

**Question for written answer E-000824/2017
to the Commission**

Rule 130

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Subject: Use of pre-warmed emergency cooling water in reactors

In its communication COM(2016) 177 the Commission emphasised that 'the Energy Union Strategy and the European Energy Security Strategy stressed that Member States need to apply the highest standards of safety, security, waste management and non-proliferation'. It also stated that nuclear safety was its utmost priority. Despite the emphasis on high levels of nuclear safety standards in the EU, investigations conducted by the broadcaster WDR and *Süddeutsche Zeitung* have revealed that considerably more reactors than previously thought may have safety defects. At least 18 reactors use pre-warmed emergency cooling water, and some have been doing so for more than 25 years. This is because many of the reactor pressure vessels are relatively old; the older the steel, the less able it is to withstand temperature differences. Experts also regard the uncertainty as to whether or not reactor pressure vessels can withstand emergency cooling water at the normal temperature as a warning sign. If the water is pre-heated, it is no longer fit for purpose in the event of an emergency. It is not known how many power plants use this method.

Is the Commission trying to find out which reactors use pre-warmed emergency cooling water, and exactly how much the water is pre-warmed in each case?

What benchmarks does the Commission use to check that safety standards are being applied and to identify breaches of the rules?

In the light of the alarming findings outlined above, what practical steps does the Commission intend to take to guarantee nuclear safety?