

The European Commission on Wednesday (28 June) called for international talks on the dangers and governance of geoengineering, saying such interventions to alter the climate posed “unacceptable” risks.

Geoengineering has attracted increasing interest as countries fail to cut [greenhouse gas emissions](#) fast enough to curb climate change. But the issue of manipulating planetary systems to fight global warming remains highly controversial.

“Nobody should be conducting experiments alone with our shared planet,” European Union climate policy chief Frans Timmermans told a news conference.

“This should be discussed in the right forum, at the highest international level,” he said, suggesting the United Nations as a potential venue for talks on the risks and possible use of geoengineering.

Geoengineering techniques include directly removing CO₂ emissions from the atmosphere. The first plants to do this are already in operation, capturing CO₂ in tiny quantities compared with countries’ emissions.

Solar geoengineering

More controversial is **solar radiation modification (SRM)**, which would cut the amount of sunlight reaching Earth’s surface by, for example, spraying sulphate aerosols into the stratosphere to reflect more light back into space.

Joanna Haigh, Emeritus Professor at Imperial College London, said as well as having physical dangers, such technologies risked giving polluters an excuse not to address the root cause of climate change – greenhouse gas emissions produced from burning [fossil fuels](#).

“The governance of geoengineering will be hugely complex, but necessary to regulate any future geoengineering technologies that could feasibly lower global average temperatures,” she added.

In an explanatory document, the Commission said that in its current state of development, **SRM “represents an unacceptable level of risk for humans and the environment”**.

The EU is funding two projects to assess geoengineering techniques, but said neither would develop or test SRM.

SRM has split opinion among scientists.

More than 100 scientists signed a February letter in support of research to understand whether SRM could reduce the immediate danger of global warming while countries attempt to cut their outright emissions.

Other scientists have called for a ban on solar geoengineering, arguing that it would be impossible to govern and could unleash unpredictable impacts, including on the weather

EU calls for global talks on climate geoengineering risks

and [agriculture](#).

Source: euractiv