



# General Assembly

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## Seventy-fourth session

Agenda item 4

### Election of the President of the General Assembly

#### **Letter dated 2 June 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Greece to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

I have the honour to enclose herewith a letter, dated 1 June 2020, addressed to the President of the General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session, regarding the election of the President of the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session (see annex).

I would be grateful if you could circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly.

*(Signed)* Maria **Theofili**  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative



## **Annex to the letter dated 2 June 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Greece to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

I am writing to you with reference to the upcoming election of the President of the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session, to which my country attaches great importance, as it constitutes the only universal organ of the United Nations.

In this regard, we would like to thank you for the exceptional efforts you have undertaken regarding the election of the President of the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session under the special circumstances that we are all going through because of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

My country, which is a member of the Western European and Others Group, despite its serious concerns related to policies pursued by Volkan Bozkır's country of origin, did not submit any reservations regarding his candidature, in the context of the informal consultations that took place within the said group last February. And this, although the country that nominated him has a long history of violations of international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

However, since then, Turkey's provocative and aggressive actions against my country have reached unprecedented levels.

More precisely, in late February-early March, Turkey, in a consistent and organized manner, actively supported civilians, present on its territory, to illegally cross the border into Greece and Europe, thus grossly instrumentalizing the plight of people seeking a better future. In parallel, it engaged in a disinformation campaign, spreading fake news with the explicit aim of denigrating the image of my country.

Since then, Turkey has also engaged in a series of provocative actions not seen before, resulting in the violation of Greek airspace and territorial waters by Turkish air force and navy ships, respectively, on a daily basis. In this context, Turkish fighter jets have even overflown Greek territory on more than 300 occasions in the space of just five months.

The apex of this conduct by Turkey is the publication in the *Official Gazette*, on 30 May 2020, of a number of hydrocarbon exploration licence applications by the State-owned Turkish Petroleum Corporation, in areas falling within the Greek continental shelf in the Eastern Mediterranean, more specifically, south and south-east of the island of Rhodes, south of the islands of Karpathos and Kassos and south-east of the island of Crete. This licence applications procedure is illegal and confirms Turkey's aims to usurp Greece's *ipso facto* and *ab initio* sovereign rights over its continental shelf by attempting to deprive Greek islands of their maritime zones, in blatant violation of international law. I take this opportunity to stress that the above-mentioned illegal applications procedure has no legal consequences on the sovereign rights of Greece and cannot be invoked against it.

My country has persistently sought to reduce tensions and build a better climate in bilateral relations with all its neighbours. In this vein, it wishes to build a constructive dialogue with Turkey and maintain all channels of communication open. However, Turkey, by taking a series of aggressive actions, contradicts by deeds its verbal assurances of readiness for dialogue and good-neighbourly relations.

In light of the above and in response to your letter, dated 27 May 2020, I wish to inform you that my country is not in a position to proceed with the election of the next President of the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session by silence procedure. Therefore, we request that his election be held by secret ballot.

Allow me, at this point, to stress that the aforementioned positions are not related to Mr. Bozkır personally.

We trust that the next President of the General Assembly will, first and foremost, abide by the principles of neutrality and transparency; will meticulously demand respect for international law by all international actors; and will represent solely the office to which he is elected, in strict adherence to the Charter, the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and the resolutions adopted by all United Nations organs.

We would be grateful if you could circulate the present letter as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 4 “Election of the President of the General Assembly”.

*(Signed)* Maria **Theofili**  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative

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