

**Question for written answer E-011897/2011
to the Commission**

Rule 117

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Subject: Floating offshore wind farms

Wind power is one of the options for consideration when developing energy policies. However, the best locations for installing land-based wind turbines have already been taken and huge economies of scale have led to the development of new, much more powerful turbines with blades so large that they can no longer be transported by land and for which it is increasingly difficult to find appropriate land-based locations for environmental reasons due to their visual impact and noise levels. This has led to increasing interest in the idea of strongly promoting offshore wind farms. Offshore winds are also stronger and more prevalent than inland ones.

However, the option of setting up offshore wind farms in deep sea areas, of which there is no shortage in the EU, far enough away from the coast to reduce the terrestrial impact of the new wind technologies to acceptable levels, is too expensive if fixed installations are used. This has led to the design of floating platforms on which to set up wind farms far from the coast.

The print media recently reported on a pilot floating offshore wind power project in Portugal, at Póvoa de Varzim.

1. Is the Commission aware of any other floating offshore wind farms in the EU? If so, how long have they been operating, what is their installed capacity and what results have they produced?
2. Has any studies been carried out into developments regarding these alternative sources of energy and their costs?
3. What possibilities are there that they could be eligible for Community funding?