

Turkish navtex sparks fresh tension with Cyprus



Tensions are expected to heighten again in the Eastern Mediterranean after Turkey issued another navigational telex (Navtex) Wednesday reserving areas within Cyprus' exclusive economic zone (EEZ) for renewed exploratory activities by its Barbaros seismic vessel.

Ankara reserved an area spanning blocks 2, 9 and 13 of Cyprus' EEZ which it claims belong to the Turkish Cypriots in the occupied north of the island.

Cyprus has already licensed blocks 2 and 9 to South Korean energy company Kogas and Italy's Eni while France's Total was recently also given rights to these blocks.

Moreover, Paris has signaled its willingness to send frigates to the region to safeguard its interests. As yet no license has been awarded for Block 13.

Cyprus reacted to Ankara's move by issuing its own navtex calling on the Barbaros to refrain from illegal activity within its territorial waters.

Meanwhile, Turkish F-16 jets conducted two overflights Wednesday over the Aegean islet of Agathonisi and one over Farmakonisi.