

GREEK AND EUROPEAN UNION SCIENTIFIC AND ECOLOGICAL PROGRAMS CONCERNING THE IMIA ISLETS

Since 1984, Greece has engaged in ecological research activities through both national and European Community action programs and through the initiative of ecological organizations.

THE CORINE PROGRAMME

The Imia islets have been declared a national and European Community protected wildlife area belonging to the area "Arki and Lipsi islands," which has been registered with the Community's environmental protection programme CORINE. Within the framework of the CORINE program, the environmentally most significant areas of each member state are selected and entered into a data bank. The "Arki and Lipsi islands" area comprises of 42 islets, including Imia, and of a total area of 30 square kilometres. It should be noted that a research program concerning the area was begun in 1984 within the framework of the Community and a preliminary study was completed in 1986. The research program was continued in 1989 by the National Technical University of Athens and was completed in 1994.

E.C. DIRECTIVE 92/43 AND THE NATURA 2000 NETWORK

In the framework of EC Directive 92/43 and the Community's NATURA 2000 program, roughly 296 areas have been registered by the National Centre for Wildlife and Marine Wildlife areas. Among them is the area "Lipsi, Arki, Agathonisi and islets" (registration number A42100010), in which the Imia rocky islets are included. These 296 regions are automatically placed under national and future European Community environmental protection programs.

ACTIVITIES OF THE GREEK ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

The Imia islets have been studied by the Greek ornithological society, which sent a team of researchers to Imia in April and June 1995 for this purpose.

ACTIVITIES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PATRAS

Since 1988, the Biology Department of the University of Patras in Greece has engaged in studies of the flora of the islands of the Eastern Aegean, with funding from the national programme PENED. In this context, personnel from the University of Patras have repeatedly visited the area, including the Imia islets, for the purpose of studying its flora.

It must be noted that, since 1984, while these activities have been taking place, Turkey never raised the slightest objection nor did she create any problem with respect to the above, as she had never officially challenged Greek sovereignty over the Imia rocky islets or any other part of Greek territory. It was only during the latest crisis that, through official diplomatic channels and by specific actions, Turkey laid claim to Greek sovereign territory.