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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

33rd meeting
Strasbourg, 3-6 December 2013

Complaint in stand-by

**SPORT AND RECREATION FACILITIES IN ÇIRALI
KEY TURTLE NESTING BEACH (TURKEY)**

REPORT BY THE GOVERNMENT

*Document prepared by
The Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs, Turkey*

- Update for the Bureau meeting (September 2013) -

GOVERNMENT REPORT ON

“Turkey: Sport and Recreation Facilities in Çıralı Key Turtle Nesting Beach”

The Construction Project in Çıralı Beach is under inspection in National Courts. The file is still open and there is no activity on construction of any building.

The Ministry will send relevant and valid information to the Secretariat as soon as the Court gives a final decision.

- Update for the Bureau meeting (April 2013) -

GOVERNMENT REPORT ON

“Turkey: Sport and Recreation Facilities in Çıralı Key Turtle Nesting Beach”

Bearing in mind that to achieve the objectivity criteria, it was not possible to make any comment on an issue which is under consideration of a national court.

Emphasizing that as it was stated in the complaint form, there is an ongoing court in Turkey on that special matter.

So, The Turkish Ministry of Forest and Water Affairs will be monitoring all progress and send all relevant information to the Secretariat as soon as the Turkish Justice Authorities reaches a final decision.

8th June 2012**SPORT AND RECREATION FACILITIES IN ÇIRALI KEY TURTLE NESTING BEACH**

We, undersigned, on behalf of the community lives in Ulupınar-Çıralı, request you to accept our complaints against the authorities in Turkey who are responsible for appropriation of a 1st degree natural site bordering to a turtle nesting beach, where has been kept undeveloped until now. Çıralı beach is very well known as one of the well protected and monitored nesting beaches of turtles in Turkey. This land allocation is going to result with some constructions, even for daily usage, and increased human activities on the most favored part of the nesting beach that has the greatest number of nests each year.

Çıralı is a cove and settlement in Ulupınar village at the central south coast of Turkey. The beach at this cove is among the 20 nesting areas of turtles in Turkey, declared as 1st degree natural site and situated within the Olimpos-Beydağları National Park. The area is very well known by turtle conservation community world wide. Ulupınar village has also gained reputation being among the pioneering places where eco-agriculture has been practiced in Turkey. The local cooperative is not only active in eco-agriculture but also in nature conservation & management of the area. The Cooperative even performs scientific monitoring on the nesting turtles annually. With this respect Çıralı is a place which is conserved by its locals. This can be accounted in top of the reasons why nesting turtles still returned to this beach every year and the number of nests has even increased since the monitoring & conservation started in 1994, in contrast to the fact that it is a settled area where both agriculture and tourism are practiced.

An area of 18ha at the northern most part of this beach, where it's the widest and the most favored part by the nesting turtles, was appropriated to Orman Spor ("forest sport" football team) in December 2011. This 18ha. land is within the 397 nr. forest lot which is in possession of Ministry of Forest, and includes 75% of the beach.

This appropriation for the benefit of Orman Spor was acted by local directorate of Ministry of Forest to establish football grounds. In addition, by application of Orman Spor, this 18ha area is permitted to be used as "C Class" excursion area by decision of the Ministry of Environment and Urban Planning's Regional Commission for Conservation of Natural Assets. Orman Spor has hired this area to its sponsor Mr. Hüseyin Gedik, a tourism investor who owned a hotel in Çıralı. Mr. Gedik is ready to turn this area in to a recreation ground with buffets and picnic tables.

Following these developments, settlers of Ulupınar-Çıralı, including local civil societies, cooperatives and community leadership (muhtar) upraised with objection against appropriation, hiring and usage of the said area. Objection and reasons of the community was forwarded to authorities. Demonstrations performed and construction tried to be prevented even against gendarmerie protection. Community leadership has put the case in court and stay of execution was demanded.

As result of local resistance, gained some national support via national press and dedicated facebook page, Governor of Antalya asked the investor to halt any further action and ordered the gendarmerie to retreat from the site. He declared that the state authorities were going to wait for the judgment.

Mentioned area borders to the northernmost section of a turtle nesting beach called Çıralı, within Ulupınar village of Kemer/Antalya, south Turkey. The beach is the widest in this part and has the greatest number of turtle nests each year. The turtle species *Caretta caretta* is known nesting in this beach since many years. Monitoring has been continued since 1994 regularly and yielded a good collection of data about nest distribution and concentrations. Upon result of studies performed in between 1994-2009, mean nest concentrations for each four quadrennial are 31.5, 40.0, 65.0 and 109.5, in succession.

The allocated area subject to complaint is continued geographically by a beach towards seaside. This part of the beach of Çıralı has the greatest number of turtle nests in nesting season. Nesting turtles

beach in the night, dig their nesting holes, lay their eggs and return back to the sea by dusk. Eggs in nests stay in the beach for X days and hatchlings find their way to beach surface first and then to the sea. This happens all through the night until first lights of the morning and the moon guides the hatchlings to the sea.

All through this breeding process of the turtle any human activity on and near the nesting beach can scare matures seeking for a safe nesting place and can destroy eggs buried in the beach. Any artificial light source in the night acts as a fake guide for hatchlings calling them away from the sea.

Allocation of this land and given permission to establish sport and recreation facilities will turn this area into an attraction point and will surely cause a considerable increase in human activities on this part of the turtle nesting beach.