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NAVIGATION IN THE STRAITS

Communication by the Government of Turkey

The attached Verbal Note addressed to the Government of Greece on 4 July 1994 by the Government of Turkey is circulated pursuant to the request of the Embassy of Turkey.

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**EMBASSY OF THE
REPUBLIC OF TURKEY**

No: 486/223

129/2

The Embassy of the Republic of Turkey presents its compliments to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and with reference to the Latter's Note No: 2551 of 29th June 1994 has the honour to inform the Ministry of the following:

The Council of Ministers by its decision of 21st June 1994 corrected some material errors of minor importance in the Maritime Traffic Regulations for the Turkish Straits and the Marmara Region (hereinafter to be referred as the Regulations) which was promulgated in the Turkish Official Gazette on 11th January 1994. Consequently, the above-mentioned decision by the Council of Ministers does in no way imply a revision of or amendment to the Regulations in question.

At its 63rd session in London in May 1994 the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) adopted a set of functional rules and recommendations with respect to vessels with limited maneuvering capability together with the traffic separation schemes established for the Turkish Straits.

Whereas the Regulations which entered into force on 1st July 1994 contains comprehensive arrangements applicable to all vessels at all times navigating in the Turkish Straits.

It is to be noted that the Regulations in force differ in their scope and extent from the specific rules and recommendations adopted by the MSC.

The dispositions of the Regulations are in full conformity with the relevant IMO rules and recommendations. Therefore, no revision of the Regulations is required.

**THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
ATHENS**

Furthermore, there is no discrepancy or inconsistency between the Regulations and the Montreux Convention. Due care was taken for the Regulations not to contradict the Montreux Convention and the principle of freedom of navigation is kept intact. To cite but an example, while the Turkish vessels 150 metres or more in length passing through the Straits are obliged to take a pilot for the safety of navigation, life, property and the environment, foreign vessels are strongly advised to do so.

The Regulations in no way infringe the stipulations of the Montreux Convention and it has never been the intention. The Regulations introduced are nothing more than a compilation of developments achieved in international law with the BASEL, COLREG, SOLAS and MARPOL Conventions, of the rules and recommendations contained in the regulations pertaining to the Ports of Istanbul and Canakkale, of all established practices which already set a precedent in one single text with a view to ensuring navigation safety in the region of Turkish Straits. Turkey has the authority to introduce arrangements in this respect and is determined to exercise its authority.

The Regulations which entered into force on 1st July 1994 will serve the interests of world shipping by effectively regulating the maritime traffic in the Turkish Straits. At the same time, the Regulations will significantly lessen the risk of accidents in the Straits and thus contribute to the safety of the people of the region as well as the city of Istanbul.

The Government of Turkey strongly recommends to all vessels that will navigate in the Turkish Straits to strictly observe the provisions of the Regulations.

The Embassy of the Republic of Turkey avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs the assurances of its highest consideration.

Athens, 4th July 1994