

France's oldest nuclear plant to close this year

6 March 2016



German media claims a 2014 incident in France's oldest nuclear plant, Fessenheim, located near the German and Swiss borders, was more serious than previously reported

France is to close down its oldest nuclear power plant, at the centre of a row with neighbouring Germany and Switzerland, by the end of this year, a green minister said Sunday.

"The timeline is one the president has repeated to me several times, it's 2016," said Emmanuelle Cosse, who was named to President Francois Hollande's cabinet last month, referring to the Fessenheim plant.

Cosse was speaking to French media after a row sparked Friday when Germany demanded that France close down Fessenheim following reports that a 2014 incident there was worse than earlier portrayed.

France's Nuclear Safety Agency said that [safety](#) at the plant was "overall satisfactory" but that the government's [energy policy](#) "could lead to different choices" regarding the facility, which is near the German and Swiss borders.

It said there was "no need" to shut the plant from a nuclear safety point of view.

France has promised to cut reliance on nuclear energy from more than 75 percent to 50 percent by shutting 24 reactors by 2025, while stepping up reliance on renewable energy.

Fessenheim, located on a seismic fault line, has worried French, German and Swiss environmentalists for years.

In September, Hollande said Fessenheim, in operation since 1977, would not be shut this year, contrary to a 2012 campaign promise, because of delays in completion of a new plant in northern Flamanville.

On Sunday, Cosse said that to reach its target, the government would have "to close other nuclear [plants](#), other reactors, obviously, over several years."

Hollande named Cosse, a member of the French Greens Party (EELV), housing minister as part of a reshuffle seen as a bid to broaden his appeal ahead of a re-election bid next year.

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