
FRANCE TO BID AU REVOIR TO OIL AND GAS EXPLORATION BY 2040

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France's parliament passed legislation on Tuesday (19 December) requiring all oil and gas exploration and production on French territories to end by 2040, the first time any country has taken such a step.

The bill, presented to cabinet in September, bans the renewal of any existing concessions beyond that date. New exploration permits will no longer be granted from now.

The decision is largely symbolic because France produces only about six million barrels of hydrocarbons a year, about one percent of its consumption. It will continue to import and refine oil.

President Emmanuel Macron, elected in May, has sought a leading role for France in the fight against climate change and stressed at a summit last week that not enough was being done.

Macron's bid to breathe new life into a landmark accord on climate change reached by nearly 200 nations in Paris two years ago came after US President Donald Trump said he was pulling out of the deal.

Lawmakers from Macron's République En Marche party and several other centrist and left-leaning forces voted in favour of the new law in parliament on Tuesday, while the hard-left group France Unbowed abstained.

Most representatives from the conservative Republicans voted against the bill.

France also plans to end the sale of gasoline and diesel vehicles by 2040.

Idolising isotopes

Macron said on Sunday he would not follow Germany's example by phasing out nuclear energy in France because his priority was to cut carbon emissions and shut down polluting coal-fired production.

I don't idolise nuclear energy at all. But I think you have to pick your battle. My priority in France, Europe and internationally is CO2 emissions and (global) warming, he told France 2 television in an interview.

Macron, who has worked to establish his role as a global leader since his election win in May, presided over a climate summit in Paris last week to breathe new life into a collective effort to fight climate change.

But renewable energy only amounts to a tiny share of French electricity production, which is dominated by nuclear for 75% of it.

Nuclear is not bad for carbon emissions, its even the most carbon-free way to produce electricity with renewables, Macron said.

France backtracks on nuclear phase-out pledge

The French government has postponed a long-held target to reduce the share of nuclear energy in the countrys power production after grid operator RTE warned it risked supply shortages after 2020 and could miss a goal to curb carbon emissions.

The 39-year old, who has sought to forge strong ties with German Chancellor Angela Merkel, did not show any enthusiasm for her decision to phase out nuclear energy, one of her landmark policies.

What did the Germans do when they shut all their nuclear in one go?, Macron said.

They developed a lot of renewables but they also massively reopened thermal and coal. They worsened their CO2 footprint, it wasnt good for the planet. So I wont do that.

Macron said he wanted to boost the growth of renewable energy but would wait for the French nuclear watchdogs opinion before shutting ageing nuclear reactors or upgrading others.

The ASN nuclear regulator said last month it would rule on a potential lifespan extension of Frances 58 nuclear reactors - all operated by state-owned EDF - in 2020-21.

This is what well base our decisions on, Macron said. So itll be rational. So in the face of that, well have to shut some plants. Maybe well have to modernise others, he said.

Kaynak/Source: