

The German government is “sabotaging the international energy transition” by massively subsidizing fossil fuel exports by the oil and gas industry, two environmental advocacy groups are warning.

Research by Urgewald and Deutsche Umwelt-Hilfe (Environmental Action Germany) shows that Germany has been supporting climate-damaging energy projects by sponsoring fossil fuel exports to the tune of billions of euros. The findings are presented in the groups’ new report, “Climate Crisis Worldwide - Sponsored by Germany” (“Klimakrise weltweit - gefördert von Deutschland”).

“It is appalling how much the German government is sabotaging the international energy transition with these guarantees [and] helping to lock in the continued use of oil and gas,” report co-author Andy Gheorghiu said. It is particularly “outrageous,” Gheorghiu said, that Germany supports natural gas even though its climate-harming effects have been scientifically proven.

From 2015 through May 2021, German officials approved 144 oil and gas export guarantees worth more than €11.75 billion, according to official data the groups obtained via the Germany’ freedom of information law. Export guarantees are given to companies and banks in order to financially secure their export deals, which often are aimed at developing and emerging countries.

Most of these taxpayer-subsidized projects are in countries where significant human rights violations occur, the groups found. Of the 28 countries involved in the deals, 15 are classified as “Not Free,” according to Freedom House.

“By promoting oil and gas projects abroad, the German government is further fueling the climate crisis. This does not serve German interests, but puts the future of young people at risk,” said Sascha Müller-Kraenner of Environmental Action Germany. “The British government is showing the way: it will no longer give money or support to fossil fuels abroad - an example that the new German government must follow.”

The groups’ report highlights Arctic LNG 2, a Russian liquefied natural gas project for which Germany is considering a financial guarantee. French President Emmanuel Macron indicated at the IUCN World Congress in September 2021 that his government will not support the project, due to climate and biodiversity concerns.

Among its recommendations, Urgewald and Environmental Action Germany is urging German officials to withhold export subsidies for fossil fuels, and assess potential human rights violations and environmental damage in energy export deals.

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