

Europe should freeze deep water drilling: top official

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European Union Commissioner for Energy Gunther Oettinger talks to the media in May 2010. Europe should freeze new deep water drilling until the causes of the rig explosion which triggered the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico are known, Oettinger said Wednesday.

Europe should freeze new deep water drilling until the causes of the rig explosion which triggered the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico are known, a top EU official said Wednesday.

EU [Energy](#) Commissioner Guenther Oettinger said governments need to make sure that the energy industry launches all possible measures to boost safety and enhance disaster prevention.

"Utmost caution must be exercised for the moment with respect to new drillings," Oettinger said, according to prepared remarks he was to

deliver to the European Parliament in Strasbourg.

"Given the current circumstances, any responsible Government would at present practically freeze new permits for [drilling](#) with extreme parameters and conditions," he said.

"This can mean de facto a moratorium on new drills until the causes of the accident are known and corrective measures are taken for such frontier operations as the ones carried out by the Deepwater Horizon."

Leased by British energy giant BP, the Deepwater Horizon rig sank on April 22, two days after an explosion that killed 11 workers, unleashing the worst environmental disaster in US history.

Oettinger will meet in Brussels on July 14 with the national regulatory authorities of the 27 EU states and the heads of 18 oil companies.

He already met in May with the main firms active in EU waters -- BP, ConocoPhillips, ExxonMobil, Repsol, Statoil and Total -- to discuss how to prevent a catastrophe like the one that befell the [Gulf of Mexico](#).

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