

(English version)

Priority question for written answer P-003013/25
to the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Maria Zacharia (NI)
(19 July 2025)

Subject: Legal status of the Turkey-Libya Memorandum — threat of war against Greece in the event that it extends its territorial waters to 12 nautical miles

As a State Party to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (Unclos), Greece has the right to extend its territorial waters to 12 nautical miles, pursuant to Article 3 Unclos. It exercised this right in the Ionian Sea in 2021.

However, this right remains unenforced in the Aegean and south of Crete. Its exercise there is critical, as it would disconnect Türkiye from Libya and invalidate any alleged maritime adjacency. The so-called Turkey-Libya memorandum of understanding (2019), concluded without recognition of Greek sovereign rights, violates international law and undermines the territorial integrity of an EU Member State.

Türkiye continues to threaten Greece with war (*casus belli*) should it exercise this legitimate right, flagrantly violating the UN Charter. This threat affects not only Greece but the EU as a whole, undermining sovereignty, stability and the lawful exploitation of marine resources within EU jurisdiction.

1. How does the VP/HR assess the threat of force against a Member State exercising a lawful right?
2. What action will the VP/HR take to uphold international law, support Greece in exercising its right, bring the issue before the Foreign Affairs Council and promote a clear stance of solidarity among Member States?
3. Does the VP/HR consider continued cooperation with Türkiye to be compatible with EU values, given these threats and violations?

Submitted: 19.7.2025

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Kallas on behalf of the European Commission
(20 August 2025)

The European Council's conclusions of June 2022 ⁽¹⁾ state that Türkiye must respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all Member States.

It is expected to make an unequivocal commitment to good neighbourly relations (essential part of Türkiye's accession process), international agreements and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

The 2023 Joint Communication on the state of play of EU-Türkiye political, economic and trade relations clearly indicates Türkiye's commitment to good neighbourly relations remains an essential requirement to ensure a stable and secure environment in the Eastern Mediterranean and the development of a cooperative and mutually beneficial EU- Türkiye relationship ⁽²⁾.

Türkiye must avoid threats and actions that damage good neighbourly relations and respect the sovereignty of all Member States over their territorial sea and airspace as well as all their sovereign rights, including the right to explore and exploit natural resources in accordance with EU and international law, in particular the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea ⁽³⁾.

The Council, in December 2024, noted the improvements in relations between Türkiye and Greece and the de-escalation in the Eastern Mediterranean and expectation to be sustained ⁽⁴⁾.

In June 2025, the European Council recalled that the Türkiye-Libya memorandum of understanding on the delimitation of maritime jurisdictions in the Mediterranean Sea infringes upon the sovereign rights of third states, does not comply with the Law of the Sea and cannot produce any legal consequences for third States ⁽⁵⁾.

The High Representative/Vice-President is continuously raising these issues with her Turkish interlocutors.

⁽¹⁾ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/57442/2022-06-2324-euco-conclusions-en.pdf>.

⁽²⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_6157.

⁽³⁾ https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/document/download/8010c4db-6ef8-4c85-aa06-814408921c89_en?filename=T%C3%BCrkiye%20Report%202024.pdf.

⁽⁴⁾ <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-16983-2024-INIT/en/pdf>.

⁽⁵⁾ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/cjtb3oep/20250626-european-council-conclusions-en.pdf>.

The EU remains committed to defend its interests and those of its Member States as well as to uphold regional stability.
