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Answer given by Mr Kadis
on behalf of the European Commission
(31.7.2026)

The Commission is fully aware of and takes into serious consideration the adverse effects of possible accidents related to oil and gas exploitation in the Arctic, including in the Barents Sea. The Commission draws on capability assessments from international bodies, including the Arctic Council's Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response and Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment Working Groups, and the European Maritime Safety Agency's supplementary response mechanisms. Also, the Offshore Safety Directive¹ aims to reduce the likelihood of major offshore oil and gas accidents and limit the consequences for workers, the environment and coastal communities, by mandating a strict Report on Major Hazards and climate-specific risk testing. The Commission continues to engage with the European Economic Area, the European Free Trade Association States for the latter to incorporate this Directive.

In the event of a disaster that exceeds a State's national capacity, assistance can be requested through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM)². This enables the Emergency Response Cooperation Centre³ to mobilise support from Member States and UCPM Participating States, such as specialised equipment and response teams.

The Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) are updating the EU Arctic Policy to address the evolving situation in the region, considering the new geopolitical and geoeconomic context. The Commission remains committed to the approach set out in the 2021 Joint Communication on the EU Arctic Policy⁴. Addressing climate change and environmental degradation and supporting sustainable economic development remain valid objectives. The Commission has taken note of the different perspectives received during the public consultation and does not comment on media reports. The update of the EU Arctic Policy is ongoing, and no conclusions have been drawn at this point.

¹ Directive 2013/30/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 June 2013 on safety of offshore oil and gas operations and amending Directive 2004/35/EC Text with EEA relevance.

² https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/what/civil-protection/eu-civil-protection-mechanism_en.

³ https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/what/civil-protection/emergency-response-coordination-centre_en.

⁴ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52021JC0027>.