Coal power in Europe

FACT BOX – COAL GENERATION IN EUROPE	
Coal plants in Europe	There are 256 coal-fired power plants left in operation throughout the EU.
Emissions from coal	In 2014, Europe's huge fleet of coal plants released a total of 755 million tons of CO_2. 18% of the EU's total greenhouse gas emissions came from burning coal.
Carbon budgets for Europe	Climate Analytics calculates that the emissions budget for coal will be exceeded by 85% by 2050 if the EU's coal-fired power plants continue their operation as planned.
The health costs of coal	In 2013, the emissions from EU coal plants were responsible for nearly 23,000 premature deaths, tens of thousands of cases of ill health, from heart disease to bronchitis, and up to €62.3 billion in health costs.
Employment in renewables	Within 15 years, the European solar sector **alone** could be employing more people than the whole coal sector does today. In the EU, the renewable energy sector now employs four times as many people as the coal sector.
National phase-out plans	The UK was the first European country to announce a coal phase-out plan, with the aim of retiring all of its coal plants by 2025. France, Portugal and Finland have also intentions to phase out coal.

5 reasons for moving beyond coal

1) Health: Coal dirties our air and water, causing long-term illness, premature death, and unnecessary costs to our health systems

2) Economics: Increasing regulation, awareness of climate risk and new, cheaper technologies mean coal has no future. Continued investment in / subsidies to coal are slowing down the just and sustainable transition we need

3) Climate: Sticking with coal contributes significantly to climate change – which is already causing floods, heatwaves, wildfires and food price hikes in Europe. By contrast, phasing out coal is the quickest way of cutting carbon emissions and our best chance of keeping our commitments under the Paris Agreement.

4) A just and sustainable transition: A prompt transition to smarter energy use and renewable energy sources will create a more stable employment base, more robust economies and a healthier European population.

5) Employment in renewables: The transition "from coal to clean" can be just and inclusive if it picks up speed now. In 2016, wind and solar energy contributed the greatest increases in generation capacity across Europe and, in the coming years, the solar sector alone could be employing as many people as the coal sector does today. We need to divert subsidies away from dirty and out-dated fuels like coal and put them into efficiency measures, demand management technologies and renewable energy sources.