

'Record fall in fossil fuels use' across UK and EU

There has been an unprecedented fall in fossil fuel use in the EU and UK – with renewables continuing to grow, according to a new report.

EU and UK coal and gas power fell respectively by 19% and 16% in 2023, according to the European Electricity Review published on Wednesday by thinktank Ember.

“Europe is entering a new era of [energy transition](#), with the cleanest power sectors ever in the UK and the EU last year,” said Ember’s Europe programme director Sarah Brown.

“[Fossil fuels](#) are playing a smaller role than ever as a system with wind and solar as its backbone comes into view.”

In the EU, renewables rose to a record 44% share of [EU](#) power and, for the first time, wind produced more electricity – 18% – than gas – 17% – in 2023.

The UK also reported record clean power generation with wind and solar accounting for a third – 33% – of the total, up from 29% in 2022.

However, despite these achievements, the UK is facing challenges as in September when the [offshore wind auction failed to secure any bids](#), a threat to the UK’s target of 50 GW of offshore wind power by 2030.

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A mix of factors contributed to this clean energy shift, like a fall in electricity demand and rising wind and solar power last year.

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“We’re seeing, record capacity installations in the EU for both wind and solar annual additions and also an increase in generation and increase in their share,” said Ms Brown.

She also added how recent events played a key role. “We saw an acceleration in the wanting to move towards clean power renewables as a result of [Russia’s invasion of Ukraine](#),” she said.

“When we saw really high skyrocketing gas prices and the energy crisis that ensued as a result of that, then we saw that extra urgency applied to that transition that we needed anyway.”

The clean transition took significant steps forward in 2023, but the report notes how an expected growth of electrification across all sectors and bigger electricity demand in the near future will need to be met with a continuous step-up in renewables if we want to achieve climate goals.