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Oceans and the law of the sea

Letter dated 16 February 2026 from the Permanent Representative of Türkiye to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, with reference to the note verbale dated 27 May 2025 from the Permanent Mission of Libya to the United Nations and its annex ([A/79/916](#)), the note verbale dated 5 August 2025 from the Permanent Mission of Greece to the United Nations ([A/79/983](#)), the communication dated 18 August 2025 from the representation of the Greek Cypriot administration of Southern Cyprus ([A/79/997-S/2025/519](#)), the note verbale dated 3 September 2025 from the Permanent Mission of Greece to the United Nations ([A/79/1005](#)) and the letter dated 8 September 2025 from the Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations ([A/80/386](#)), I would like to bring the following to your attention.

There is no single authority which in law or in fact is competent to represent jointly the Turkish Cypriots and the Greek Cypriots, and the island of Cyprus as a whole. Concerning the Cyprus issue, Turkish and Turkish Cypriot positions have been explained through numerous letters in the past, most recently on 28 December 2024 ([A/79/711-S/2024/987](#)).

Regarding the maritime boundaries of Türkiye under international law, Türkiye has already submitted to the United Nations the limits of various sections of its maritime areas of the Eastern Mediterranean, as appropriate, based on its ipso facto and ab initio legal and sovereign rights, in particular through the Permanent Mission's notes Nos. 2004/Turkuno DT/4739, dated 2 March 2004, 2005/Turkuno DT/16390, dated 4 October 2005, and 2013/14136816/22273, dated 12 March 2013, and its letters dated 25 April 2014 ([A/68/857](#)), 18 March 2019 ([A/73/804](#)), 13 November 2019 ([A/74/550](#)) and 27 February 2020 ([A/74/727](#)).

Through the letter dated 18 March 2020 ([A/74/757](#), annex), the outer limits of the Turkish continental shelf in the Eastern Mediterranean were submitted to the United Nations, a section of which was delimited by the Continental Shelf Delimitation Agreement between the Republic of Türkiye and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, signed on 21 September 2011 and submitted to the United Nations on 25 April 2014 ([A/68/857](#), annex), and another section of which was delimited through the memorandum of understanding between the Government of the Republic of Türkiye and the Government of National Accord-State of Libya on the



Delimitation of Maritime Jurisdiction Areas in the Mediterranean of 27 November 2019. The geographical coordinates of the maritime border between Türkiye and Libya as established by the memorandum of understanding were submitted to the United Nations through a note verbale from the Permanent Mission dated 11 December 2019, contained in the letter dated 27 February 2020 (A/74/727, annex). The aforementioned memorandum of understanding entered into force upon ratification by both countries as of 8 December 2019 and was registered with the Secretariat of the United Nations on 11 December 2019, in accordance with Article 102 of the Charter of the United Nations.

Referring to our previous letters dated 2 July 2020 (A/74/936) and 21 August 2020 (A/74/997-S/2020/826), I wish to reiterate that the international legal framework concerning the delimitation of maritime jurisdiction areas highlights the principle of equity and the goal of an equitable solution. The claims made by the Permanent Mission of Greece and the representation of the Greek Cypriot administration of Southern Cyprus in their aforementioned communications, which presuppose the islands' right to automatically generate full maritime jurisdiction areas wherever they may be located, ignore the relevant circumstances and relevant international jurisprudence. Relevant court decisions, including, but not limited to, the 1977 Court of Arbitration decision in the France-United Kingdom case, the 2009 International Court of Justice decision in the Romania-Ukraine case and the 2012 International Court of Justice decision in the Nicaragua-Colombia case, have either completely ignored the islands that remain on the wrong side of the median line to generate maritime areas or given only partial effect in delimiting the maritime areas, if their location distorts equitable delimitation or if there are other special/relevant circumstances, including the comparison of coastal lengths.

I wish to stress that Greece's selective interpretation of the law of the sea, as well as its excessive maritime boundary claims, as reiterated most recently through the notes verbales dated 5 August 2025 (A/79/983) and 3 September 2025 (A/79/1005), concerning the role of the islands in the delimitation of the continental shelf/exclusive economic zone, demonstrates its neglect of the principle of equity as the fundamental rule of maritime boundary delimitation and disregard of the legitimate rights of Türkiye. I refer, on this issue, to our previous letters dated 13 November 2020 (A/75/598-S/2020/1116) and 9 December 2022 (A/77/646-S/2022/936).

Furthermore, Türkiye reaffirms that the so-called agreement signed between Egypt and Greece on 6 August 2020 concerning the delimitation of the exclusive economic zone violates Türkiye's continental shelf in the Eastern Mediterranean and infringes upon Türkiye's rights in the region. The Republic of Türkiye deems the said agreement null and void, as explained in our note verbale dated 14 August 2020 (A/74/990).

With reference to the letter dated 8 September 2025 from the Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations (A/80/386), concerning the validity of the two memorandums of understanding between the Government of the Republic of Türkiye and the Government of National Accord-State of Libya, the first on the Delimitation of Maritime Jurisdiction Areas in the Mediterranean, signed on 27 November 2019 and duly registered with the Secretariat of the United Nations, and the second on Cooperation in the Field of Hydrocarbons, signed on 3 October 2022, I would like indicate the following.

Referring to the joint letter dated 9 December 2022 from the Permanent Representatives of Türkiye and Libya to the United Nations (A/77/646-S/2022/936), I wish to emphasize that Libyan national legislation duly empowers the Libyan Government to conclude memorandums of understanding with other States. Many States, including European Union member States, have concluded other similar memorandums of understanding with the Government of National Unity of Libya in

areas that require long-term commitments by the signatories. Türkiye reiterates that any and all of the memorandums of understanding signed between Türkiye and Libya are concluded in accordance with international law and are valid and in effect, including the memorandum of understanding between Türkiye Petrolleri Anonim Ortaklığı and the National Oil Corporation of Libya, signed on 25 June 2025.

On the subject of the Maritime Spatial Plan declared by Greece on 16 April 2025, I would like to underline that some of the areas specified in said plan violate Türkiye's maritime jurisdiction areas in both the Aegean Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean. Greece's unilateral actions and claims will not have any legal consequences for Türkiye, as stated in official press release No. 84 dated 16 April 2025 of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye. In this scope, the explanation given by the Permanent Mission of Greece through its note verbale dated 3 September 2025 (A/79/1005), regarding the so-called maritime limits as illustrated in the Greek Maritime Spatial Plan in maritime areas where there is as yet no delimitation agreement, is that the relevant limits of the Greek Maritime Spatial Plan are determined by the so-called "median line" in accordance with Greek domestic law (article 2 (1) of Law No. 2289/1995, as amended by article 156 (1) of Law No. 4001/2011 (Government Gazette No. 179/A/22.8.2011)). I wish to refer to our previous letters dated 2 July 2020 (A/74/936) and 21 August 2020 (A/74/997-S/2020/826), in which it was clarified that unilaterally characterized domestic laws and practices of other countries are not binding upon Türkiye and cannot be invoked against Türkiye in relevant dealings.

Moreover, under international law, a State cannot invoke its own domestic law as a legal basis or justification of its claims against other States in a dispute involving delimitation matters. Greece's efforts to defend its maximalist and excessive maritime boundary claims, which are disputed under international law, through its domestic legislation run contrary to the well-established principles of international law, as well as international jurisprudence, are futile, create no legal consequences for Türkiye and cannot prejudice Türkiye's ipso facto and ab initio rights in the Turkish continental shelf in the Aegean Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to stress Türkiye's readiness and full support for ensuring a just, equitable and peaceful solution to all pending issues, including the equitable delimitation of maritime jurisdiction areas with all relevant coastal States that it recognizes, in accordance with international law, in order to further contribute to the stability and prosperity of the entire Mediterranean basin. Türkiye believes that building peace and stability in the Eastern Mediterranean will only be possible through dialogue and cooperation. With this understanding, I wish to emphasize that Türkiye is committed to the spirit and intent of the Athens Declaration on Friendly Relations and Good-Neighbourliness, signed by President Erdoğan and Prime Minister Mitsotakis on 7 December 2023, in Athens, which underscores that both countries will endeavour to resolve any dispute arising between them in an amicable manner through direct consultations between them or through other means of mutual choice as provided for in the Charter of the United Nations.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 75, and published on the website of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, as well as in the next edition of the *Law of the Sea Bulletin*.

(Signed) Ahmet Yıldız
Ambassador
Permanent Representative