

Coal

Poland plans \$40bn nuclear push to cut reliance on coal

Nation accelerates drive to wean itself off fossil fuel that makes up 74% of its electricity generation



Coal miners in Gliwice. Under the climate ministry's plan, the country's share of coal in electricity production will fall to between 37 and 56 per cent in 2030 © EPA

James Shotter in Warsaw YESTERDAY

Poland plans to press ahead with a \$40bn plan to build its first nuclear power plants and could accelerate its phase-out of coal, the climate ministry said on Tuesday as it set out its new energy strategy for 2040.

The ministry said Poland, one of the few eastern bloc states left without a nuclear reactor when communist rule ended in 1989, planned to invest 150bn zlotys (\$39.7bn) in atomic energy, with the first unit coming on line in 2033.

Together with 130bn zlotys of investments in offshore wind projects, the nuclear energy would help the central European nation cut its [dependence on coal](#), which last year accounted for 74 per cent of Polish electricity generation, one of the highest levels in the EU.

Under the climate ministry's plan, which still has to be adopted by the government, the share of coal in electricity production will fall to between 37 and 56 per cent in 2030 and to between 11 and 28 per cent in 2040, depending on CO2 prices.

The ministry had previously forecast that coal would account for 56 per cent of electricity generation in 2030 and 28 per cent in 2040.

Shares in Polish state-owned energy groups, including PGE and Tauron, which have fallen sharply over the past two years as rising CO2 prices have made their dependence on coal [increasingly problematic](#), rose on the news before falling amid a broader market sell-off.

The government is separately working on a plan to hive off state-owned energy groups' coal assets to allow them to concentrate on greener power sources.

Kamil Kliszcz, an equity analyst at mBank in Warsaw, said the 2040 plan was a reasonable compromise between the [mounting pressure](#) for Poland to move away from coal and the complexities of doing so in a country where more than 100,000 jobs still depend on the industry.

"This plan takes in account all the trends that are taking place and EU regulations. And on the other hand, it recognises the realities of the Polish energy system and the fact that you can't do anything from one year to the next," he said. "But let's see if it passes [the government]."

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However, activists at Greenpeace dismissed the plan as “dangerous fantasies rather than an energy strategy”, and pointed out that, unlike most other EU states, Poland had still not set out when it would wean itself off coal.

“People might see this strategy as progressive in light of previous comments [by ministers] about coal remaining the basis the energy system towards 2060,” said Joanna Flisowska, head of the group’s climate and energy unit.

“Because of that statement, this plan sounds progressive. But it is still not good enough, and still detached from the climate crisis and from climate politics on the EU level, given that the EU could tighten its 2030 emissions targets.”