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COMMODITIES JANUARY 18, 2019 / 6:38 AM / UPDATED 2 HOURS AGO

## Germany's 2019 hard coal imports seen rising after mining ends

Vera Eckert

3 MIN READ



FRANKFURT (Reuters) - Germany is expected to import 45 million tonnes of hard coal this year, up roughly 1.4 percent from 2018 despite mounting competition from renewable energy, as the closure of domestic mines reduces domestic supply, importers said on Friday.

FILE PHOTO: Uniper's Scholven coal power plant is pictured in Gelsenkirchen, Germany, September 28, 2018. REUTERS/Thilo Schmuelgen/File Photo

The total would comprise an estimated 30 million tonnes for power generation and 15

million tonnes of coking coal and coke, products used in steelmaking, data from lobby group VDKI showed.

Germany's last two hard-coal mines, in the west of the country, closed at the end of December under a deal to stop unprofitable mining in favor of imports. The pair had contributed an annual 2.6 million tonnes of power station feedstock.

The coal importer lobby said hard coal usage would benefit from a court ban on logging in an ancient forest, a move that will impede the mining of domestic rival lignite, or brown coal, by utility RWE.

The court ruling curbs supply to RWE's brown-coal power plants, and hard coal could cover part of the deficit.

The two types of coal accounted for a combined 38 percent of German power production last year.

Despite the forecast rise, there could be import losses in 2019 as a result of a long-term national plan, due within the next fortnight, on phasing out coal, VDKI said.

The projected increase would also be from a weaker base.

Volumes in 2018 declined by 13 percent year-on-year to 44.5 million tonnes as renewable energy gets priority on grids, elbowing out thermal plants' output.

Steam coal imports for power stations alone fell 17 percent to 30 million tonnes.

Green power made up 40 percent of total generation in 2018, resulting from Germany's politically driven process to replace fossil fuels.

VDKI estimated the addition of green power plants lost it 3 million tonnes of imports last year, while relatively high solar production in a hot year also played a part.

"2018, just like 2017, was a very bad year for hard coal in Germany," VDKI chairman Wolfgang Cieslik said during the presentation of the data in Hamburg.

VDKI managing director Franz-Josef Wodopia said steelmaking usage of coal could benefit from higher demand projections by the World Steel Association for 2019, but cautioned that the macroeconomic environment had recently worsened.

"We cautiously expect the same level of imports as in 2018," he said of coking coal.

Midwest, Northeast ready for new snow storm

Reporting by Vera Eckert; Editing by Dale Hudson

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ENVIRONMENT JANUARY 18, 2019 / 8:11 AM / UPDATED 42 MINUTES AGO

## Climate plans could make Germany's 'no limits' Autobahns history

Markus Wacket

2 MIN READ



FILE PHOTO: Cars pass a 120 km/h (75 mph) speed limit sign on the A27 Autobahn near the northern German city of Bremen April 10, 2008. REUTERS/Morris Mac Matzen

BERLIN (Reuters) - The days of unlimited speeding on Germany's famously fast Autobahns could be over if the government adopts a series of draft proposals on climate protection put forward by its committee on the future of transport.

Charged with coming up with recommendations on reducing the environmental harm caused by transport, the committee also proposed fuel tax hikes and electric vehicle

quotas to help Germany finally meet European Union emissions targets.

The proposals, outlined in a draft paper seen by Reuters, could prove controversial in car-mad Germany, whose decades-old motorway network is famous for “no limits” sections where drivers can put even the fastest cars through their paces.

Germany could be hit with heavy EU fines if it fails to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and poisonous nitrogen oxides. Transport emissions, which have not fallen since 1990, are a particular target for reductions.

The government is torn between the need to protect Germany’s crucial car industry, buffeted by a series of costly emissions cheating scandals in recent years, and the need to act to protect a rapidly deteriorating climate.

The paper says measures including a motorway speed limit of 130 kmh and fuel tax hikes from 2023, the abolition of tax breaks for diesel cars and quotas for electric and hybrid car sales could deliver half the greenhouse gas emissions cuts that are needed.

The National Platform on the Future of Mobility has yet to finalize the recommendations. It is due to report its findings at the end of March, which will then be incorporated into a climate change law the government wants to enact this year.

But the committee is well aware that many of its suggestions could be controversial.

“Not every instrument and every measure will be accepted,” reads the draft. “It will take political deftness, diplomatic skill and a willingness to compromise to achieve the climate change goals.”

Writing by Thomas Escritt; Editing by Mark Potter

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