

Statement by the representative of Greece
(3rd Session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN), 9th
Plenary Meeting, New York, Friday, May 5th , 2023)
Agenda Item 16

Mr Chair,

I wish to refer to the statement of the distinguished delegate of Türkiye who made a presentation of the Presidential Decree 6188 of 7 October 2022 to the Group of Experts.

The Decree designates the locations and the names of a number of undersea features in maritime areas including the Aegean Sea and the Mediterranean Sea, out of which eight (8) fall entirely or partly within Greek continental shelf, over which Greece exercises ab initio and ipso facto sovereign rights, and two (2) fall partly within Greek territorial sea.

The territorial sea of Greece and its continental shelf are subject to its sovereignty and sovereign rights respectively. Consequently, it has the exclusive right to designate the names of undersea features located within its territorial sea and continental shelf.

The Decree, to the extent that it concerns undersea features that lie within Greek territorial sea and Greek continental shelf, is a clear violation of the applicable rules of international law, in particular the relevant provisions of the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea (1982), which also reflect customary international law. It cannot, consequently, affect Greece's rights or bear any legal consequences whatsoever.

Furthermore, the above-referred features, which were named in the Decree, are already known and recognized under specific and different geographical names, which have already been subject to entries into the International Hydrographic Organisation - Intergovernmental Oceanographic Committee "Gazetteer of Undersea Feature Names" (IHO-IOC GEBCO). They are also widely published in international sources and bibliography. Therefore, there is no justification for naming differently the above underwater features. It is equally important to underline that these underwater features are referred to in the 'National Gazetteer of Geographical Names of Greece' under the names which are used in the IHO-IOC GEBCO Gazetteer.

Thank you