

‘Let’s burn more coal,’ says (Green) German Economy Minister

This report has been co-published with our affiliated organisation, [Brexit Facts4EU.Org](https://BrexitFacts4EU.org). We are most grateful for their original research into the raw data which backs what follows.

Consequences of Germany’s energy policy now to include polluting Europe this winter

Over 150 German coal plants set to fire up electricity production as Russian crisis heats up

In an interview on Sunday with Germany’s Economy Minister – a member of the environmentalist Green Party – there was a moment which falls into the category of “You couldn’t make this up.”

Robert Habeck, a Green minister in the ruling German coalition government, actually suggested that Germany will have to ramp up output from its 151 coal-fired power plants this winter, to keep German industry running and to enable people to heat their homes.

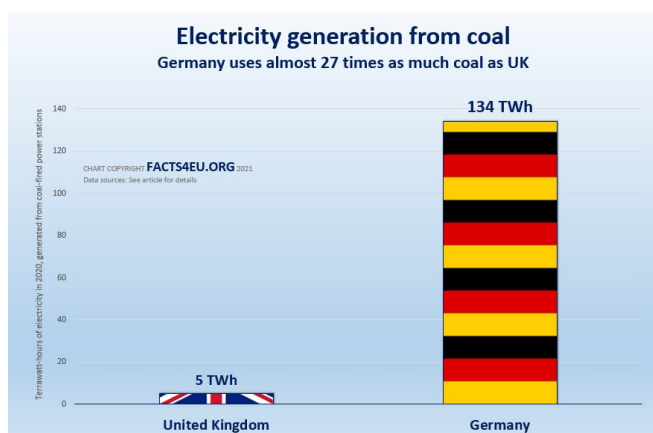
Germany was already Europe’s heaviest polluter, now it’s set to get worse

Last year Facts4EU.Org warned about Germany’s use of coal-fired power stations. Whereas the United Kingdom has dramatically reduced its reliance on coal, Germany has not reduced by anything like the same amount.

Germany was already using coal for power generation at a rate 27 times higher than that of the UK. And now it's set to get even worse.

Summary

Electricity generation from coal



- UK : 5 TWh
- Germany : 134 TWh

[Notes: TWh = “Terrawatt hours”. Sources : OWID | BP Statistical Review of World Energy | Shift Data Project | Ember]

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German Economy Ministry and its Minister admit Germany will increase its pollution of Europe

Below is what the Ministry and its minister said in the last 48 hours.

Germany's Vice Chancellor speaks



*"The situation on the gas market has deteriorated in recent days. The missing quantities can still be replaced, and the gas storage tanks are still being filled, albeit at high prices. Security of supply is currently guaranteed. **But the situation is serious.**"*

*"We are therefore further strengthening precautions and taking additional measures to reduce gas consumption. This means that gas consumption must continue to fall, so more gas must be stored in storage, **otherwise things will get really tight in winter.**"*

– Robert Habeck, Vice Chancellor of Germany and Federal Minister for Economic Affairs and Climate Action, 19 June 2022

*"To reduce gas consumption, less gas must be used to generate electricity. **Coal-fired power plants will have to be used more instead.**"*

– Statement from Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action, 20 June 2022

Germany's energy policy under Merkel – the world warned her but 'Mutti knew best'



In the last decade Angela Merkel presided over a German energy policy that involved closing all its nuclear power plants. The last of these are scheduled to close by the end of this year.

At the same time she ramped up the purchase of cheap Russian gas using the Nordstream I pipeline and approved the construction of a second one – Nordstream II. The former has just had its supply limited by Putin's Russia, supposedly for technical reasons. The latter has been built but has been put on hold by the new German government of Olaf Scholz.

Bizarrely former German Chancellor Merkel also approved the construction of new coal-fired power stations. Most of the coal Germany burns is lignite – the worst kind.

Merkel's headlong rush into Russian sources of cheap gas, oil, and coal, together with her rush into renewables, has now left Germany with a massive problem. Its gas reserves stand at 57%, which is not nearly enough for the coming winter.

Germany is already the biggest polluter in Europe – now it wants to make this worse

The Bundestag (German parliament) is now in the process of passing a bill to allow the burning of more coal for power generation, using 'reserve' power plants that were scheduled to go offline by 2030.

Not only that, but plants that were closed will come back online. These plants generally used lignite from East German mines. The bill is due to pass into law by 08 July.

Yesterday the head of the German Association of Energy and Water Industries told German state broadcaster ARD that reserve power plants burning German lignite can be brought online:

"in a relatively short time span."

– Kerstin Andreae, German Association of Energy and Water Industries, 20 June 2022
