

Germany and Norway inaugurate clean energy undersea link

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Germany and Norway can exchange power generated from wind, solar and hydroelectric sources via the new cable.

Germany and Norway on Thursday inaugurated an undersea power cable designed to facilitate the exchange of renewable energy as Europe's biggest economy looks to phase out coal and nuclear power.

NordLink, one of the longest undersea cables in the world, runs 623 kilometres (388 miles) from the southern Norwegian town of Tonsund to the mouth of the Elbe in northern Germany.

The cable will allow wind or [solar energy](#) produced in Germany to be exchanged for [hydroelectric power](#) produced in Norway, helping the two countries to plug gaps in production caused by fluctuating wind, sun or rain levels.

Providing enough power for about 3.6 million homes, NordLink has been operational since April but was officially opened on Thursday by Chancellor Angela Merkel and Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg.

Merkel described the project as "a really big step... towards a sustainable and therefore future-proof energy supply" for Germany.

"In this way, fluctuating power generation can be balanced out right away—something that will be a major task with the growing expansion of renewable energies," she said.

Germany plans to phase out [nuclear power](#) by 2022 and coal by 2038.

It also this month set more ambitious targets to reduce CO2 emissions after a landmark ruling by the country's top court declared a flagship climate protection law "insufficient".

Under the new targets, the German government expects to slash emissions by 65 percent by 2030 compared to 1990 levels, going further than a previous 55 percent reduction target.

The cut will reach 88 percent by 2040, with the goal of bringing Germany to carbon neutrality by 2045, five years earlier than previously expected.

Renewables accounted for half of Germany's [electricity production](#) for the first time in 2020, compared with 25 percent less than ten years ago, according to the Fraunhofer research institute.

The NordLink project "is an important step for the German energy transition and the integration of the European electricity system," Thorsten Lenck of the Agora Energiewende think tank told AFP.

Interconnectivity between different countries is also one of the central pillars of the European Union's climate strategy.

Cross-border projects are already up and running between Norway and the Netherlands, the Netherlands and Britain, and Denmark and the Netherlands.

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