art. 218 (par. 1 & 2) of the law stipulates that minor development projects in a sub-area within a protected area might be authorized by a PD -after a joint proposal by both the Minister of Environment & Energy and the Minister of Development & Investments provided that the integrity of the wider area, in terms of ecological functions, is not endangered and complies with its conservation targets. For this reason, the law requires, in the first place, a special environmental study (SES) along with a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) as well as the opinion of the Central Council on Planning Issues & Challenge in addition to any other related requirements designated under law no. 3937/2011 entitled 'Biodiversity Conservation & other Provisions'.

Finally, according to the existing national legislation, the qualification of an area as a protected one along with its classification (e.g. absolute nature protection area, etc.) requires, firstly, drawing up a SES and, subsequently, issuing the related PD. To date, the Ministry has been running the SESs Project for the Natura-2000 network in Greece, which will end up issuing these PDs, including that on the island of Zakynthos.

**B. Follow-up on the illegal landfill site**

The illegal landfill site in the area of Skopos has been inactive since ca. 2017. In January 2022, the newly established Regional Management Body for Solid Waste of Ionian Islands (PLC<sup>1</sup>) notified the Ministry (Directorate of Waste Management) that an updated environmental impact assessment (EIA) for the site, initially published in 2014, was then available and had been approved by the Governing Council of the Management Body. The EIA was subsequently submitted to the Decentralized Administration of the Peloponnese, Western Greece & Ionian Islands for evaluation and approval.

The expected cost for the restoration of the site amounts to ca. € 6 million and its funding has been secured as stated by the afore-mentioned Management Body.

**C. Follow-up on the illegal road in the protected landscape between Gerakas and Daphne**

A fine was imposed against the offender in 2018 by the Regional Unit of Zakynthos. The Ministry is also aware of a joint appeal filed recently by the NGOs WWF Hellas and Medasset with the Coordinator of the Decentralized Administration of the Peloponnese, Western Greece & Ionian islands against a decision issued by the Regional Unit of Zakynthos ruling a reduction of the imposed fine.

The Ministry is closely monitoring the case. In this respect, COIEL/SYGAPAZ<sup>2</sup> proceeded to an on-the-spot appraisal in 2021 to ascertain if previous measures imposed by COIEL/SYGAPAZ had been implemented. To our knowledge, the inspection and the issuance of the report by COIEL/SYGAPAZ are under way. Furthermore, our Directorate recently contacted the Urban Planning Directorate of the Municipality of Zakynthos and the Department of Environment, Water Economy & Spatial Planning of the Regional Unit of Zakynthos notifying them of the December 2021 letter of the Secretariat to the Ministry and requesting updated information on this case as well as urging them to take any necessary action according to existing national legislation. To date, no feedback has been provided yet.

**D. Follow-up on the two illegal buildings in Nature Protection P2 of Gerakas, illegal constructions in Daphne beach as per point 1 of the Recommendation**

To our knowledge, the buildings still remain in these areas. For any updates on these cases, our Directorate recently contacted the Urban Planning Directorate of the Municipality of Zakynthos and the Department of Environment, Water Economy & Spatial Planning of the Regional Unit of Zakynthos notifying them of the December 2021 letter of the Secretariat to the Ministry and requesting updated information on this case as well as urging them to take any necessary action according to existing national legislation. To date, no feedback has been provided yet.

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<sup>1</sup> Public Limited Company

<sup>2</sup> Coordination Office for the Implementation of Environmental Liability of the Ministry of Environment & Energy

We remain at your disposal for any clarification you may need.

Sincerely yours,

Dr Evangelos Badieritakis

The national focal point to the Bern Convention

Athens, 5 August 2022

To the Secretary of the Bern Convention

Dear Ms Sticker,

**Subject:** File 1986/8: Greece: Follow-up to Recommendation No. 9 (1987) on the protection of *Caretta caretta* in Laganas Bay, Zakynthos (supplementary Report)

In response to a recent letter of the Department of Biodiversity of MoEE1 to the Department of Environment, Water Economy & Spatial Planning of the Regional Unit of Zakynthos, as described in points C & D of our July 2022 Report to the Secretariat of the Bern Convention, the local agency of Zakynthos replied that there are no pending complaints filed for environmental inspection in the reported areas. The same agency also informed MoEE that precise information (e.g. the GGRS87/Greek Grid coordinates of those constructions/buildings/activities, etc., and the name of the complainant in each case) for the identification of those constructions/buildings, etc., for which complaints have been filed in the past, is needed in order to get access to the related case-files.

We remain at your disposal for any clarification you may need.

Sincerely yours,

Dr Evangelos Badieritakis

The national focal point to the Bern Convention