European Parliament
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TEXTS ADOPTED

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The illegal Türkiye–Libya Memorandum of Understanding and infringement of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

European Parliament resolution of 26 November 2026 on the illegal Türkiye-Libya Memorandum of Understanding and infringement of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (2026/2981(RSP))

The European Parliament,

– having regard to the joint statement by the President of the European Council, António Costa, and the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, of 20 October 2026,

– having regard to the statement of 21 October 2026 by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Kaja Kallas, on behalf of the EU on the ratification of the Libya-Türkiye Memorandum of Understanding by Libya’s House of Representatives,

– having regard to the joint statement delivered at the United Nations headquarters in New York on 26 October 2026 on behalf of Bahrain, Cyprus, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, the European Union and Greece,

– having regard to the European Council conclusions of 12 December 2019, which stated that the Türkiye-Libya Memorandum of Understanding infringes the sovereign rights of third states, does not comply with the law of the sea and cannot produce legal consequences for third states,

– having regard to all of its previous resolutions on Türkiye and Libya, in particular its recommendation of 23 November 2022 to the Council, the Commission and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs

and Security Policy on the situation in Libya[1],

– having regard to the Charter of the United Nations, in particular the principles of sovereign equality, territorial integrity and the peaceful settlement of international disputes,

– having regard to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), in particular Articles 56, 74, 77, 83 and 121 thereof,

– having regard to the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties of 1969, in particular Article 34 thereof, and to the corresponding principle of customary international law concerning treaties and third states,

– having regard to the report of the UN Secretary-General of 10 August 2026 on the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL),

– having regard to the agreement of 6 August 2020 between Greece and Egypt on the delimitation of the exclusive economic zone between the two countries,

– having regard to the fundamental principles of international law and to the UN Charter, the 1977 and the 1979 High-Level Agreements between the leaders of the two communities in Cyprus, and the relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council on Cyprus, including Resolution 186 (1964), which reaffirmed the sovereignty of the Republic of Cyprus, Resolutions 541 (1983) and 550 (1984) condemning secessionist actions in Cyprus, and Resolution 789 (1992),

– having regard to Rules 136(2) and (4) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas on 20 October 2026, Libya’s eastern-based House of Representatives ratified the illegal 2019 Libya-Türkiye Memorandum of Understanding (hereafter the MoU), despite the fact that the Al-Bayda Appeals Court in Libya had already ruled the MoU null and void and had cancelled it in its judgment of 27 January 2021; whereas the Libyan House of Representatives had previously rejected the MoU in 2020; whereas on 27 November 2019, the Government of Türkiye and the then Tripoli-based Government of National Accord signed a Memorandum of Understanding on delimitation of the maritime jurisdiction areas in the Mediterranean, which was ratified by the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye on 5 December 2019 and has since been invoked by Türkiye in support of its maritime claims, including before the UN; whereas its subsequent approval by the House of Representatives cannot remedy its incompatibility with international law or enable its provisions to prejudice the rights of third states; whereas since the discovery of

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[1] OJ C 167, 11.5.2023, p. 116.

offshore natural gas reserves in the early 2000s, maritime delimitation disputes and competing claims in the eastern Mediterranean have intensified, and Türkiye, through unilateral actions and claims that are incompatible with the principles of international law, has challenged the lawful delimitation of exclusive economic zones (EEZs) and the sovereign rights of neighbouring coastal states, thereby undermining regional stability, escalating tensions and jeopardising prospects for regional cooperation;

B. whereas the MoU purports to delimit maritime jurisdictions in the Mediterranean, disregarding the geographical presence and maritime entitlements of the Greek islands and the sovereign rights of Greece; whereas the EU itself is a party to UNCLOS,

C. whereas Türkiye and Libya do not have opposite or adjacent coasts; whereas the MoU extends to maritime areas over which Greece and Egypt have exercised their sovereign rights under international law;

D. whereas the EU has consistently rejected the MoU's infringement of third states' sovereign rights; whereas the statements of 20 and 21 October 2026 reaffirmed the EU's position that the MoU is null and void, cannot produce any legal consequences for third states, that the EU has a strategic interest in a stable and secure eastern Mediterranean and called on all countries to respect the sovereign rights of all EU Member States in accordance with EU and international law, including UNCLOS; whereas the unilateral delimitation of maritime zones through arrangements that disregard the legitimate maritime rights and sovereign rights of third states undermines regional stability and the rules-based international order;

E. whereas the eastern Mediterranean is of strategic importance to the EU in terms of energy security, maritime connectivity, critical infrastructure and regional stability; whereas unilateral maritime claims, and actions based thereon, may undermine legitimate economic activities and investments in the region;

F. whereas on 26 October 2026, the EU, Greece, Cyprus, Egypt, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates jointly stated that the MoU ignores geographical realities and the rights of coastal states, including the rights of islands, that its ratification does not alter its legal status, and that acquiescing in bilateral arrangements that disregard international law would set a dangerous precedent;

G. whereas UNCLOS, with its contracting parties and fundamental provisions reflecting customary international law that is binding on all states, establishes a comprehensive legal framework governing maritime activities, safeguarding freedom of navigation, protecting the sovereign rights of coastal states and enabling global maritime trade; whereas Article 121(2) UNCLOS provides for the entitlement

of islands to maritime zones under the rules applicable to other land territory, subject to the exception in Article 121(3); whereas the Greek islands, including Crete, cannot be disregarded in maritime delimitation; whereas Greece has concluded agreements on the delimitation of EEZs with Egypt and Italy, while the Republic of Cyprus has done likewise with Egypt, Israel and Lebanon;

H. whereas Article 3 UNCLOS recognises the right of every state to establish the breadth of its territorial sea up to 12 nautical miles; whereas the continued maintenance by Türkiye of a threat of war (*casus belli*) against Greece in the event of the exercise of this lawful right is incompatible with the principles of peaceful relations, good neighbourliness and international law;

I. whereas no bilateral agreement between two states can deprive a third state of its sovereign rights or prevail over international law, and subsequent parliamentary ratification cannot turn an illegal and void memorandum into a legal agreement; whereas Greece has rejected the MoU and has not consented to any impairment of its maritime rights;

J. whereas maritime delimitation must be conducted in accordance with international law, with due regard to the rights of all relevant coastal states and with the aim of achieving an equitable solution; whereas the protection of Member States' sovereign rights in their EEZs and continental shelves is a matter of solidarity and strategic importance for the EU, including for its energy security, maritime infrastructure and regional stability; whereas the maritime boundaries of Greece and Cyprus are external boundaries of the EU, and an infringement of the sovereign rights of a Member State constitutes an infringement of the interests of the EU as a whole;

K. whereas widespread fragility and instability in Libya continue to prevent the country from embarking on a path of reforms, good governance, peace and growth; whereas a stable, sovereign and united Libya – maintaining good neighbourly relations and respecting international law – is essential to lasting peace and cooperation in the Mediterranean;

L. whereas the MoU jeopardises the implementation of several UN Security Council resolutions that have imposed an arms embargo on Libya, in particular UN Security Council Resolution 1970 (2011), and paves the way for systematic violations of UN sanctions imposed by this resolution;

M. whereas Libya has signed UNCLOS but has not ratified it; whereas Türkiye is the only EU candidate country that has not signed or ratified UNCLOS, to which Greece and Cyprus are parties; whereas Türkiye's non-participation in UNCLOS does not exempt it from the applicable rules of customary international law of the sea;

N. whereas in July 2024, Türkiye deployed military ships in order to impede the Italian ship *Ievoli Relume* from conducting research for the construction of the Great Sea Interconnector, an electricity interconnection project between Greece and Cyprus and an EU Project of Common Interest, inside the Greek EEZ near Kassos, claiming jurisdiction under the pretext of the MoU; whereas Türkiye has repeatedly obstructed the EUR 2,1 billion EU-backed Great Sea Interconnector project, including by interrupting maritime operations in 2024; whereas following the deal, three months ago, making the French infrastructure investor Meridiam a majority shareholder in the project, a French vessel departed Heraklion to resume work on the project amid heightened concerns over potential Turkish interference;

O. whereas the ratification followed a series of unilateral steps based on the MoU, including the hydrocarbons memorandum of understanding of 3 October 2022 between the Government of Türkiye and the Tripoli-based Government of National Unity, the memorandum of understanding of 25 June 2025 between the Turkish Petroleum Corporation and Libya’s National Oil Corporation on offshore seismic surveys, and a verbal note of 24 August 2026 from the Tripoli authorities contesting Greek hydrocarbon exploration activities south of Crete;

P. whereas Türkiye’s lack of cooperation continues to hamper the EU’s efforts to effectively implement the UN embargo on Libya; whereas these efforts continue to be challenged by factors that include Türkiye’s obstructive attitude towards Operation EUNAVFOR MED IRINI and open questioning of the operation’s purpose, legitimacy and impartiality, and Türkiye’s repeated refusals to grant flag-state consent to the inspection, under Security Council Resolution 2292 (2016), of Turkish-flagged vessels bound for Libya;

Q. whereas Türkiye’s declaration, on 15 August 2026, of the establishment of marine environmental parks extending beyond its territorial waters and, consequently, beyond its jurisdiction constitutes yet another attempt to advance unilateral maritime claims in the Aegean Sea and the eastern Mediterranean under the pretext of environmental protection, in violation of the law of the sea, as reflected in UNCLOS, raises serious concerns regarding security and stability in the region and forms part of Türkiye’s expansionist maritime strategy, as embodied in its ‘Blue Homeland’ (*Mavi Vatan*) doctrine;

1. Condemns the MoU as incompatible with international law and the applicable principles of the law of the sea; reaffirms that the MoU infringes the sovereign rights of third states, does not comply with the law of the sea, is null and void and cannot produce any legal consequences for third states; rejects any attempt to invoke, implement or rely on the MoU as a legal basis for maritime claims

affecting the sovereign rights or maritime entitlements of Greece or any other third state; considers it a very worrying development that undermines regional stability and good relations in the eastern Mediterranean;

2. Strongly deplores the decision of Libya's eastern-based House of Representatives of 20 October 2026 to ratify the MoU; stresses that any subsequent domestic legislative approval or ratification cannot remedy the MoU's incompatibility with international law, validate maritime claims undermining the rights of third states or render it opposable to Greece or other affected states;

3. Fully endorses the European Council conclusions of December 2019 and June 2025, the joint statement of the Presidents of the European Council and of the Commission of 20 October 2026 and the statement by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, on behalf of the EU, of 21 October 2026; welcomes the unity shown by all 27 Member States and the joint statement of 26 October 2026 by the EU, Greece and Cyprus with Egypt, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates;

4. Reiterates its call on Türkiye to sign and ratify UNCLOS, which forms an integral part of the EU *acquis*, and to abide fully by its provisions and customary international law in good faith; reiterates its call on the Libyan authorities to ratify UNCLOS;

5. Expresses its full and unequivocal solidarity with Greece and Cyprus in defending their sovereignty and sovereign rights in accordance with international law; underlines that respect for the rights of EU Member States is an essential requirement in the EU's relations with third countries; emphasises that any violation of a Member State's sovereign rights is a matter of concern to the EU as a whole and calls for a decisive and united response at EU level to actions that undermine those rights;

6. Reaffirms the maritime entitlements of the Greek islands, including Crete and the Dodecanese, in accordance with Article 121 UNCLOS; rejects the treatment of these islands as though they lacked relevant coasts or maritime entitlements; stresses that the delimitation of overlapping entitlements must comply with international law and cannot be imposed by an agreement between other states;

7. Deplores Türkiye's ongoing violations of the sovereign rights of Greece and the Republic of Cyprus, including through the political instrumentalisation of NAVTEX (navigational telex), increased territorial water incursions, illegal fishing, the rejection of Greece's

maritime spatial planning under Directive 2014/89/EU[2], and competing Turkish spatial plans and marine parks that encroach on Greek jurisdiction; calls on Türkiye to refrain from any unilateral action in the Aegean Sea and the eastern Mediterranean that runs contrary to international law and the sovereign rights of Member States, including exploration or drilling activities, NAVTEX notices or other measures in maritime areas over which EU Member States exercise sovereign rights, and to refrain from any interference with the laying of cables or the implementation of the Great Sea Interconnector and other Projects of Common Interest; condemns Türkiye's declaration, on 15 August 2026, of the establishment of marine environmental parks beyond its territorial waters as a means of advancing its unilateral 'Blue Homeland' (*Mavi Vatan*) claims in the Aegean Sea and the eastern Mediterranean; stresses that such actions cannot establish maritime jurisdiction or sovereign rights, nor prejudice the rights of other states, in violation of international law and the law of the sea;

8. Deeply regrets that Türkiye maintains a formal *casus belli* against Greece, should Greece exercise its lawful right under Article 3 UNCLOS to extend its territorial waters to 12 nautical miles; deplores Türkiye's continued violations of the sovereignty and sovereign rights of Greece and the Republic of Cyprus;

9. Recalls the principle reflected in Article 34 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties; emphasises that Türkiye and Libya cannot, through a bilateral arrangement, prejudice Greece's rights or impose maritime boundaries on the country without its consent;

10. Calls on Türkiye and the relevant Libyan authorities to rescind the MoU and the related hydrocarbons arrangements and refrain from implementing them; urges both countries to abandon any claims or measures based thereon that infringe the sovereign rights of EU Member States;

11. Calls on Türkiye and the relevant Libyan authorities to refrain from issuing or implementing any exploration or exploitation licences, seismic survey permits, drilling authorisations or other concessions on the basis of the MoU in maritime areas overlapping with the maritime entitlements of Greece or other third states; calls for the EU to respond to any such activities through coordinated diplomatic and political action;

12. Expresses concern over the signature of and references to the memoranda of understanding between Türkiye and Libya on

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[2] Directive 2014/89/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 July 2014 establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning (OJ L 257, 28.8.2014, p. 135, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2014/89/oj).

comprehensive security and military cooperation;

13. Calls on the Council, the Commission and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) to translate the EU's stated position into coordinated diplomatic action, including through joint démarches to Türkiye and the relevant Libyan authorities and consistent representation of the EU position at the UN and in other international bodies; calls on the VP/HR and the Member States to take account of the continued presence of Russian military personnel and assets in Libya in their engagement with all Libyan actors;

14. Urges the Commission and the European External Action Service to ensure that EU agreements, programmes, financing decisions and official representations neither recognise nor facilitate the implementation of the MoU's unlawful maritime claims; calls on the Commission to take all necessary steps to safeguard critical energy and connectivity infrastructure of European interest in the eastern Mediterranean, including the Great Sea Interconnector, especially given the importance of such infrastructure for European energy security and resilience;

15. Calls on the Commission to review EU financial cooperation with Türkiye and Libya to ensure that no EU funds support activities that implement the MoU in violation of Member States' sovereign rights; calls for the suspension or redirection of funding that supports such activities, in accordance with the applicable legal frameworks, while safeguarding humanitarian assistance and support that benefits civilian populations;

16. Calls for a more ambitious and cohesive European maritime security posture, commensurate with the EU's economic strength, building on the operational example of EUNAVFOR ASPIDES to safeguard critical subsea infrastructure, energy corridors and freedom of navigation in the eastern Mediterranean and neighbouring seas;

17. Reaffirms the EU's full solidarity with Greece and the Republic of Cyprus in the defence of their sovereignty and sovereign rights; recalls that, under Article 42(7) of the Treaty on European Union, if a Member State is the victim of armed aggression on its territory, the other Member States have an obligation of aid and assistance towards it, using all means in their power; reiterates its call on the Council and the VP/HR to pursue the operationalisation of that clause, including for maritime scenarios, and to make it clear that any such action will have specific consequences for the EU's cooperative relations with both countries;

18. Calls on the Council to consider targeted restrictive measures, in accordance with EU law, against persons or entities responsible for activities implementing the MoU that violate the sovereign rights of

Member States, should such activities occur or persist;

19. Calls for the protection of the interests of the EU and its Member States in the eastern Mediterranean, and the adoption of appropriate diplomatic measures to prevent the undermining of regional stability and international law by actions based on the so-called MoU;

20. Stresses that progress in EU-Türkiye relations must be accompanied by tangible respect for international law, good neighbourly relations and the sovereign rights of all Member States;

21. Supports Greece’s efforts to pursue maritime delimitation with Libya through negotiations in good faith and in accordance with international law; encourages the peaceful settlement of maritime disputes, including recourse to international judicial or arbitral mechanisms on an appropriate jurisdictional basis;

22. Reaffirms its support for Libya’s sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and institutional reunification, and for the UN-facilitated political process; stresses that respect for neighbouring states’ rights must form an integral part of Libya’s regional engagement; insists that respect for international law, including UNCLOS, the sovereign rights of Member States and good neighbourly relations be an explicit condition in all future agreements between the EU and Libya;

23. Reiterates its steadfast support for Libya and UNSMIL in advancing national reconciliation, institutional unity and a transparent, inclusive dialogue anchored in Libyan ownership and consensus; welcomes, in this sense, the new political roadmap presented by the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Libya, Hanna Tetteh, to the UN Security Council on 21 August 2025;

24. Requests that the VP/HR and the Commission report to Parliament within three months on the diplomatic steps taken, the safeguards concerning EU funding and any further measures proposed to protect the sovereign rights of Greece, Cyprus and other Member States;

25. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the European Council, the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Government and Grand National Assembly of Türkiye, the relevant Libyan authorities and the Secretary-General of the United Nations.