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Prohibition of new RES plants under "roadless mountains" initiative

Rokas Law Firm | Energy & Natural Resources - Greece



MARIA
IOANNOU

On 31 December 2021, the Ministry of Environment and Energy issued a decision⁽¹⁾ that introduces a general prohibition of any road works and – more generally – human intervention on the pristine natural environment of the mountainous region of Lefka Ori on the island of Crete, as specified by the relevant published coordinates. This area largely coincides with two Natura 2000 areas under the code numbers GR4340014 and GR4340008, as well as the national park of Samaria. The decision shall apply for two years.

The decision is expected to affect, among other things, the licensing procedures and the development of any new renewable energy source (RES) plants in the relevant area. However, the maintenance of already installed RES plants that are duly permitted should not be affected by the decision. Interventions for national defence purposes are also not affected, along with measures to prevent natural disasters and for the restoration of the natural environment.

According to the Ministry's press announcement, this policy initiative is being adopted for the protection of the integrity of the natural habitats and fauna and flora of specific, environmentally significant mountainous regions, especially in light of the upcoming designation of land uses in such environmentally sensitive areas. This policy shall extend, for now, to a total of six mountainous regions in Greece, denoted under the newly introduced term "roadless mountains" – namely, mountainous regions in Crete, Samothrace, Ilpeiros, Grevena, the Peloponnese and Thessaly.

For further information on this topic please contact [Maria Ioannou](mailto:m.ioannou@rokas.com) at Rokas Law Firm by telephone (+30 210 361 6816) or email (m.ioannou@rokas.com). The Rokas Law Firm website can be accessed at www.rokas.com.

Endnotes

(1) ΥΠΕΝ/ΔΔΦΠΒ/119000/3593 (ΟJ D' 1007/31 December 2021).