



PRESS RELEASE

A 33 year fight for Akamas

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22 March 1986: A group of conservationists visits Akamas Peninsula, one of the few remaining natural areas of Cyprus left untouched by uncontrolled and widespread touristic development. During this visit, the group, later christened "Friends of Akamas", call on the State to designate Akamas Peninsula as protected. 33 years later, the same group, together with seven other organizations, continue to demand the self-evident for Akamas.

Over the last 3 decades, the importance of the Akamas Peninsula for nature and local communities has been recognized through laws and decrees, while a whole series of conservation and management plans have been prepared for the area. Despite these, a brief visit to Akamas is enough for one to realize that the area not only is it not properly managed, but there are many illegalities and no measures have been taken to rectify these. Illegal restaurants and refreshment stalls and other illegal constructions and arbitrary interventions, the majority of which have been there for years, continue to exist.

The implementation of the Sustainable Development Plan of the Akamas National Forest Park, which was approved by the Ministerial Council in 2018, requires the removal of all these illegalities before the Plan is implemented. This has simply not happened. The only actions that have been undertaken so far are road works in an area where no building work and no alteration of the natural environment is permitted (the road between Aphrodite Baths and Fontana Amoroza). The plan, labelled "very ambitious" by the Government, contains numerous problematic provisions that need to be seriously addressed. Plan provisions such as the creation of 14 'nodes' providing facilities and the improvement of the area's road network are worrisome, let alone the fact that the Plan has not undergone an Appropriate Assessment nor a Strategic Environmental Impact Study, both procedures required by law.

And so, we wonder: what will the media be writing about Akamas Peninsula 33 years from today? Will the illegalities have been rectified, as promised by the authorities? Will there ever be effective management, protection and monitoring of Akamas or will everything be just on paper still?

The Friends of Akamas, the Federation of Environmental Organizations, the Cyprus Nature Conservation Foundation - Terra Cypria, BirdLife Cyprus, Friends of the Earth, the Cyprus Ecological Movement, the Cyprus Natural Coastline Initiative and the Environmental Research Center – Enalia Physis call on all relevant departments to move from words to action. To take immediate action on all illegalities and promote the proper management of the area by

implementing the Management Plans for the Natura 2000 sites of the Akamas Peninsula. Only then will Akamas be truly protected for the sake of its nature and its communities.

The photographs that follow show illegalities that continue to exist in the area:



Illegal restaurant at South Lara



Illegal refreshment stall at South Lara



Illegal off-road driving at Lara



Illegal use of beach umbrellas in North Lara



Illegal beach intervention at Asprokremmos



Illegal refreshment stall at Aspros Potamos



Illegal beach alteration at Kafizis beach



Illegal restaurant at Aspros Potamos



Uncontrolled grazing at Akamas

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