

EN

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Answer given by Mr Jørgensen
on behalf of the European Commission
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The Commission acknowledges that geothermal energy plays an important role in the decarbonisation of the EU.

A Commission study¹ analysed the emissions of geothermal plants across Europe and concluded that extreme values are typically linked to specific locations and older plants. Most of the systems operate in closed loops, where no relevant emissions occur.

Geothermal projects are covered by EU environmental legislation. Under the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive², geothermal projects that may significantly affect the environment must undergo an environmental assessment before approval; it requires authorities to assess impacts on air quality, climate and human health.

To facilitate the environmental assessments, the Commission proposed in the European Grids Package³ that Member States set up single digital portals that ensure access to all relevant environmental and geological data for permit-granting procedures.

Furthermore, as set out in the AccelerateEU Communication⁴, the Commission will support Member States and stakeholders in gathering detailed geological data and create an EU-level database as well as showcase best practices for clean technologies.

The Commission also supports research and development in geothermal technologies to improve the environmental performance, such as the project for geothermal emissions control under Horizon 2020⁵ that also included consortium partners from Italy.

Geothermal projects reducing greenhouse gas emissions are also supported under the Innovation Fund and in general, in EU Funding calls, the inclusion of the ‘do no significant harm’ principle as an eligibility condition reinforces environmental compliance across all topics.

¹ <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/b100f4de-932e-11ea-aac4-01aa75ed71a1>.

² Directive 2011/92/EU : <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32011L0092>.

³ https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/infrastructure/european-grids_en.

⁴ https://energy.ec.europa.eu/strategy/accelerateeu-strengthen-eu-energy-resilience_en.

⁵ <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/818169>.