Question for written answer E-003567/2022
to the Commission
Rule 138
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Subject: Radioactive ash from coal power plants

While the debate around the radioactivity of nuclear power plants' waste products has raged in the media, the radioactivity of coal-fired power stations receives less attention. Their usage is even being suggested as a replacement for nuclear power.

Studies show that ash from coal power plants contains significant quantities of arsenic, lead, thallium, mercury, uranium and thorium[1].

To generate the same amount of electricity, a coal power plant gives off at least ten times more radiation than a nuclear power plant.

The fact that coal power plants are radioactive has been established not only on the basis of scientific data, but also because some companies have specialised in salvaging uranium from the smoke the plants give off in order to resell it to the nuclear power industry[2].

With this in mind, does the Commission take these respective degrees of radioactivity into account when deciding between coal and nuclear power? If so, what steps have been taken or are anticipated to protect EU citizens?

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1 D. Grenêche, 'Déchets radioactifs, la vérité des faits et l'exactitude des chiffres', *Revue nationale du nucléaire*, 2019.
2 A. Gabbard, 'Coal Combustion: Nuclear Resource or Danger?', *Oak Ridge National Laboratory Review*, 1993.