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GeoTHERM
expo & congress

Donnerstag, 2. Juni 2022 / Thursday, 2 June 2022
Kongress 1 - Tiefe Geothermie / congress 1 - Deep Geothermal Energy
12.45 - 13.10



The geothermal sector in Poland

Der geothermische Sektor in Polen

Henning von Zanthier, LL. M. Rechtsanwalt/radca prawny
VON ZANTHIER & DACHOWSKI

The Energy market in Poland is still heavily reliant on coal but the use of renewable sources for both heat and electricity production is increasing. The Polish heating market is unique as the country has multiple developed district heating systems and one of the longest pipelines network in the European Union.

Poland has generally a significant geothermal potential (based on natural conditions). The most prospective region is the Polish Lowlands province which covers around 87% of the country. The most important reservoirs there are located in the Lower Cretaceous and Lower Jurassic formations with wellhead temperature of these waters varying between 20 and 94°C. Even higher temperatures will likely be obtained at greater depths.

In the recent years many geothermal plants have been established in the Polish Lowlands province – for example in Pырzyce, Stargard or Uniejów. This paper provides a short description of each of those investments as it illustrates the variety of the purposes geothermal energy can be used for in Poland and gives an overview of how a realisation of a geothermal plant looks in practice.

Looking from a legal point of view, at each phase of the investment – (1) project preparation, (2) design, licensing, engineering services, (3) drilling, (4) surface installation, (5) plant facilities and (6) access to the district heating network there are steps which have to be followed. A brief overview of those steps is provided in the paper. It is also worth mentioning that there is a possibility to obtain subsidies for geothermal projects.

The Polish geothermal sector will likely grow in the next years and there are already a few new investments planned. We are involved into the biggest geothermal project in Poland and might be able to reveal some facts about the conditions of this project.

Overall, therefore, because of the developed district heating systems, natural conditions and available subsidies the country is a good destination for a geothermal investment.