

European wind power output tipped to treble by 2020: report

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In Pierrelatte, southern France, a wind turbine operates near a uranium enrichment plant in May 2011. Energy producers expect European wind power generation to triple by 2020, with tens of thousands of new, ever-bigger wind turbines springing up, an industry body said Tuesday.

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The European Wind Energy Association (EWEA), which groups energy giants with wind interests and also many involved in nuclear or gas-fired [electricity generation](#), released its figures in a new report aiming to influence EU energy policy after 2020.

By the end of last year, the 'Pure Power' report said, [wind power](#) produced about 5.3 percent of demand across the EU's 27 states, some 182 Terawatt hours (TWh). Its share is tipped to reach 15.7 percent by 2020, or 581 TWh.

By the end of 2010, there were more than 70,000 turbines in operation, and the EWEA says 60,000 more of the same size would be needed to meet 2020 targets, although installing bigger machines could reduce the number to half or less depending on technology developments.

Investment is tipped to rise from 12.7 billion euros (\$18 billion) of annual investment in 2010 to 26.6 billion euros in 2020, 40 percent of that investment going into offshore wind farms.

Justin Wilkes of the EWEA said companies would invest 194 billion euros in onshore and, increasingly, [offshore wind farms](#) by then, "mainly driven by a strong EU regulatory framework to 2020, which we need also after 2020."

His grouping wants binding European Union targets for [renewable energy production](#) -- part of wider climate-action commitments -- to be extended from the present 19 percent to 34 percent for the decade after 2020.

EU states have been increasingly reluctant since the deep recession of the recent years to set binding European-level targets affecting domestic investment needs.

Germany and Spain alone account for well over half of all EU wind power, but Britain, France, Italy and Portugal are also emerging alongside small, but market-leading Denmark -- despite strong Paris adherence to its giant [nuclear industry](#), which delivers 80 percent of France's electricity needs.

Scotland, whose independence-seeking government in Edinburgh is already committed to producing 100 percent of its energy needs from renewables, exporting its traditional oil and gas output, alone claims one quarter of the EU's coastline.

Germany has turned its back on nuclear power after an earthquake and tsunami caused an accident at a nuclear plant in Japan in March, and the EWEA says Berlin could fill the 20-percent gap in its generating capacity with wind within a decade.

The report can be accessed online at: [www.ewea.org/fileadmin/ewea_documents/Pure Power III.pdf](http://www.ewea.org/fileadmin/ewea_documents/Pure_Power_III.pdf)

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