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Republic of Cyprus

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE
RURAL DEVELOPMNENT AND ENVIRONMENT

DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES
AND MARINE RESEARCH
CYPRUS

**SUB-REGIONAL MARINE OIL POLLUTION CONTINGENCY PLAN BETWEEN CYPRUS, GREECE, AND ISRAEL**

Tabletop Exercise on ‘‘Communications’’ of the Joint Spill Response Exercise CYPEX2026

SCP CGI/JSRE/TTX3/1
25 September 2026

Original: English

Date: 22 September 2026, 09:45 – 13.45 CEST

# REPORT ON THE CYPEX2026 TABLETOP EXERCISE ON COMMUNICATIONS



Team Meetings Photo

**TITLE:** Tabletop Exercise (TTX) on ‘‘Communications’’ of the Joint Oil Spill Response Exercise CYPEX2026

**DATE/ LOCATION**
September 22nd 2026, 9:45CEST online via Microsoft Teams meeting

## Introduction

1. The tabletop exercise TTX serves as a critical preparatory phase for the full-scale CypEx 2026, scheduled in 11th November 2026 at Larnaca, Cyprus.

2. The TTX is being conducted, pursuant to the Implementation Agreement of the Sub-Regional Contingency Plan for Marine Oil Pollution between the Government of the Republic of Cyprus, the Government of the Hellenic Republic, and the Government of the State of Israel (SCP CGI) and to the decision taken among the NOAs of CGI at the Sixth Meeting for the implementation of the SCP CGI convened in Piraeus, Greece (Agenda item 9, par 38.c)

3. The TTX was hosted by the Department of Fisheries and Marine Research (DFMR) - CYPRUS and was conducted online via Microsoft Teams Meeting.

4. The principal objective of the TTX to rigorously test and evaluate the communication protocols and channels among all stakeholders involved in responding to an oil spill incident with the view of preparing for the CYPEX 2026. The TTX exercise intends to utilize real communication routes, such as official email systems and other established communication platforms, to simulate a realistic and practical response environment.

5. The TTX was attended by representatives from Cyprus, Greece, Israel, REMPEC and EMSA and was co-ordinated by Mr Stefanos Skarvellis of Green Bow Maritime Ltd. The complete list of participants is given in the Annex to the present Report.

## Agenda Item 1: Opening of the Meeting

6. The TTX opened at 09.45 hours on Tuesday 22nd September, by the Chairperson and Head of the Cyprus delegation, Stavros Ioannides, Senior Officer of DFMR, who welcomed the participants. Mr. Ioannides expressed his warm appreciation to all participants and highlighted the importance of the TTX as a critical preparatory phase for the full-scale CypEx 2026. He took the opportunity to thank REMPEC as well as all contracting parties for their support throughout the process of preparation leading to the Cypex2006.

7. The representative of REMPEC, Ms. Elisa Giangrasso, emphasized the importance of the TTX as a significant step in the preparation of the forthcoming exercise as well as REMPEC's critical role in facilitating the Contracting parties.

8. The Heads of the Cypriot, Israeli and Greek delegations, respectively, introduced the members of their delegations.

9. Mr. Skarvelis, emphasized the importance of communication protocols and explained the processes of the communication system via the exchange of reports and emails as well as the importance of discussing the issue of developing a common platform for Big Data sharing that was primarily shared by Israel.

**Agenda Item 2: Scenario execution and comments**

10. **Preparatory discussion - Identification of needs prior to the exercise**

Cyprus has presented the basic scenario of the CYPEX 2026 that will take place at Cyprus on the 11th of November 2025 based on which certain Communications should take place for the mobilization of assets under the SCP CGI. The TTX scenario is based on oil spill incident at sea, of 1.000 mt of HFO 380cSt initial release and 90 mt / hour continuous flow from MT BLACKWATERS with forecasted zones /areas and sensitive resources affected being the Energy Center of Cyprus, Vassiliko Port the Naval Base Evangelos Florakis and fish farms

11. **Introduction and Briefing: Welcome participants, outline the objectives, goals, and key takeaways of the exercise. Explain the use of real communication routes.**

An initial description of the content of each step along with the required actions by the participants has been presented, connecting it with specific documents and procedures either with REMPEC or the Regional Contingency Plan.

12. **Step 1: Evaluation – Determination of Size and Severity & Unified Command Structure (Internal Cyprus process)**

Presentation of Cyprus internal procedures following an incident up to the activation of the National Contingency Plan and the ICS/IMT procedures that are documented in order to set first-response priorities, mobilisation of assets and distribution of information to all relevant Cyprus Administrations.

13. **Step 2: JRCC Coordination & Update (internal Cyprus action)**
Cyprus has described the internal procedures for communicating the decisions contained in the IMT document addressing to the JRCC (amongst other Admins) the mobilisation of National and Regional Assets, that will be used for responding to the casualty.

14. **Step 3: Request for Regional Assistance and Sub-Regional Contingency Plan Activation**

Based on the preliminary reporting received from the site of the incident along with trajectory modelling, Cyprus has decided to initiate SCP CGI as well as the EMSA contracted vessel in the area.

The relevant updated Rempec Forms, POLWARN, POLINF, FOLFAC, as well as the forms requesting assistance from Greece and Israel (Annex 8 of SCP CGI) have been completed and sent to REMPEC, Greece and Israel simulation the formal communications that should take place during CypEx2026 and/or a real incident.

Another procedure has been followed through Cyprus Ministry of Shipping for the mobilisation of the EMSA vessel in the area.

15. **Step 3: Remarks**

a) Typing errors in the email addresses of some recipients initially prevented the delivery of emails containing the relevant forms. As a practical measure to minimise the risk of similar issues, it was suggested that Administrations operating within the Outlook email environment make use of the "Request a Delivery Receipt" and "Request a Read Receipt" options available under the Options menu before sending emails containing important forms or operational information. This would allow the sender to receive confirmation of successful delivery and, where applicable, notification that the email has been opened by the recipient.

b) REMPEC suggested the use of incremental numbering for successive POLWARN, POLINFO and POLFAC messages, even where the messages contain substantially the same information. This would facilitate the identification and chronological tracking of each communication and help avoid confusion between successive messages relating to the same incident.

16. **Step 4: Advanced Communication Infrastructure**

Acknowledgement receipts of REMPEC Forms from REMPEC, Greece and Israel have been sent to Cyprus, thus testing the communication infrastructure between REMPEC and the assisting Countries.

17. **Step 4: Remarks/ Issues identified and Follow-up Actions**

a) POLWARN acknowledgement procedure – Israel

Israel reported that it had received an email indicating that the acknowledgement procedures relating to the POLWARN message had not been received by REMPEC, although Ms. Elisa Giangrasso had verbally confirmed receipt. In this regard, it was noted that the solution proposed under **Step 3** could also be followed to address the issue and ensure confirmation of receipt through the established communication channels.

b) Additional assistance request – Cyprus

Cyprus opted to request additional equipment beyond the assets initially identified and agreed upon under the CypEx 2026 scenario. The Assisting Countries responded by partially approving the requested assets, thereby providing an opportunity to test and verify the assistance-request and approval procedures established under the SCP CGI.

c) Confirmation of receipt of assets

The possibility of introducing an additional Reply Form from Cyprus to the Assisting Countries, confirming receipt of the assets to be provided, was discussed. It was agreed that a simple email reply would be used for this purpose, both to confirm receipt and to avoid unnecessarily increasing the administrative burden associated with the assistance procedure.

d) Daily cost of assets

The issue of the daily cost of assets to be provided to the Requesting Party was also raised. It was agreed that this matter should be further discussed following the completion of CypEx 2026, with a view to establishing a clear and commonly understood framework for the costs applicable to each type of asset identified in the SCP CGI. For the Contracting Parties' consideration, Article 13 of the Prevention and Emergency Protocol and Part 6 of the SCP CGI on Administration and Logistics, provide relevant principles in this regard

e) Big Data Sharing Platform

The need for a suitable Big Data Sharing Platform was discussed, with the view that such a platform is likely to become necessary in the near future. The Parties agreed that an appropriate procedural framework governing its use, including the sharing, access and handling of information, should be further discussed and established.

For the purposes of CypEx 2026, it was proposed that the Requesting Country initiate the procedure through a commercial platform/provider, using one of its designated administrative email accounts, and invite the Assisting Countries through the email addresses of their respective National Representatives. This approach was considered appropriate, particularly as some of the information and data to be shared during the exercise may be of a sensitive or restricted nature.

Cyprus will determine, in the coming days, the procedure and platform to be used for the purposes of CypEx 2026 and will subsequently inform REMPEC and the Assisting Countries accordingly, allowing the agreed arrangement to be tested during the exercise.

18. **Step 5: Reporting and Documentation**

During the final step of the TTX, and following confirmation that the established communication procedures had been successfully tested, the issue of ensuring the continuous provision of updates and uninterrupted flow of information among all involved Parties was discussed.

In this context, Cyprus proposed that the Internal Management Team (IMT) Form, used by Cyprus to regularly update priorities, response strategies and the allocation of response assets in the field, could be shared with the other involved Parties. The use of such a form would facilitate a common understanding of the evolving situation and support the coordination of response actions among the Parties.

Cyprus also proposed that the availability and use of Experts to support and coordinate the actions under the SCP CGI should be ensured, particularly during an actual incident requiring the activation of the Plan. In this regard, it was noted that the relevant Expert Form, as updated by REMPEC and previously incorporated into the approved SCP CGI, should be used for this purpose.

19. **Outcome**

a) SCP CGI and REMPEC forms and communication procedures have been tested and confirmed.
b) During the TTX Exercise the following subjects have been raised for further discussions and adoption:
c) Big-Data sharing platform establishment and management procedures by the requesting Country
d) Pricing / Costing of the assets included in the SCP CGI
e) A daily SITREP form should be introduced and adopted in order to keep all participant Administration formally updated on strategies and actions.
f) Incremental numbering for successive POLWARN, POLINFO and POLFAC messages

20. **Action Items**

a) Cyprus:
   - Prepare a Report of the TTX Exercise
   - Make arrangements for Transportation of the participants and/or observers upon their arrival at Cyprus
   - Issue a final Timetable of the day of the exercise by reviewing with REMPEC Consultants the final Exercise scenario
   - Consider the request to set a Big-Data platform for sharing at least the satellite images received by EMSA and/or trajectory modelling.
b) Greece:
   - Send participants names, contact details and travel arrangements
c) Israel:
   - Set an alternative platform for sharing Big Data if not performed by Cyprus Administration
   - Send participants names, contract details and travel arrangements.

21. **Referenced documents**

a) Presentation of a power point summarising the mobilisation and response procedures

b) REMPEC updated forms POLWARN – FOLINF – POLFAC

c) SCP CGI annex 8 forms

d) Agenda of the tabletop exercise on communications

e) SCP SGI

22. **Debriefing and Conclusion**

Mr. Ioannides invited Mr. Skarvelis, representatives of the three Parties, REMPEC and EMSA to provide their final comments on the Tabletop Exercise (TTX).

Mr. Skarvelis reiterated that the TTX constituted a critical step in the preparation for the full-scale exercise CypEx 2026, scheduled to take place in November. He noted that the exercise provided an important opportunity to test and further improve the established communication protocols, with particular emphasis on ensuring an effective and coordinated flow of reporting and information exchange between the participating Parties in response to an oil pollution incident.

Mr. George Suciu highlighted the excellent communication and cooperation between Cyprus and EMSA on previous occasions when EMSA had been requested to participate in exercises conducted under the multinational exercise NEMESIS framework.

Mr. Stylianos Markoulakis likewise commended EMSA for its prompt response and the effectiveness of the communication channels established with Cyprus. He noted that these communication arrangements have been successfully tested not only during previous exercises but also in the context of actual marine pollution incidents.

Mr. Ioannides expressed his appreciation to EMSA and conveyed Cyprus's gratitude for, and recognition of, EMSA's continued commitment to providing assistance and support whenever requested. He expressed his confidence that the close cooperation with EMSA would continue unabated.

Mr. Ioannides also thanked REMPEC for its continued support in guiding and facilitating the practical implementation of the Sub-Regional Contingency Plan for Marine Oil Pollution between Cyprus, Greece and Israel (SCP CGI). He particularly acknowledged REMPEC's commitment to supporting the Partner Countries in the preparation and delivery of CypEx 2026, as well as in further strengthening and coordinating cooperation among them.

Mrs. Elisa Giangrasso thanked all participants and the hosting country, Cyprus, for the satisfactory conclusion of the TTX and reiterated REMPEC's continued commitment to supporting all Parties in the implementation of the SCP CGI and the preparation of CypEx 2026.

Mr. Fred Arzoine took the opportunity to kindly request that Cyprus consider inviting the Ministers responsible for the relevant competent authorities of Greece and Israel to attend CypEx 2026, noting that the exercise could be viewed as the practical culmination of the cooperation established under the SCP CGI. Mr. Ioannides responded that he would convey the request to the competent authorities in Cyprus and revert to the Parties accordingly.

The participants uniformly expressed the view that the TTX had been highly useful and had further strengthened cooperation, coordination and mutual understanding among Cyprus, Greece and Israel, as well as between the Partner Countries and REMPEC and EMSA. They expressed their appreciation to Cyprus for the successful organisation and hosting of the exercise.

The NOAs also took note of the communication gaps identified during the TTX, as highlighted by Mr. Skarvelis, and thanked him for his coordination of the exercise and guidance throughout the process. The NOAs reiterated their commitment to adequately

address the shortcomings identified during the testing of the communication channels and procedures, with a view to ensuring their effective application during an actual incident.

The Parties further committed to refining the established Communication Procedures, including through the development and utilisation of a Big Data Sharing Platform. They agreed that the lessons identified during the TTX, together with the improvements to be introduced as a result of the exercise, would contribute significantly to strengthening the overall preparedness, coordination and operational capability of the three Parties to respond effectively to an actual marine oil pollution incident.

23. **Date, place and duration of the next Exercise**

The communication protocols and information flow will be tested again on the 10th of November, 2026, the day before the On field CypEx 2026, with their physical presence at the JRCC, Larnaca.

The multinational Exercise NEMESIS 2026 Invitation will soon be sent to all participants

24. **Preparation and dissemination of the Report**

The participants and agree have instructed the Host Country and the Co-ordinator Mr. Stefanos Skarvelis to proceed with the preparation, dissemination of the final version of the TXT Report.

## Agenda Item 3: Closure of the Meeting

The Meeting closed by the Chairperson on Tuesday 22nd September2026, at 13.45 CEST.

**ANNEX I**

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

| Participant | Organization | Contracting Party | Email |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ms. Elisa Giangrasso | REMPEC | | egiangrasso@rempec.org |
| Mr. George Suciu | EMSA | | George.SUCIU@emsa.europa.eu |
| Mr. Stavros Ioannides | Department of Fisheries and Marine Research | CYPRUS | sioannides@dfmr.moa.gov.cy |
| Mr. Antonis Avgousti | Department of Fisheries and Marine Research | CYPRUS | AAvgousti@dfmr.moa.gov.cy |
| Mrs. Theodora Shamma | Department of Fisheries and Marine Research | CYPRUS | TShamma@dfmr.moa.gov.cy |
| Mr. Andreas Sourmelis | Department of Fisheries and Marine Research | CYPRUS | asourmelis@dfmr.moa.gov.cy |
| Mrs Theodora Ioannou | Department of Environment | CYPRUS | theioannou@environment.moa.gov.cy |
| Mr. Josif Alambritis | Department of Environment | CYPRUS | ialambritis@environment.moa.gov.cy |
| Mr. Rafail Strouthou | Deputy Ministry of Shipping | CYPRUS | RStrouthou@dms.gov.cy |
| Mr. Fred Arzoine | Marine Environment Protection Division | ISRAEL | Freda@sviva.gov.il |
| Ms. Danit Levi-Nizri | Marine Environment Protection Division | ISRAEL | danitl@sviva.gov.il |
| Mr. Stylianos Markoulakis | Marine Environment Protection Directorate | GREECE | smarkoul@hcg.gr |
| Mr. Panagiotis Maridakis | Marine Environment Protection Directorate | GREECE | maridakis.p@hcg.gr |
| Mr. Stefanos Skarvelis | Greenbow Maritime Ltd | | ss@greenbowmaritime.com |