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Oceans and the law of the sea: oceans and the law of the sea

Letter dated 24 April 2023 from the Permanent Representative of Greece to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

With reference to the note verbale dated 13 February 2023 from the Permanent Mission of Libya to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary General ([A/77/742](#)), Greece would like to state the following:

The cited note verbale circulates a letter of the same date addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, by which Libya expresses its objection to Egyptian Presidential Decree No. 595 (2022), concerning the western maritime boundaries of the Arab Republic of Egypt. To this effect, Libya attaches to the letter a list of coordinates and a map of its purported eastern maritime borders.

Greece objects to and rejects the Libyan claims regarding its eastern maritime boundaries, to the extent that these infringe upon its sovereign rights.

These purported Libyan eastern maritime borders violate the Greek exclusive economic zone as delimited, in accordance with international law, by the Agreement between the Government of the Hellenic Republic and the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt on the delimitation of the exclusive economic zone between the two countries, signed on 6 August 2020.

Libya, in support of its arguments concerning these purported eastern maritime borders evokes, inter alia, the 2019 “Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of National Accord-State of Libya and the Government of the Republic of Turkey on Delimitation of the Maritime Jurisdiction Areas in the Mediterranean”, as well as the Libyan legislation of 2005 on the proclamation and demarcation of a protected Libyan fisheries zone.

In this respect, Greece would like to reiterate that the 2019 Memorandum is null and void and produces no legal effect whatsoever, as already stated by Greece (see letter from the Permanent Representative of Greece dated 9 December 2019, annexed to a letter dated 14 February 2020 ([A/74/706](#))). This Memorandum blatantly violates fundamental rules of the law of the sea, including the right of islands to generate maritime zones as any other land territory, and totally disregards the sovereign rights of Greece. Furthermore, it is in clear violation of the letter of the Libyan Political Agreement of 2015, as it was not ratified by the



House of Representatives of Libya, as required by article 8, paragraph 2 (f), of this Agreement, approved by the United Nations Security Council through its resolution [2259 \(2015\)](#). Consequently, any purported Libyan eastern maritime borders based on the 2019 Memorandum, as well as their relevant coordinates, are devoid of any legal effect.

Such Libyan claims, which flagrantly violate international law, constitute, moreover, a threat to peace and stability in the Mediterranean.

As regards the Libyan fisheries protection zone proclaimed in 2005 and mentioned in the same Libyan letter, Greece would like to underline that this zone is not in conformity with international law. It is reminded that the European Union has strongly protested against the said zone for transcending the median line between Libya and Greece, as well as for using baselines drawn not in conformity with international law. The European Union requested the Libyan side to adjust the outer limit of its declared fisheries protection zone in a manner that does not go beyond the median line between the Libyan coast and the coast of neighbouring States (British Embassy's diplomatic note of 21 December 2005 and verbal note of the German Embassy in Tripoli dated 13 June 2007, issued in the name of the States members of the European Union). Greece, for its part, has also expressed on numerous occasions, including at the highest level, its strong objections to the Libyan Government regarding the proclamation of this zone.

Finally, while reserving all its rights under international law, Greece would like to reiterate that it remains strongly committed to resolving any delimitation issue with neighbouring countries in the eastern Mediterranean by peaceful means, in good faith and in accordance with the law of the sea, as it has already done with Italy and Egypt.

I would be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 72 (a), and published on the website of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea and in the next edition of the *Law of the Sea Bulletin*.

(Signed) Evangelos C. **Sekeris**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
