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Answer given by Mr Jørgensen
on behalf of the European Commission
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The issue of energy prices is of crucial importance for the competitiveness of European companies and for the wellbeing of citizens. The Commission has been assessing the root causes for the high electricity prices in Southeastern Europe and has engaged bilaterally with the respective Member States and the EU Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators.

The Commission is in continuous talks with Member States to support the implementation of adequate tools to respond to price spikes, without interfering with the proper functioning of the wholesale markets and the necessary investment incentives. These tools could for example mobilise non-fossil flexibility, reduce demand during critical hours, increase cross-border capacities, or protect consumers. The existing internal market rules allow Member States to introduce such measures, and the Commission is committed to support the Member States in designing such measures. The Commission also underlines the importance of using efficiently existing interconnections between Southeastern Europe and the rest of Europe and strongly supports the maximisation of use of existing interconnections.

As regards derogations under Article 16(9) of Regulation 2019/943¹, the Commission underlines that these have an exceptional character and may be granted only under strict conditions. They must be limited to what is necessary to ensure operational security and avoid discrimination between internal and cross-zonal zones. Furthermore, they shall be granted for one year to allow for a re-assessment of the identified security concerns. It is for the national regulatory authority to decide on such derogations.

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2019/943/oj/eng>.