

GREECE TO EXPORT SOLAR POWER TO GERMANY, COVER STRIP-MINES WITH LARGEST PHOTOVOLTAIC ARRAY IN THE WORLD



Project Helios is a solar energy exchange initiative with the potential to bail Greece out of economic crisis and solve much of Germany's energy woes. The 20 billion euro (US \$29 billion) concept was cast in a meeting between Germany's Deputy Economy Minister Stefan Kapferer and Greek ministers of finance, development, energy, and the environment.

The proposed photovoltaic park will be largest in the world with an output set to double Greece's current solar energy capacity of 10.2 GW. Electricity generated in these fields will be exported to power hungry Germany. Germany has the fifth largest GDP in Europe and an energy demand to match. Since Chancellor Angela Merkl announced the shutting down of the country's 17 nuclear reactors by 2022, German government has been seeking ways to compensate for the industry's production, which accounted for 23% of national electricity consumption.



The 200 square kilometers of land necessary to complete the mammoth project will come in part from strip-mined scenery of Northern Greek region Kozani. The area--once responsible for harvesting lignite (aka brown coal) and asbestos--is gearing up to become the renewable energy envy of the the world. Though the project can't reverse environmental damage done by rapid industrial advancement or restore the public health, it does have the potential to create as many as 60,000 green jobs.

Project Helios couldn't come at a better time for the job-starved country of Greece. Unemployment rates are soaring to new highs (16.6% in May) and its economy is continuing on its three-year decline with 4.5% less output expected for 2011.

The bargain will help Germany reach its aggressive energy policy targets, which include reducing CO2 emissions by 40% below 1990 levels by 2020 (80% by 2050) and increasing the relative share of renewable energy in gross electrical consumption to 35% by 202 (80% by 2050).

The Greek government has initiated discussion with foreign banks and plans for the photovoltaic partnership come with a 20 to 25 year perspective, which may help attract investors.

Source: <http://ecopolitology.org/2011/08/29/greece-to-export-solar-power-to-germany-cover-strip-mines-with-largest-photovoltaic-array-in-the-world/>