Lessons learned from the German coal phase-out process since the 1950s

Webinar on Germany's long goodbye from coal; 09.06.2020

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Germany: Long history starting with the European Coal and Steel Community in 1951 and coming to an end in 2018

- 150 million t hard coal production
- ~ 600,000 employees in hard coal mining

1951 Foundation of the ECSC & co-determination law
1956 Suez crisis & liberation of coal price
1957 Re-integration of Saarland Foundation of Saarbergwerke AG
1958 Begin of the coal crisis
1964 Import coal cheaper than domestic coal
1968 1st oil crisis
1973 “Action program Ruhr” End of “ground lock”
1979 2nd oil crisis
1980 Reunification & EU influence in structural policy grows
1989 Begin of “IBA Emscher Park”
1990 ~ 2000 Growth orientation of EU structural policy, focus on “lead markets”, increased decentralization & participation
1997 Saarbergwerke AG sold to RAG AG
2007 Law to end hard coal subsidies & RAG foundation
2012 End of coal production in Saarland
2018 End of hard coal subsidies → end of production

Source: Oei et al. (2019).
Germany: Hard coal phase-out was economically driven and replaced by cheaper imported hard coal

- Domestic hard-coal was up to four times more expansive compared to imported coal

- Substitutional processes in households and industry

- Production and employment in Germany peaked in 1957

- Germany spent at least €330 billion on direct and indirect hard coal subsidies

Source: Oei et al. (2019).
Coal and Renewables in Germany since 1980

Source: Oei et al. (2020).
The carbon lock-in of coal regions and actors originates from various sources

Source: Oei et al. (2019).
List of selected References – all open-access

Lessons from Germany’s hard coal mining phase-out: policies and transition from 1950 to 2018

Journal: Climate Policy

Coal phase-out in Germany – Implications and policies for affected regions

Journal: Energy

Economic Resilience of German Lignite Regions in Transition

Journal: Sustainability
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Background: Policy Making, Stakeholder Engagement
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A just and timely coal transition is possible but needs political support
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