

# Germany may wait 100 years for nuclear waste storage site

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The intermediate nuclear waste storage facility near the northern German city of Gorleben is seen on November 26, 2011

Germany may not have a final storage facility for its nuclear waste up and running until the next century, an expert report released on Tuesday suggested.

For the past two years, a commission of scientists, industry leaders and civil society representatives have debated the question of where Germany should store [waste](#) from its soon-to-be-retired nuclear reactors.

Initially, the commission had hoped to reach a decision on the final site of the highly radioactive spent fuel from the country's power plants by 2031, with the facility itself slated to open in 2050.

But even that decades-spanning timetable was described by commission president Michael Mueller as "ambitious".

The final report, published on Tuesday, stated that the storage facility might only enter service "in the next century".

For many years now, a site in Gorleben, in the northern state of Lower Saxony, had been under discussion, drawing often violent clashes between police and anti-nuclear demonstrators.

But choosing a site for the permanent [nuclear waste](#) dump has become all the more pressing since 2011, when Chancellor Angela Merkel announced plans to shut down all eight remaining reactors in the country by 2022 following the Fukushima disaster in Japan.

In the wake of that decision, the expert commission was instructed to go back to square one and choose a suitable spot within Germany based on scientific criteria.

Gorleben is still one of the possible options, but a series of other sites are also being looked at.

Germany's vocal environmentalist movement was quick to lash out at the report's findings on Tuesday.

Commission members had simply "delayed" the decision, said Jochen Stay of anti-nuclear organisation Ausgestrahlt.

"The recommendations they've made are so vague that they could justify choosing any site," Stay added.

Germany's government has been locked in battles with industry for years over who should foot the bill for the nuclear phase-out, with the costs of storing the waste and safely dismantling the reactors representing a very substantial financial risk for the country's four biggest power suppliers, RWE, Vattenfall, EON and EnBW.

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