



## NATO: Italy a Key Player in "Cold Response 2026" Amid Arctic Ice

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**Rome, January 19, 2026** – In March, Northern Europe will once again be the stage for one of the main winter exercises of the Atlantic Alliance: **Cold Response 26**, a multinational activity **led by Norway** that will take place **in Norway, Finland, and Sweden from March 9 to 20, 2026**.

According to the **Finnish Defence Forces**, the part in **Finland** – organized in the **Rovajärvi** area – will involve **about 7,500 soldiers** from **Finland, Sweden, the United States, France, Italy, and the United Kingdom**.

Overall, Norway indicates **about 25,000 participants from 14 nations**, with land and air activities concentrated mainly in northern Norway and northern Finland, and a maritime component off the Norwegian coast.

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## Logistics and Reinforcements: The Finnish "Test"

For Helsinki, Cold Response 26 is primarily a testing ground for a point often decisive in high-intensity scenarios: **the ability to bring in forces and supplies** and make them operational quickly, despite distance, climate, and infrastructural constraints. Colonel **Marko Kivelä**, commander of the **Jaeger Brigade** and director of the land maneuver for the Finnish army, emphasizes that the exercise is the most important of the year “particularly” for the **verification of logistical readiness**, with a significant number of troops to be transferred to Finland **by road and by air**.

The numbers released by the Finnish Defence Forces describe a “mixed” structure typical of NATO reinforcement exercises: about **4,000 allied military personnel** (including **2,000 Swedes**) and **3,500 Finns**, with a significant weight of **reservists** (about **2,000**). Among the most relevant elements, the presence in Finland of a **Swedish division headquarters** with subordinate units.

The declared objective is to **train the reinforcement of NATO's northern area** and cooperation in **challenging Arctic conditions**, improving the ability to respond to crises and threats and interoperability among allies.

## The Norwegian Framework: “Multi-Domain” Exercise and Joint Command

Oslo frames Cold Response 26 as a **multi-domain** exercise (land, sea, air, **cyber, and space**) and explains that, in addition to the “live” phase, a **large-scale simulation** is planned to increase complexity and realism and test decision-making processes at the strategic-operational level.

Norway also notes that the exercise is led by a **Norwegian-American headquarters** at **Reitan, near Bodø**, and is also designed to strengthen Nordic integration within the Alliance.

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## Focus on Italy: Presence Already Indicated, “Probable” Contribution with Alpini and Amphibious Component

In the Finnish communiqué, **Italy is explicitly listed** among the countries that will take part in the segment in Finland. However, **details on the national contribution** (units, numbers, and platforms) have not yet been made public by the authorities involved.

That said, **in line with previous editions** and recent large Arctic exercises led by Norway, it is **likely** that Rome will focus on a profile “consistent” with the operational environment:

- **Alpini** (for mobility and combat in mountainous/winter terrain): already in **Cold Response 22** Italy deployed a tactical group based on the **3rd Alpini Regiment (Brigata Taurinense)**.
- **Navy** and amphibious capability: also in **Cold Response 22** the Navy participated with **Nave Garibaldi** and **a company from the San Marco Marine Brigade**.
- A similar setup was also seen in **Nordic Response 2024** (Arctic exercise led by Norway), where Italy employed **Garibaldi, San Giorgio** with a landing force of **Marine Fusiliers**, and a contingent of **Alpini** as opposition forces.

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In summary: **Italy's participation in Cold Response 26 is already planned at the country level, and it is plausible** – as per recent practice – a contribution that combines **Alpini** and an asset from the **San Marco Marine Brigade** with support from the **Navy**, but the official details on “which units” and “with what numbers” will come with operational communications closer to the start of the exercise.