



The Dutch import story behind Britain's no-coal record

06/05/2019

By Kelvin Ross

Editor

Between May 17-31, Britain saw its first two-week period without domestic [coal-fired power stations](#) generating electricity since the 1880s.

However, modelling carried out by energy market data analyst EnAppSys shows that power generated from coal has been imported from abroad over the same period – with the most coming from the Netherlands.



EnAppSys says that high carbon taxes in Britain were the key reason why the UK's electricity system has run without coal for the last two weeks – and it adds that further no-coal records could be broken should these taxes remain at current levels.

These higher carbon taxes do not, however, apply in neighbouring regions and over the initial two-week period of zero coal, Britain imported 50.9 GWh of power from coal-fired plants operating abroad.

Of this power, only a relatively low share of the modelled coal-originating imports came from France and Ireland (0.1 GWh and 0.9 GWh respectively), with France seeing a high share of power from nuclear plants and with Ireland seeing high levels of wind generation over the noted period.

Instead, the largest share of the modelled total was from the Netherlands, where coal-fired power stations continue to operate at a high level of activity as a result of only paying around half the carbon taxes paid within the UK.

Rob Lalor, senior analyst at EnAppSys, said: "Britain's move towards a green future has seen an increased reliance on low-carbon power sources to generate electricity. This has coincided with a shift

in Britain's energy policy, with coal plants set to be phased out by 2025 and high-polluting power plants penalised by higher carbon taxes, which include the GB carbon price floor of £18 per tonne.

"This has translated into a two-week period without coal-fired power being generated within Britain, but with [European markets](#) seeing less aggressive carbon pricing, electricity generated by coal-fired power stations would have continued to have been consumed within British households.

"Without a shift in policy, the number of 'no-coal' days is likely to increase again in future as more electricity is generated from [renewable sources](#). Indeed, our latest GB quarterly market report revealed that the amount of clean energy derived from renewable sources hit a record high in the first three months of 2019."

The figures produced by EnAppSys are based on the different sources of power generated around Europe (incomplete for the Netherlands, leading to a potential under-estimate of real coal production). This shows that the Netherlands produced 535.8 GWh of power from coal over the period.

With the country also seeing exports to Britain over this period at 7.8 per cent of

demand, this translates into an assumed export of coal-fired generation totalling 40.4 GWh.

This analysis was also extended into Germany, where 5017.3 GWh of power was produced from coal or lignite plants over the period, but with only 2.1 per cent of demand in Germany being exported to Netherlands, there was only a 0.16 per cent modelled passthrough assumed for German coal into Britain. This translated into a 9.5 GWh import of coal from Germany over the period.

These import totals at 50.9 GWh imply an effective 151 MW baseload production of coal from outside of Britain over this period.

Lalor said: "Whilst the absence of the higher UK-only carbon prices would have prevented this coal-free run from occurring – or at least for as long – the same carbon price levels applied outside of Britain might also have prevented coal from being imported from neighbouring regions."

.....

The latest trends and technologies in the European coal sector will be discussed at **POWERGEN Europe** in Paris in November.

Copyright © 2019 Clarion Events, Tulsa, OK. All Rights Reserved [PRIVACY POLICY](#) | [TERMS AND CONDITIONS](#)

TOPICS

World Regions
T&D
Gas Fired
Coal Fired
Nuclear

Renewables
Decentralized Energy
Digitalization
Topic Index

ABOUT US

About Us
Contact Us
Advertising
Subscribe

RESOURCES

Current Issue
Online Archives
RSS Feeds

SUPPORT

Site Map

OTHER POWER SITES

HydroWorld
Hydro Review
Renewable Energy World
Power Engineering

THE POWER & ENERGY SERIES

The Power & Energy Series
African Utility Week
Asian Utility Week
Australian Utility Week
China Utility Week
DistribuTECH
European Utility Week

Future Energy East Africa
Future Energy Nigeria
HydroVision
POWERGEN Africa
POWERGEN Asia
POWERGEN Europe
POWERGEN International