

France could close a third of nuclear reactors: minister

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France's new environment minister said Monday nearly a third of the country's reactors could be shut under plans to scale back the amount of electricity produced from nuclear power.

In 2015, the previous Socialist-dominated parliament passed a law obliging the government to reduce the proportion of electricity generated from nuclear power from around 75 percent to 50 percent by 2025.

"We can all understand that to reach this target, we're going to have to close a certain number of reactors," Environment Minister Nicolas Hulot told RTL radio.

"It will be perhaps as high as 17 reactors, but we need to look into it," he said.

Hulot, a celebrity environmentalist, was named as minister for ecological transition in the first government of 39-year-old centrist President Emmanuel Macron, elected in May.

France has 58 nuclear reactors operated by state-owned EDF, which produces some of the lowest-cost electricity in Europe.

The country earns around €3 billion (\$3.4 billion) per year from exports to neighbouring countries.

The [nuclear power](#) network was once a source of national pride, but support fell after the Fukushima plant disaster in Japan in 2011 and the [government](#) is keen to encourage the transition to [renewable energy technology](#).

Many of the plants were built in the 1970s and 80s in response to oil-price shocks.

They face lengthy safety vetting processes, hefty investment and political challenges to gain extensions in their operating life.

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