

COAL SAVES GAS

- German coal-fired power plants are in good condition
- EU approval possible
- Bringing older coal-fired power plants from the grid reserve to the electricity market
- Electricity generation with coal is cheaper than with gas

Regarding the article by BERLIN.TABLE dated April 8, 2026 (Energy Price Crisis: Why Reactivating Coal-Fired Power Plants Is Hardly Possible), the Association of Coal Importers (VDKi) issues the following statement:

- **Situation:** Germany faces a looming gas crisis: LNG is expensive, and gas from the Persian Gulf is currently not reaching Asian markets. Competition for the remaining globally available LNG volumes will keep gas prices high and make it difficult to fill German gas storage facilities. Therefore, from the VDKi's German perspective, it makes sense to conserve gas by increasingly using coal-fired power plants instead of gas-fired ones for electricity generation. The approximately 6.7 GW of hard coal-fired power plants in the grid reserve are suitable for this purpose.
- **Maintenance Status of Hard Coal Power Plants:** Contrary to what is claimed in the Berlin.Table article ("availability severely limited"), Germany's hard coal grid reserve power plants are in good condition. If their maintenance status were as poor as described, they would be unable to fulfil their roles in the grid reserve. Examples: **STEAG** power plants in Bexbach (726 MW), Weiher (656 MW), Völklingen (approx. 400 MW), and Bergkamen (717 MW). It is also known that other power plants, such as GKM Units 7 and 8 (approx. 820 MW), as well as Uniper (Scholven, approx. 700 MW, Staudinger 522 MW, etc.), are in good condition.
- **Cheaper electricity generation during renewable energy shortages:** Even **older hard coal-fired power plants** are currently easily capable of producing **electricity more cheaply** than gas-fired power plants. The decisive factor at present is not efficiency, but the difference between gas and hard coal prices. With a CO₂ certificate price of 72€/MWh and current market prices for hard coal traded in Europe, older hard coal-fired power plants generate electricity at a cost of approx. **115 €/MWh** — modern hard coal units even **at 95 €/MWh**. Open-cycle gas turbines currently have generation costs of 135€/MWh (assuming an LNG price/TTF of 46.00 €/MWh).
- **Coal saves gas:** The VDKi believes that Germany can save approx. 2.0 billion m³ of natural gas by importing an additional 3 mill. tons of coal. Natural gas that can then be stored for heating in the winter. If the hard coal-fired power plants in the grid reserve had been operating in the electricity market last winter, storage levels could be 50% higher than they are now. The natural gas supply shortage is not imminent now, but it looms next winter.

- **Climate footprint of hard coal at least on par with LNG from the U.S.:** The VDKi, through studies, and Cornell University (Robert Howarth) have scientifically demonstrated that hard coal-fired power plants are at least on par with LNG-fired gas power plants in terms of their overall climate footprint.
- **Political backing/EU:** Regarding EU approval (citation from the BMW: “highly questionable to impossible”), the argument of relatively empty gas storage facilities (20% capacity in Germany) and a looming gas crisis should suffice. Italy has just postponed its coal phase-out. No EU approval is known to be required for the 2022 Standby Power Plant Act. Like the VDKi, Saarland’s Minister-President Anke Rehlinger, for example, is open to the idea of utilizing reserve coal-fired units.

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