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Coal regions in transition

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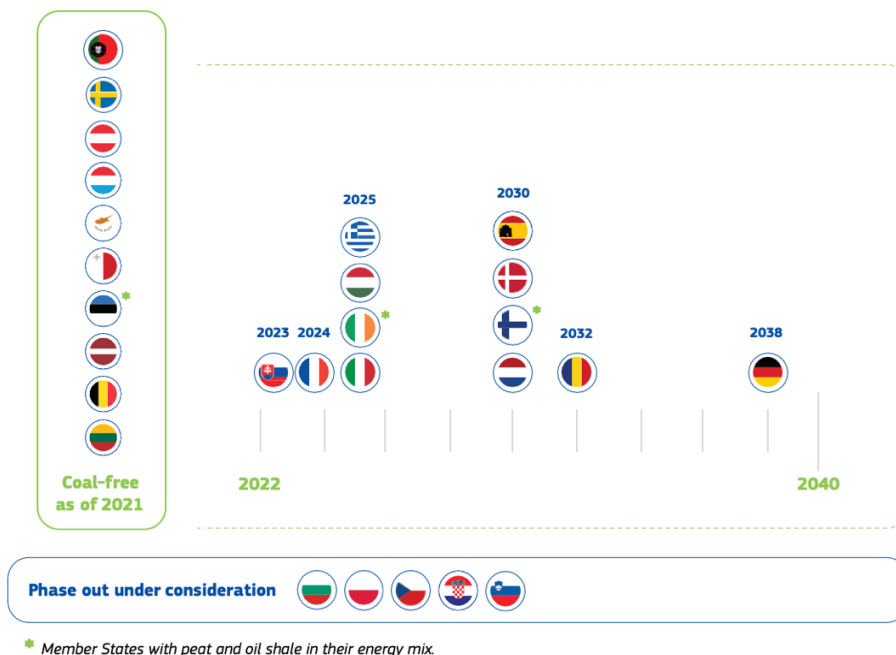
Coal in Europe's energy mix

Coal accounts for about a fifth of total electricity production in the EU. It is also a significant economic driver, providing jobs to around 230,000 people in mines and power plants across 31 regions and 11 EU countries.

While coal remains a central fuel in the European energy mix, the transition to cleaner forms of energy and innovative technologies, such as [carbon capture and storage](#), is imperative to meet the EU's commitment to reduce CO2 emissions by at least 55% by 2030 and to become the world's first climate-neutral bloc by 2050.

The decline of coal-based energy production is an ongoing reality in Europe. Since 2012, total coal power generation has dropped by almost a third in the EU. The declining use of coal has led to mines closing down and power plants being decommissioned in a number of regions across Europe. The graph below summarises the current state of play of national coal phase-out commitments in the EU.

Coal phase out commitments in the EU



Supporting coal regions in transition

The [European Green Deal](#), presented by the Commission in December 2019, aims at making Europe the first climate-neutral bloc in the world by 2050. To help to achieve this goal, the Commission introduced the Just Transition Mechanism ([proposal for Regulation COM/2020/22](#)) which, alongside tailored financial and practical support, will help workers and generate the necessary investments to areas particularly affected, like the EU coal regions.

Furthermore, the European Commission provides tailored support, either in the form of operational country teams or bilateral discussions with Commission experts. This support can help national and regional authorities to identify ways to initiate and implement the transition. This support is accompanied by existing EU funds, financing tools, and programmes.

The country teams work with national and regional authorities in regions chosen by Member States to encourage the preparation of transition strategies and support the identification of priority projects.

The Initiative for coal regions in transition

To ensure that no region is left behind in this transition, the Commission also launched the Initiative for coal regions in transition. Included as a non-legislative element of the 'Clean energy for all Europeans' package, the initiative helps mitigate the social consequences of the low-carbon transition.

The '[Initiative for Coal Regions in Transition](#)' works as an open forum, which has gathered all relevant parties, local, regional and national governments, businesses and trade unions, NGOs and academia since 2017. It promotes knowledge-sharing and exchanges of experiences between EU coal regions, and represents a unique, bottom-up approach to a just transition, enabling regions to identify and respond to their unique contexts and opportunities. All EU coal regions are invited to participate.

Documents

- [Decision on financing and support for coal and carbon intensive regions in transition C\(2020\) 5455 final and its annexes](#) (August 2020)
- Factsheet: [The Just Transition Mechanism](#) (January 2020)
- [Study: EU coal regions: opportunities and challenges ahead](#) (JRC, July 2018)
- [Factsheet on EU Structural Support Action for Coal and Carbon Intensive Regions](#) (November 2018)
- [Terms of reference: Initiative on coal and carbon-intensive regions](#)

Related links

- Article: [Towards a just and clean energy transition](#) (EN | FR | DE | IT | ES | PL, October 2020)
- [A European Green Deal](#)
- [Clean energy for all Europeans package](#)
- [Initiative for coal regions in transition](#)
- [Just Transition Platform](#)
- [Just Transition Mechanism](#)
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