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Letter dated 23 October 2026 from the Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, and with reference to the decision of the Libyan House of Representatives, on 20 October 2026, to approve the Turkish-Libyan memorandum of understanding on delimitation of maritime jurisdiction areas in the Mediterranean Sea of 2019, I wish to reiterate that my Government's position on the "memorandum" has been consistently conveyed in numerous communications, including the letters dated 20 January 2020, 24 April 2020 and 20 July 2020 and the note verbale dated 18 August 2025 addressed to the Secretary-General (A/74/660, A/74/824, A/74/962 and A/79/997, respectively).

The timing of the Libyan House of Representatives' decision to approve the 2019 Turkish-Libyan memorandum raises serious concerns about the motives behind this move and the interests it is intended to serve. Libya's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity must not be subordinated to the geopolitical agendas and ambitions of third States. Turkey is exploiting Libya's political and institutional circumstances to advance unlawful maritime claims that extend far beyond any geographically plausible limits, seeking to impose an artificial maritime reality at the expense of the sovereign rights of third States. Such actions reflect a deliberate policy of escalation in the eastern Mediterranean, undermine international law and pose a serious threat to regional peace, security and stability.

The so-called memorandum purporting to delimit the exclusive economic zone/continental shelf between the coasts of Turkey and Libya does not comply with international law, and in particular the rules of international law pertaining to the conclusion of treaties, as well as the international law of the sea, as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. As such, the said "memorandum" does not produce any legal consequences for third parties, nor does it affect any third State's rights to maritime zones, including its sovereign rights, under international law.

This "memorandum" purports a maritime delimitation between two States that do not possess opposite or adjacent coasts, thereby fabricating a non-existent maritime boundary between the two, while deliberately ignoring the presence and maritime entitlements of other coastal States in the region, including Greek islands. It is underlined that article 121 (2) of the Convention – which reflects customary

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international law and is, as such, also opposable to States which are non-Parties to the Convention – explicitly provides for the entitlement of islands to a territorial sea, a contiguous zone, a continental shelf and an exclusive economic zone.

The Republic of Cyprus underscores the importance of full respect for international law. In this regard, it recalls that maritime delimitation agreements must be concluded between States with opposite or adjacent coasts, in good faith and in accordance with the well-established principles of international law, as codified in the Convention and guided by international jurisprudence.

I would be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 74, and of the Security Council, and published on the website of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, as well as in the next edition of the *Law of the Sea Bulletin*.

(*Signed*) Maria **Michail**