

Renewable records have been smashed yet again across **Europe**, with fresh data from energy think tank Ember today confirming electricity generation from wind and solar outstripped that from **fossil fuels** across the EU during the month of May.

The data released today found that almost a third of the EU’s electricity last month was generated from wind and solar, with 59TWh representing a 31 per cent share of the grid. In contrast, fossil fuels generation fell to a record low during the period of 53TWh or 27 per cent. Other forms of clean power generation, such as hydro and nuclear, accounted for the remaining 44 per cent of the grid.

Ember said the performance marked the first time wind and **solar power** generation had exceeded fossil fuel generation over the course of an entire month.

“Europe’s electricity transition has hit hyperdrive,” said Ember’s Europe lead Sarah Brown. “Clean power keeps smashing record after record.”

The new milestone was driven by growth in solar generation, strong wind performance, and relatively low electricity demand. Solar was found to have generated a record 14 per cent of electricity in the EU in May, hitting an all-time high of 27 TWh, exceeding the previous records that was set in July last year.

For the first time, EU solar generation overtook coal generation, with coal providing just 10 per cent of the EU’s electricity in May, the data showed.

Wind power also grew year-on-year and generated 17 per cent of the EU’s electricity in May – or 32 TWh. However, Ember noted this was lower than the record which was set in January this year when wind produced 23 per cent – or 54 TWh of the EU’s electricity. The strong combined performance from wind and solar meant coal generation fell to an all-time monthly low in May, with just 20 TWh of power coming from “the most polluting source” form of generation, Ember said. The record-low coal generation in May was just below the previous record, which was set during the pandemic lockdowns when coal power generated slightly above 10 per cent of all EU electricity during May 2020.

Fossil gas also recorded the lowest share of generation since 2018 at just 15 per cent of EU electricity during May, the data found.

Ember said the latest results provided further evidence that the collapse in fossil fuel power generation is “not an exception” and reflects a growing trend whereby renewable capacity additions and energy efficiency gains are rapidly eating into fossil fuels’ market share.

“Solar and wind are helping to cut fossil fuel use,” Brown added. “Not only did coal power set new lows, but gas is also tumbling. The EU is on track for a huge collapse in fossil power this year, as wind and solar emerge as the backbone of the future electricity system.”

The combination of renewable capacity additions, especially from solar, coupled with falling

'Europe's electricity transition has hit hyperdrive': Wind and solar overtake fossil generation across the EU

electricity demand have “propelled” wind and solar forward and caused fossil fuel generation to fall throughout late 2022 and into 2023, Ember said.

From January to May this year, coal and gas generation were found to have fallen by 20 per cent and 15 per cent, respectively, compared to the same period in 2022, while solar was found to have increased by 20 per cent and wind by five per cent.

According to Ember's European Electricity Review which was published in January, wind and solar generation overtook gas generation in the EU in 2022, representing another major milestone for the continent's clean energy transition.

The sharp fall in fossil fuel generation is being reflected in many countries across the bloc. For example, in Germany coal generation fell to its lowest level since early 2020 last month, despite the closure of its last nuclear power plants earlier this year. Similarly, in Poland, which is one of Europe's largest coal power producers, coal-fired generation fell to an all-time low of 62 per cent grid share or 7TWh.

The trend is also evident in the UK, which has seen a flurry of renewable records toppled since the start of the year.

In January, **National Grid ESO** confirmed that the UK had set a renewable power record with 87.6 per cent of electricity on the grid coming from renewables and nuclear sources for a half hour period. A separate analysis from Imperial College London commissioned by Drax, showed that [renewable energy sources](#) generated a record 40 per cent of Britain's electricity over the course of 2022, an increase of more than a third versus 2021.

According to Drax the surge in clean energy generation last year helped to cut [CO2 emissions](#) by as much as 2.7 million tonnes year-on-year.

Source: Business Green