

**Capacity Building of the Key Stakeholders in the Area of
Geothermal Energy**

Project Opening Event

9 February 2021, 14.00–16.20 CET, online

Address by H.E. María Erla Marelsdóttir,

Ambassador of Iceland to Poland

Mr. **Guibourgé-Czetwertyński**, *Undersecretary of State, Ministry of
Climate and Environment*,

Mr. Michalski, *Vice President NFEP & WM*,

Dear Gerard, *Pokruszynski, Ambassador of Poland to Iceland*,

Distinguished speakers and participants,

I am very pleased to be able to address this opening Event of the Capacity Building of the key Stakeholders in the Area of Geothermal Energy Project, under the EEA Grants programme “Environment, Energy and Climate Change”.

The Programme that was launched one year ago in Warsaw during the State visit of the President of Iceland to Poland, where H. E. Guðni Th. Jóhannesson the President of Iceland and H. E. Andrzej Duda the President of Poland addressed the conference.

That was the last time I was in Poland, unfortunately, because of the travel restrictions imposed by the pandemic.

I am very much looking forward to being able to meet with you in person once the pandemic eases and travelling is possible again.

Poland and Iceland enjoy good and successful cooperation in many fields, from the political to the people-to-people level, Iceland being the adopted home for almost 20.000 Poles, by far the largest immigrant population in Iceland.

Through the EEA Grants, we cooperate in many important fields, including gender equality, democracy building, education, research, culture and, why we are here today: in the Energy sector, exploring opportunities for cooperation in the field geothermal energy.

Our cooperation in the geothermal energy sector has strengthened with many Polish professionals having attended the post-graduate Geothermal Training Programme under the auspices of UNU, 1991-2003 located in Iceland.

The Icelandic National Energy Authority has also worked on smaller projects and organised study visits, in cooperation with relevant Polish authorities, the Mineral and Energy Economic Research Institute [*MEERI PAS = Mineral and Energy Economic Research Institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences*],

and other partners in Poland, supported by the EEA Grants, with the aim of evaluating geothermal potential and possibilities in Poland.

These projects are useful in preparing for larger investments and future projects, that can be funded by the EEA Grants.

The open call that has now been launched as a part of the Environmental, Energy and Climate Change Program, is such an opportunity.

And offers opportunities for further cooperation – for municipalities, cities, companies, and institutions in Poland in cooperation with companies and institution in Iceland.

I therefore encourage relevant stakeholders to use this opportunity to further develop geothermal and district heating possibilities in Poland.

Climate changes is one of the largest challenges that we face today. Increased use of renewable energy is key part of the solution.

The use of geothermal energy for house heating can lead to substantial reduction in greenhouse-gas emissions.

In Iceland it has created important economic opportunities, improved energy security, reduced greenhouse gas emissions and reduced Iceland's dependency on fossil fuels.

The additional uses and side benefits that geothermal energy offers have in Iceland been drivers for innovation and growth in the areas such as tourism, aquaculture, the health and spa industry, innovations in the cosmetic industry, and for general relaxing and recreation, with outdoors swimming pools and hot pots all year round.

Dear participants,

Iceland and Poland enjoy longstanding good relations, as manifested during the State visit of the President of Iceland to Poland last year. There are many opportunities for cooperation, and we consider the EEA Grants among the most important instrument when exploring ways to deepen our collaboration and foster closer ties with Poland.

I look forward to hearing more about the important project that will be presented today. Furthermore, I wish you success in implementing the project and I hope it will further enhance the cooperation between Iceland and Poland in the field of geothermal energy.

Thank you.