

Voices of Nuclear to protest against closure of Fessenheim nuclear power plant

« Let's defend our climate citadels »

Paris, January 27, 2020

Voices of Nuclear and other representatives of civil society will gather at Fessenheim, near the border between France and Germany, on February 22 to denounce the programmed dismantling of Europe's biggest low-carbon electricity source, France's successful nuclear power plant fleet, considered by many countries and international organisations as an exemplary success and a major tool in the fight against global warming.

On that date, because of a political diktat, unit 1 of EDF's Fessenheim nuclear power station will produce its last kilowatt-hour. Unit 2 is scheduled to be disconnected from the grid on June the 30th. Both units produce 900 megawatts and have been operating since 1977.

This squandering of a source of electricity that emits almost no CO₂ (4g/kWh in France, [10 times less than solar photovoltaics](#)) is the result not of safety concerns – the Nuclear Safety Authority considers Fessenheim one of the better safety performers in EDF's fleet – but of a purely political decision, made hastily by the government, with no public consultation, in a bid to gain Green political support.

Fessenheim 1 is the first of 16 reactors arbitrarily ordered shut by 2035 under the recently published French national energy plan, the PPE.

Let there be no rewriting of history. If Fessenheim is to be a symbol, let it be that of negligence by a handful of politicians of the interests of a whole nation.

Fessenheim's closure will bring an increase of 6 to 12 Mt of CO₂ emissions per year (in comparison, the emissions from all domestic flights in France in 2018 amounted to 5 Mt of CO₂. Source: Ministry of Ecological and Solidarity Transition).and of 5 to 13 billion euros of additional taxes to rightfully compensate EDF for the loss of the electricity the company could still have sold.

Since the end of 2019, there has been a succession of permanent reactor shutdowns in Europe: Mühleberg in Switzerland, Ringhals 2 in Sweden, Philippsburg 2 in Germany, and now Fessenheim in France, even though emissions in Europe are not falling or falling only slightly, and grid operators are warning of the consequences of the serial closure of dispatchable capacities that are needed to back up intermittent wind and solar power plants.

Germany's remaining six nuclear power units are scheduled to be phased out by the end of 2022, despite the country's failure to meet its CO₂ emissions reduction goals.

Voices of Nuclear and fellow pronuclear civil society groups will gather at Fessenheim to protest against this act of climate vandalism, the unravelling of energy independence and security of supply in France and Europe, and the waste of a longstanding and profitable generating resource.

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- The internet website of Voices of Nuclear : <https://www.voix-du-nucleaire.org/>