

DROUGHT IN NORWAY NEWEST ENERGY THREAT

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temporarily stop hydroelectricity exports.

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Norway is warning that it may cut the rest of Europe off from its energy exports, exacerbating the energy crisis on the continent.

Geographically, the country is supercharged for producing hydroelectricity, and generates over 90% of its own electricity from running water stored in reservoirs through hydroelectric power stations. Normally, there's enough water to produce [electricity for export](#), which goes to customers including the UK, Germany, and the Netherlands.

But this year's drought has brought water reservoir levels, particularly in the southern part of the country, so low that the government is considering having to temporarily stop exports to maintain domestic electricity supply. The government announced on August 8th that it was considering restricting exports, though details had not been decided on, media reports.

Terje Aasland, the oil and energy minister, [informed](#) the Norwegian parliament that his department prioritised refilling dams over power production when levels fall below the seasonal average.

Power producers in southern Norway have already slowed down energy production to save water for the winter in the hopes of avoiding a supply crisis. Aasland [said](#) electricity production in southern Norway was down 18% compared to last year.

"This results in historically high electricity prices and a situation where, for the first time in many years, we cannot completely rule out a period of electricity rationing in the spring. But our professional authorities emphasise that the probability of this is low," he [explained](#)

to parliament.

His department is working out what reservoir levels would trigger export cut-offs.

“We need a management mechanism or security mechanism that safeguards national security of supply so that we do not run out of water in our reservoirs,” Aasland [told](#) Reuters. “We are now introducing a system where, when we come to a situation where the magazine capacity is below what is normal for the time of year and down to a critically low level, there will be a restriction on exports.”

Under the circumstances where many European countries are facing both increasing energy costs while scrambling to store up supplies for the winter, losing access to Norway’s cheap hydroelectricity would be another demoralising blow, even if it’s relatively inconsequential in the overall energy mix.

The *Guardian* [reports](#) that the North Sea Link cable, which was switched on last October, can supply power to about 5% of British households, though it is primarily used when demand is high and wind power production in the UK is low.

The government is expected to present its plan for export cut-off triggers this week.

Sylvi Listhaug, leader of the right-wing Progress party, has [said](#) “it would be a scandal” for “energy nation Norway” to have to ration electricity domestically.