

NEPTUN DEEP: A EUROPEAN CLIMATE THREAT

Fossil fuel companies OMV Petrom and Romgaz are planning Europe's biggest fossil gas extraction project in Romania that will turbo-charge extreme weather events and obstruct the EU's carbon neutrality target.

As Romania hosts the European Gas Conference this month, Greenpeace is shining a spotlight on the EU's biggest proposed fossil gas drilling project. Operated by the fossil fuel company OMV Petrom in the Romanian Black Sea, Neptun Deep will impact local biodiversity, the global climate, increase extreme weather events and lock the EU into an outdated, destructive energy system that harms our wellbeing and our future. Neptun Deep -and all fossil fuel projects- must be stopped. Greenpeace is calling on the EU and national governments to ban all new fossil fuel infrastructure projects.

Neptun Deep is a threat to present and future generations

According to an [estimate prepared for Greenpeace Romania](#), the project could produce more than 200 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions over 20 years¹, making this project a threat to the EU's carbon neutrality target².

Apart from missing a political target, turbo-charging the climate crisis with such a project also means [more frequent and intense extreme weather events](#). An [expert analysis](#) by Prof. Dr. Wim Thiery from Vrije Universiteit Brussel for Greenpeace Romania assesses that thousands of people worldwide could die prematurely before the end of the century due to extreme temperatures caused by the total greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuel company OMV Petrom's Neptun Deep project.³

¹ [Carbon footprint of the Neptune Deep project: between dream and reality](#) (in Romanian)

² In 2024, Greenpeace CEE and Fridays for Future Austria [filed a complaint with the OECD](#) against the Austrian oil and gas company OMV, alleging that the expansion of fossil gas projects is incompatible with the OECD Guidelines for Responsible Business.

³ To estimate the number of temperature-related premature deaths that could be caused by Neptun Deep, Prof. Dr. Wim Thiery, Associate Professor at the Department of Water and Climate Vrije Universiteit Brussels, used the [Mortality Cost of Carbon](#) method developed by US researcher R. Daniel Bressler to estimate the number of temperature-related excess deaths which could take place globally until the year 2100, caused by present day carbon emissions. The emissions scenario used for this analysis assumes an increase of average global temperatures by 4.1 °C by 2100. Carbon mortality estimates are reliant on assumptions about emissions, climate dynamics and human responses to future climates. Every metric ton of carbon emitted today will contribute to heating our planet and is therefore set to contribute to impacts into the future. The link between fossil fuels and the climate crisis is well established, as is the relationship between human-caused climate change and an increase in extreme weather events. It is not possible to project with absolute certainty how our climate will change or the impacts it will have. Thus, the estimates presented here are reliant on many assumptions and are subject to large uncertainties. This research is intended only to illustrate the extent to which contemporary emissions may lead to future climate change impacts.

It puts the possible death toll until 2100 at 46,000, for temperature-related deaths only. While there are major uncertainties in any such estimate, it illustrates the huge risks OMV Petrom is taking by developing Neptun Deep, gambling with everyone's safety. The analysis also highlights that more than 1.2 million children born between 2010 and 2020 are expected to experience an additional heat wave in their lifetime as a result of emissions from Neptun Deep alone.

Neptun Deep is endangering the Black Sea's biodiversity

The Black Sea is an ecosystem with thousands of species, from dolphins, sea horses and stingray to algae and phytoplankton that play a vital role in regulating the climate and cleaning the air. Amid plastics, war, [oil spills](#), overfishing and pollution, this ecosystem is struggling to survive. The gas project will only put more pressure on the fragile [marine life](#).

The Black Sea will become a construction site for the next few years, with ten wells to be drilled around the extraction area (7,500 km²), 160 km of pipeline to the coast and dozens of ships transporting infrastructure materials, thus harming fish, marine mammals, and terrestrial species and their habitats. The projected gas pipeline will cross [two Natura 2000 sites](#). Both areas are important stopover sites for many bird species, including the endangered red-breasted geese and Dalmatian pelicans, of which there are just over 4,000 left in the world.

Neptun Deep is not needed for energy security

The “energy security of the EU” excuse is a fallacious argument massively used by fossil fuel companies to impose harmful projects that will lock Europe into gas dependency. The [Global Energy Monitor map](#) gives a good overview of the gas projects currently planned in Europe, including LNG terminals, pipelines and extraction sites.

With Neptun Deep, Romania wants to become the EU's biggest gas producer and a [first deal](#) has already been signed to supply Germany. Yet, several [analyses](#) show that the EU does not need expanded gas supplies to meet the declining demand.

To truly improve Romania's and the EU's energy security, governments should stop investing in new fossil gas infrastructure, and instead invest in reducing energy waste and speeding up the transition to renewables to become less dependent on the geopolitical tool that is fossil gas.

Neptun Deep is still not fully authorised

OMV Petrom is still awaiting construction permits, such as the permits on the engineering and design studies from the public administration ACROPO, and the final offshore construction permit from the Ministry of Energy. And several legal challenges launched by Greenpeace Romania are still ongoing:

Greenpeace Romania [legally challenged the environmental permit](#), and the next hearings regarding its suspension will be held on January 20 and January 30. One of

the suspension files used as an argument the worrying ecotoxicity studies that were used in drafting the Environmental Impact Assessment. These ecotoxicity studies were made public only after Greenpeace Romania [won a lawsuit](#) forcing Romanian institutions to provide information of public interest regarding the Neptun Deep project.

Last year, Greenpeace Romania also challenged the [Zonal Urban Plan](#) and the [Ministry of Culture Ordinance](#). Hearings are scheduled in February.

Neptun Deep is partly financed by public money

Although the EU Unit doesn't fund fossil fuel extraction projects anymore, it still funds supporting infrastructure such as pipelines distributing the fossil gas extracted in new projects. Thanks to this absolute nonsense, the Tuzla-Podisor pipeline which will transport fossil gas from Neptun Deep to three Romanian gas power plants, and perhaps to Romania's neighbours soon too, has already been granted public money ([€230 million](#)).

- The European Union injected €86 million in the Tuzla-Podisor pipeline through its [Modernisation Fund](#). “Fun fact”: the Modernisation Fund [money](#) comes from taxes on pollution. And is invested to fund future pollution.
- The [European Investment Bank](#) (EIB) loaned the Tuzla-Podisor pipeline developers €150 million in 2018.

Neptun Deep is in a conflict zone

Betting on the development of fossil gas to secure Europe's energy security is already a reckless gamble, given the well-documented climate, social, and environmental devastation caused by fossil fuels. But betting on the development of fossil gas, furthermore in the middle of a war zone, is outright irresponsibility. The question of energy security raised by the Russian war on Ukraine cannot be answered by a project that is itself exposed to massive risks as a result of this very war.

Yet this is exactly what's happening: the Black Sea is the theatre of Russia's war against Ukraine, and the region is littered with sea mines, which have been responsible for accidents in recent months. These mines and the geopolitical context pose a serious threat to this fossil gas project, but OMV Petrom didn't include them in its project documents. Greenpeace documented this situation in the report “[Black Sea: Shadow of the Mines](#)”.

Neptun Deep's operator OMV Petrom is already suspected of leaving platforms to rust in the Black Sea

A whistleblower contacted Greenpeace Romania in February 2023 with safety concerns: [photos and documents](#) reveal that at least one platform is in an advanced state of disrepair, with damaged support pillars, visible cracks, and extensive corroded surfaces, posing an imminent risk of major hazards in offshore operations.

Based on these observations, Greenpeace launched a court case in July to get an expert to inspect the platforms. In December 2024, Greenpeace Romania won the case after the Bucharest Court approved the request for an authorized technical expert to inspect one of the oil and gas platforms (the Pescăruș platform) operated by OMV Petrom in the Black Sea to verify compliance with safety standards. In parallel, Greenpeace EU and Greenpeace Romania also submitted a complaint to the European Commission in August 2024, also alleging a possible breach of the Offshore Security Directive.

These issues were reported to the authorities and OMV Petrom at the beginning of 2024, however they refused to cooperate in addressing the identified problems. Even more so, they attempted to block the case by resorting to various legal procedures. It is irresponsible to allow OMV Petrom to proceed with new installations, while other OMV Petrom platforms in the Black Sea could lead to accidents.

Conclusion and demands

In Romania, more than [50,000](#) people have already voiced their opposition to Neptun Deep. In Austria last year, [76 scientists](#) joined Greenpeace to call on OMV Petrom to stop the Neptun Deep project over climate and pressure on precious marine ecosystems concerns. Despite the mounting evidence against the project and the growing opposition, Neptun Deep is expected to begin production in 2027.

The Neptun Deep project is just the tip of the iceberg: in Europe, fossil fuel companies are pushing European states into such massive, unnecessary investments just like TotalEnergies' LNG terminal in France, or ONE-Dyas' gas rig between Germany and the Netherlands.

In Romania and across Europe, the resistance against such projects and the fossil fuel companies pushing for them is growing. Projects like Neptun Deep just keep EU countries locked into an outdated, destructive energy system that harms the wellbeing and future of people around the world.

That is why Greenpeace is fighting to stop Neptun Deep, and calling on the EU and national governments to ban all new fossil fuel infrastructure projects, phase out fossil gas and invest in reducing gas demand, expanding renewables and cutting energy waste.

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