

European Commission
Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection
FACTSHEET CYPRUS CRISIS



Facts & figures

- On 11 July an explosion of containers with explosives occurred at a naval base in Cyprus, killing 13 persons and injuring more than 60;
- The neighbouring Vasiliko Power Plant (VPP) was severely damaged and electricity production capacity in Cyprus was reduced to approximately 60 % of peak summer power requirements;
- Following a request from Cyprus, DG ECHO's Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC) deployed a 15 person team to assess the damage, provide advice on health and safety issues and facilitate coordination of incoming assistance;
- Several Member States offered generating capacity;
- A Greek offer of 70 MW capacity was accepted. The Commission will co-finance the transport of the assistance.

1. OVERVIEW OF THE SITUATION

On 11 July 2011 a major explosion within the “Evangelos Florakis” naval military base in Cyprus caused 13 deaths and injured more than 60 persons. The adjacent Vasiliko Power Station (VPP) suffered extensive damage which has caused the complete interruption of its operation. Vasiliko Power Station is the largest Power Station of the island, contributing some 50% to the power generation of the country. Both the assessment and restoration work at VPP require external assistance.

On 13 July the Cypriot Civil Protection authorities activated the EU Civil Protection Mechanism and requested the Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC) in the European Commission / DG ECHO to deploy a European Union Civil Protection Team on the ground.

Cyprus also requested mobile power generating capacity through the Mechanism to fill the gaps left by the damaged power station.

Several Member States (IT, DE, LU, PL, EL) offered such capacity. Cyprus accepted the Greek offer of 70 MW as best fitting their needs. The response of Greece was rapid. As of 28 July, a massive package of 129 heavy containers equal to 70 MW electricity power have been transported from Greece to Cyprus. The transportation of the containers from Limassol harbour to

Vasiliko has started, and delivery to the VPP site is expected to be completed by 30 July.

The Commission will co-finance the transport costs of the assistance with an amount of 1.000.000 €, 50% of which will be reimbursed according to the procedures of the Civil Protection Financial Instrument.

The key tasks of the 15-person EU civil protection team arriving on 16 July to Cyprus were to assess the situation of the damaged power plant and offer technical expertise and evaluation and facilitate the coordination of incoming assistance.

The multinational team was composed of experts from 8 countries (AT, BG, DE, HU, IT, MT, PL and UK) including a liaison officer from the Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC) in DG ECHO. It is the largest team ever deployed by the Mechanism within the EU.

The purpose of the assessment was to provide the Cypriot authorities with an initial situation overview regarding the impact of the blast on the VPP on site.

The field mission was supported by an aerial assessment with the use of micro Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), a cutting-edge technology used for the first time in an EU CP assessment mission.

2. Findings of the field assessments:

The EUCP team presented its findings to the Minister of the Interior on 27 July. The key issues their report deals with are the extent of structural damage to the buildings, the restoration of the fire protection system as well as safety and security measures.

In terms of **structural damage**, the findings are rough estimations based on three possible scenarios. The EUCP worst case scenario is that the damage amounts to approximately 700 million euro – this figure must be treated as provisional mainly because the EUCP team was not able to test the equipment that survived the blast. As to the timeframe for the restoration of operation, the severely damaged units 1-3 would require roughly 22-28 months, whereas other units where the damage is less severe could be back in operation earlier. It should be possible to have from Vasiliko a supply of 38 MW within 2 to 3 months. When Unit 5 is re-activated, this will supply the system with a further 150 MW – but for this to happen a minimum of 6 months will be required.

As regards **fire protection**, currently, the fire protection system is inoperative due to damage to the fire main at the entrance of some structures. All fire pumps are inoperative but appear undamaged. Most of the main fire system is likely to be repairable within a short period of time by isolating damaged parts, replacing fire pump fuel pipes and establishing a temporary supply to the auxiliary fire pump.

In relation to **safety and security**, investigation and measurements of radioactivity levels (α , β and γ radiation and neutrons) at the Evangelos Florakis naval base and the immediate surrounding area as well as in the area of the EAC (Electrical Authority) power station showed no increased level of radiation. Sampling of the soil and analysis did not indicate the presence of uranium. The monitoring of the air quality did not show any concentrations of nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide or particulate matter (PM10) higher than the respective limit levels. The team's security experts considered the risk of unexploded ordnance (UXO) as low.

Inside the buildings the exposure to dust is much higher and will increase, as soon as cleanup and restoration work starts. Personal protective equipment is highly recommended especially in the buildings. For those areas where access is possible and in order to avoid any future contamination due to cleanup and restoration work, chemicals should be removed.

Aerial assessment was performed using a remotely controlled air device "mini drone" (UAV) indoors and outdoors of the partially collapsed buildings of the Vasiliko Power Plant, in most of its inner parts that are inaccessible or too dangerous.

Assessment experts discussing details and next steps immediately after the landing of the UAV.



129 containers transported in four shipments in the period of 21 to 27 July were provided by Greece.

Upload of containers Piraeus harbour, Greece (Courtesy GSCP/DEH); EU CP Team together with Cypriot authorities facilitating the delivery of the Greek assistance at Limassol harbour, Cyprus.



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