United Nations A/81/455

General Assembly

Distr.: General
23 October 2026

Original: English

Eighty-first session
Agenda item 74
Oceans and the law of the sea

Letter dated 22 October 2026 from the Permanent Representative of Greece to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions of my Government, I have the honour to communicate the following regarding the recent purported ratification by the Libyan House of Representatives of the "Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of Türkiye and the Government of National Accord-State of Libya on Delimitation of the Maritime Jurisdiction Areas in the Mediterranean", signed on 27 November 2019.

The Memorandum was concluded despite the fact that Türkiye and Libya have neither adjacent nor opposite coasts and, consequently, no common maritime boundaries. It entirely disregards the presence of numerous Greek islands, including Crete and the Dodecanese islands, and their entitlements to generate maritime zones beyond the territorial sea. The resulting delimitation amounts to a blatant refashioning of geography, contrary to the international law of the sea as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the established delimitation practice. The Memorandum is therefore illegal under international law, and its recent purported ratification by the Libyan House of Representatives can neither confer any legal effect upon it nor alter its legal character as being null and void, producing no legal consequences.

Accordingly, Greece rejects the Memorandum in its entirety. In this regard, reference is made to the letter dated 9 December 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Greece to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, annexed to her letter dated 14 February 2020 (A/74/706), as well as to the letters dated 19 March 2020 (A/74/758), 20 April 2020 (A/74/819), 1 June 2020 (A/74/872), 15 February 2021 (A/75/753), 17 November 2022 (A/77/604), 24 April 2023 (A/77/865) and 17 January 2024 (A/78/718), from the Permanent Representatives of Greece to the United Nations, and to the notes verbales dated 2 September 2020 (A/74/1006), 5 August 2025 (A/79/983) and 3 September 2025 (A/79/1005) from the Permanent Mission of Greece to the United Nations.

Greece also wishes to underline that any act purportedly adopted pursuant to this Memorandum, including the ratification bill, as well as any act purportedly based on the unlawful coordinates contained therein, is contrary to international law and of no legal effect. In this respect, Greece reiterates its opposition to, and strongly protests, the conclusion of the "Memorandum of Understanding between the

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Government of the Republic of Türkiye and the Government of National Unity-State of Libya on Cooperation in the Field of Hydrocarbons", signed on 3 October 2022, insofar as it seeks to implement the 2019 Memorandum or is otherwise based on the purported delimitation contained therein. Greece further underlines that any action taken in purported implementation of the Memorandum signed on 3 October 2022 that infringes upon Greece's sovereign rights or jurisdiction constitutes a violation of international law, with respect to which Greece reserves its rights.

In the light of the foregoing, the ratification of the 2019 Memorandum is and shall remain without prejudice to any rights conferred upon Greece under international law, as well as to the positions expressed by Greece regarding Libya's claims to maritime zones which are contrary to international law. In particular, with regard to the "official position of Libya regarding the outer limits of its continental shelf in the Mediterranean Sea" (including the relevant coordinates and map contained in the enclosure to the note verbale dated 27 May 2025 from the Permanent Mission of Libya to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (A/79/916)), Greece considers Libya's claims to be unsubstantiated and legally unfounded. In this respect, Greece reiterates its position as set out in the note verbale dated 3 September 2025 from the Permanent Mission of Greece to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (A/79/1005).

Finally, while reserving all its rights, Greece reiterates its strong commitment to resolving any delimitation issue with neighbouring countries in the Mediterranean by peaceful means, in good faith and in accordance with the international law of the sea, as demonstrated by the maritime delimitation agreements it has concluded with Italy and Egypt.

I would be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 74, 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*) Aglaia **Balta**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative