



Press release 01/ 2023

THE RETURN OF COAL - NEW ENERGY WORLD

- **Hard coal: guardian angel in the energy crisis**
- **VdKi Chairman Alexander Bethe: "Our industry is efficient and on the spot when it is needed".**
- **Giving up early hard coal as a back-up option is "economically ghost driving".**
- **After Russia embargo and switch to alternatives: High praise for power plant operators, power plant engineers and logisticians**

"It is irresponsible to talk about the end of hard coal without having reliable alternatives". This is what Alexander Bethe, Chairman of the Board of the Coal Importers Association (VdKi), said at the traditional New Year's reception of his association at the Hotel Grand Elysée in Hamburg. " Politics must be honest with itself. There is no way around coal as a mainstay in the medium term".

Instead of discussions about shortening operating times, the focus should be on expanding the grids and storage facilities. "We need a reorientation of energy policy and an immediate lifting of the anticipatory fuel bans: first build up green technology, then switch it off. And not the other way around," says Alexander Bethe.

The discussion that coal is only needed for one or two winters is unrealistic and counterproductive. This will not convince logistics companies in the long term to invest more in means of transport and more staff. After the stop on Russian coal, his industry reacted very well. In a short time, the industry switched to alternative types of coal. The trade has set new priorities: USA, South Africa, Colombia.

Gas will remain expensive, as 100 billion cubic metres of pipeline gas will have to be replaced in Western Europe. LNG export capacities and means of transport do not fall from the sky. The fleet of new German gas-fired power plants is only visible in fragments.

Chancellor Scholz had spoken of a turn of an era. Alexander Bethe: "The turn of an era in the energy sector must include that the bitterly needed hard coal will accompany the energy turnaround for longer". CO₂ capture and storage (CCS) for coal-fired power plants should not be excluded.

On the figures: Global coal consumption could reach a new record high of more than eight billion tonnes this year. Germany will import about 43 million tonnes of this (steam coal, coking coal, coke). That is about 0.6% of world production.

Berlin, 13 January 2023

V.i.S.d.P: Coal Importers Association e. V., Jürgen Osterhage, Managing Director