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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE  
AND NATURAL HABITATS

**Standing Committee**  
23<sup>rd</sup> meeting

Strasbourg, 1-4 December 2003

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**Follow-up of Recommendation No.84 (2000) on the  
conservation of Western Milos and in particular  
the Milos' viper (*Macrovipera schweitezeri*)  
(Greece)**

**Report by the Government**

*Document prepared by  
the Ministry of the Environment, Physical Planning and Public Works of Greece*

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**HELLENIC REPUBLIC**  
**MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT PHYSICAL PLANNING AND PUBLIC**  
**WORKS**  
**DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF THE ENVIRONMENT**  
**ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING DEVISION**  
**Natural Environment Management Section**

***Follow-up of Recommendation No.84 (2000) on the conservation of Western  
Milos and in particular the Milos' viper *Macrovipera schweitezeri****

The Competent National Authorities on the basis of the studies "Vipera lebetina schweitezeri conservation proposals" and the "Habitat Types Mapping Project" for all the Natura 2000 sites have revised the former proposal for the Natura 2000 site GR 4920020 "Profitis Elias". This revision resulted in a significant enlargement of the site, now called "Profitis Elias and the greater area" so that almost the major terrestrial part of Western Milos is included in this site. All the Milos viper core areas and the connecting them corridors, in Western Milos, are included in the enlarged site. (*Annex I*)

The establishment of a protected area in the Western Milos and the appropriate conservation measures have been elaborated within the frame of the Specific Environmental Study (SES), which is under consideration, by the Ministry of the Environment. It can be said that this study is not satisfactory.

The legal establishment of the protected area presupposes the modification of the current physical planning arrangements for Western Milos (Decision No.54/1987 of the National Physical Planning and Environmental Council). This decision is mainly related to the exploitation of minerals and to quarrying activities. The relevant Services of the Ministry of the Environment are examining carefully the alternatives for the appropriate legal procedure, in view of such a modification, which have to be submitted to the Minister of the Environment for the appropriate consideration.

Meanwhile, conservation action has been undertaken and measures have been adopted and implemented in Western Milos having as follows:

- An extra environmental term has been induced, with regard to the prohibition of the circulation of the heavy vehicles, transporting the excavated materials and minerals during the hours 19:00 – 07:00. This prohibition covers the two quarrying companies "AGET – HERACLES" and "INTERBETON". Furthermore modification and/ or amendment of the current environmental terms can be imposed, provided their prior justification.
- The restoration works of two ceased quarries, at the locations northern and southern Rallaki, are at an advanced stage.
- The 383,44 ha surface area (Chalakas-Agriokambos-Profitis Elias-Keratogianni-Xirokambos-Tsouvala), which has been dramatically affected by fire, in summer 2002, has been officially declared as a "re-afforested area" according to the forest legislation. This declaration aims at the revegetation of the natural vegetation and comprises the prohibition of:
  - grazing (goats for 10 consecutive years, sheep and other big animals for 5 consecutive years)
  - timbering, land clearing and any other non forest cultivation
- The Ministry of the Environment, in collaboration with the relevant Regional and Prefectural Authorities have elaborated projects, which are of significance in terms of conservation purposes in Western Milos. These projects, cofinanced through E.U funds (Third Community Support Frame), are the following:

- a. “*Study and Afforestation Works of a 150 ha area at “Tsouvala location”*” with a budget of 300.000€ This project is contributing to the habitat restoration for the Milos viper and has been chosen as the appropriate conservation action in comparison the grazing management plan for western Milos. The latter was assessed as no necessary.
- b. “*Fire Combating Management Plan for Milos Island*” with a budget of 700.000€  
For both projects (a) and (b) the study “*Vipera lebetina schweizezeri* conservation proposals” is considered as the basic element.
- c. “*Restoration of the inert quarry at the location “Chaleppa”*”. This location is included in the greater area of the core area for Milos viper. It is expected that the project will benefit not only the landscape aesthetics but also the restoration of the Viper’s habitats and the prevention of further soil erosion. The project has a budget of 289,000 € and a duration of 3 years (2004-2006).
- d. “*Protection of biotopes of species and Natura 2000 sites\* of Milos Island*” with the following actions:
  - i) Monitoring Programme for: the Milos viper populations and some other amphibians and reptiles, the road mortality in the relation to the efficiency of the underground passages, the habitat changes and the avifauna.
  - ii) Inventory of the local population concept, on the protection of the local indigenous wildlife and natural environment, the establishment and operation information office, planning of the communication strategy, development of information materials.
  - iii) Planning and construction of pilot underground passages for the Milos viper on two black spots.

The project (d) which started in August 2003, has a total budget of 683.584 € and a duration of 3 and half years.

Some other species like *Podarcis milensis* and *Natrix natrix schweizezeri*, are, definitely, receiving conservation through the legal arrangements and conservation projects in the Western Milos.

There is not reported any illegal trade case with Milos viper.

Athens, November 2003

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\* Apart of the terrestrial Natura 2000 site there is marine Natura 2000 site GR4220005 “Aktes Ditikis Milou” around the Western Milos for the protection mainly of *Monachus monachus*