

**Joint Declaration of the Ministers from the European Union Member States and  
South-Eastern Mediterranean Countries, on their Cooperation on the Safety of  
Offshore Oil and Gas Activities**

**Paphos, Cyprus  
12 - 13 December, 2012**

*In the presence of*

HE Mr Neoklis SYLIKIOTIS	Minister of Commerce, Industry & Tourism
HE Mr. Günther H. OETTINGER	European Commissioner for Energy

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*The participants of the CY Ministerial Meeting*

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The participants of the “Ministerial Meeting between the Member States of the European Union and Countries in the South-Eastern Mediterranean region in the context of energy cooperation” in Paphos, Cyprus on the 13th of December, 2012 agree to adopt the following joint declaration:

- a) **NOTING** that a vast majority of the oil and gas production in the South-Eastern Mediterranean takes place offshore;
- b) **RECOGNIZING** the important contribution of indigenous oil and gas production to the security of energy supply, the economic growth and the employment in the region;
- c) **STRESSING** that the large potential of natural gas and oil in the South-Eastern Mediterranean could contribute towards the enhancement of the security of energy supply of both the EU and the region;

- d) **TAKING INTO ACCOUNT** that, due to the fact that the Mediterranean is a semi-closed sea, in case a major accident occurs, this could have implications for surrounding areas and that therefore any contingency measures would require a regional dimension;
- e) **REAFFIRMING** the benefits of close cooperation among EU Member States and South-Eastern Mediterranean countries and coordination at the emergency preparedness and response in order to prevent potential negative effects of offshore oil and gas operations;
- f) **DEEPLY CONCERNED** by the possibility of a major accident and the resulting consequences such as the loss of human life as well as environmental, economic and social consequences, and in this regard **STRESSING** the vital interest in taking all possible measures to prevent a major accident;
- g) **BEARING IN MIND** the potential impact of offshore hydrocarbon exploration and production, which may take place in vulnerable and complex marine ecosystems, and in this regard **RECALLING** the value of transboundary environmental impact assessments;
- h) **NOTING** furthermore the collective and individual efforts of the industry concerned, as well as its record on safety and risk management; **UNDERLINING** the industry's responsibility for the safety of its operations;
- i) **MINDFUL** of the lack of global standards and the diversity of the applicable regulatory frameworks governing offshore activities;

Therefore we, the Participants of the Ministerial Meeting:

1. **UNDERLINE** that the likelihood of a major accident needs to be reduced as much as possible, and in case such an accident nonetheless occurs, its consequences need to be limited;
2. **UNDERLINE** the need for regular tests to respond effectively to accidents, through transboundary emergency mechanisms;
3. **CALL** for intensifying and stimulating regional and international partnerships and for carrying out, where appropriate, transboundary environmental impact assessments for such activities in order to ensure that those activities are guided by equally high levels of safety and protection as in the EU;
4. **WELCOME** in this regard the promotion of action in the context of the existing conventions and protocols including the Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution Resulting from Exploration and Exploitation of the Continental Shelf and the Seabed and its Subsoil (Offshore Protocol) and **CONSIDER** the principles of the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention);
5. **RECOGNISE** the proven benefits of close cooperation between the countries of the EU and the South-Eastern Mediterranean region and **ENCOURAGE** the promotion of best practices and the establishment of regional emergency response plans, making best use of existing international conventions;
6. **UNDERLINE** in this regard, the need for a continued comprehensive consideration of all aspects of offshore oil and gas operations, with a view to achieving the highest possible levels of safety of operation, precaution, environmental protection, maritime safety and emergency preparedness and response;

7. **CALL** on the offshore oil and gas industry to consistently make use of best practices and apply the highest safety and environmental protection standards in their operations both in EU and non-EU waters;
8. **RECALL** that the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) sets out the legal framework within which the activities in the oceans and seas should be carried out ;
9. **SUPPORT** the strengthening of regional preparedness and response capacity to deal with emergencies potentially affecting the citizens, economy or environment of the region;