

Torn over coal, German village struggles to heal

January 27 2019, by Hui Min Neo



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Sybill Tetsch returned to the German village of Proschim to set up a

restaurant four years ago, in an attempt to save her birthplace from mining excavators and heal a deep rift there over the future of coal.

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With Germany poised to end [coal](#) exploitation in the next two decades, Tetsch and other like-minded activists see only one answer: Proschim stays.

But in the village in the eastern Lausitz region where everyone has a miner in the family, the future of coal is an explosive topic that has soured relations and pushed friends apart.

"The division runs through the families. Neighbours don't greet each other. So we wanted to create a place where everyone can come together without abusing each other," said Tetsch, 48—admitting she has not yet quite succeeded in her bid to bridge the gap.

Leag, the owner of the surface lignite mine, is due to make a final decision in 2020.

But tensions have soared in recent months as Germany mulls whether to shutter all coal power plants as part of efforts to make the country carbon-neutral by 2050.

A government-appointed commission recommended on Saturday an exit from the fossil fuel by 2038. Chancellor Angela Merkel and Finance Minister Olaf Scholz are due to meet Thursday (January 31) with regional leaders to discuss the plan.

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