

ENDE GELÄNDE

STOP COAL – PROTECT THE CLIMATE



13 – 16 MAY 2016 IN LUSATIA



Foto: Ende Gelände

Aktivists occupying the open-cast coal mine Garzweiler, August 15, 2015



Information for journalists

Direct action is happening between 13th and 16th May 2016

You are welcome to accompany the action. If you plan to do so, please get in touch, then we can match you with activists. We strongly recommend you to attend the *Press Action Briefing* at Friday 13, 11am.

Contact:

e-mail: presse@ende-gelaende.org

+49 157 70584656 or Dorothee Häußermann: +49 152 0456 0800

About pictures you can use and other practical information, please keep up to date on our website:

<https://www.ende-gelaende.org/en/press/>

What actions are planned for 13th-16th May?

Ende Gelände Action: more than 2000 people from all over Europe will come together and take part in civil disobedience in the Lausitz lignite mining area. In white dust suits, they will go into the open cast mine and stop the digging equipment. Others will be at the extraction site. Their presence will shut down the coal mining, so detrimental to the climate, from 13th to 16th May.

Demonstration *Coal has no future*: At 1pm on Saturday, there will be a demonstration from Welzow to Proschim, supported by environmentalist groups and local campaign groups. In August 2015 at Ende Gelände 1500 people shut down the opencast mine at Garzweiler in the Rhine mining area.

The *Lausitz climate and energy camp* (9th – 16th May) in Proschim offers a diverse and exciting workshop programme. <https://www.lausitzcamp.info/>

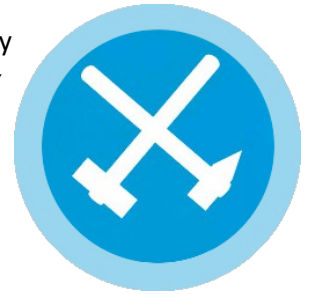
Who are *Ende Gelände*?

Ende Gelände is a joint initiative made up of people from the anti-coal and anti-nuclear power movement, the post-growth movement, those preparing the climate camps in the Rhineland and Lausitz, the forest occupation in Hambacher Forst, grassroots initiatives as well as large environmental groups, left-wing political groups and individuals.

What are we demanding?

Ende Gelände is demanding an immediate stop to coal mining and an just transition to a social and ecological society. We want to move to a society based on 100% renewable energy and grassroots democracy. This would involve transforming out an economy into one not based on profit and constant growth, but on respect for the environment and a 'good life' for all.

We are fighting for climate justice, that is, solidarity with those who are most severely affected by climate change and an unfair economic system. *'Energiewende ('energy transition') means not only a change in the sort of energy we use. A real Energiewende would tackle the causes of excessive energy use, and the economic system in which a few companies make huge profit out of people and nature.'* (Dorothee Haussermann)



We take the '1.5 degree target' seriously: for a realistic change to stop global warming, we must leave 60 – 80% of fossil fuels in the ground. Neither the Paris agreement nor the German climate change plans provide a path for doing this. So we are asking for people not to leave the future of our climate up to governments and big business but rather than take responsibility. *'If we want to avoid the worst consequences of climate change, then every tonne of coal we take from the earth is a tonne too much. Governments will not take urgent action— so we must.'* (Hannah Eichberger)

We take the '1.5 degree target' seriously: for a realistic change to stop global warming, we must keep 60 – 80% of global fossil fuels in the ground. For Europe this means we have to leave 90 % of coal reserves untouched. Neither the Paris agreement nor the German climate change plans provide a path for doing this. So we are call asking for people not to leave the future of our climate up to governments and big business but rather than take responsibility. *'If we want to avoid the worst consequences of climate change, then every tonne of coal we take from the ground is a tonne too much. Governments will not take urgent action— so we must.'* (Hannah Eichberger)

We demand that Vattenfall take full responsibility for managing the phase out of coal mining in Lausitz and for the welfare of its employees. If the Czech investor EPH takes over, the mine will be in operation for years to come. *'Vattenfall has made profit out of the mine for years and is now evading its responsibility. The takeover of Lausitz by EPH is good for Vattenfall's PR, and a catastrophe for the climate.'* (Mona Bricke)

Who supports us?

Environmental groups from across Germany have expressed their support. 'Ende Gelände is a wake-up call for us to stop using this destructive technology, protect our environment and show solidarity with people across the globe, particularly those who are already threatened by climate change.' Organisations that support us include BUND (Friends of the Earth Germany), Compact, Robin Wood, urwald and the 'Umwelt Institut München e.V'.

Ende Gelände is also part of a two week global series of 'Break Free from Fossil Fuels' (3 – 16 May) with the aim of leaving fossil fuels in the ground. Thousands of people on 5 continents and 12 countries will be demonstrating against coal power stations, pipelines and oil and gas infrastructure. Last weekend, e.g., hundreds shut down, the world's biggest coal export harbour in Newport/Australia.

International networks enable strong support for Ende Gelände. 25 buses will arrive from 12 different countries. Groups from Sweden, France, UK, Austria and Switzerland will be arriving by bike.

Prominent public figures have signed the *Global Call for Support* for Ende Gelände: 'Nothing substantial will happen to protect the climate if we don't take action from below, if we don't shut down fossil fuel infrastructure, if we don't force governments and corporations to abandon their destructive business-as-usual.'

Those who have signed include:

Alberto Acosta, economist and former presidential candidate and Minister for Oil (Ecuador); Noam Chomsky, Prof. Emeritus, MIT (USA); Naomi Klein, writer (Canada); Avi Lewis, film maker (Canada); Vandana Shiva, physicist (India); Michael Hardt, philosopher, Duke University (USA); Susan George, economist, Attac France (France); Nnimmo Bassey, climate activist, HOMEF (Nigeria); Caroline Lucas, Member of Parliament (GB)



Read our Global Call of Support and the full list of signatories:

<https://www.ende-gelaende.org/en/get-involved/global-call-for-support/>

Why is civil disobedience legitimate?

Given the impending climate crisis we need to take urgent action, but no adequate response has come from the parliamentary process. Even the moderate German climate protection targets will not be met, even though that the regional governments of Brandenburg, Sachsen and Nordrhein-Westfalen intend to stop lignite mining by the middle of the century.

So we are taking responsibility for climate protection and want to stop lignite mining with civil disobedience. When energy companies destroy the landscape, dig up villages and increase climate change, it is considered legal. But we consider it unjust, and we do not intend to tolerate it.

When thousands of people walk onto the Vattenfall site and disrupt the work, that is not legal, but in view of the destructive consequences of the mining, it is legitimate.

We do not have the resources to fund professional lobbyists to put pressure on those legislating on climate. But there are lots of us and we can pit our physical presence against the weight of the companies. Many campaigns which have successfully brought about social advances started with civil disobedience, such as the campaigns for women's suffrage or civil rights in the USA.

Our action agreement

The Ende Gelände alliance has created an action agreement which outlines how we will conduct ourselves during the direct action. Some key points:

“We will behave in a calm and cool-headed way. Escalation will not be provoked by us. We will not put people in danger. We will block and occupy with our bodies, but we will not destroy or damage any machinery or infrastructure in the process. [...] Our action is not directed at Vattenfall workers or the police. The safety of the activists taking part, and of the pit workers, will be our top priority.”

Read our full action agreement on <https://www.ende-gelaende.org/en/action/action-agreement-2/>

Background information:



Urgency of the climate crisis

The global average temperature rise of one degree since the start of meteorological records has led to serious droughts, an increase in extreme weather events and the collapse of important ecosystems such as coral reefs. People in the global South are already subject to rising sea levels, a lack of drinking water, poor harvests – and these are the people who have contributed the least to climate change and have the fewest options for coping with the circumstances. Further increasing temperatures will worsen the social and ecological crises.

The closer we get to the 2 degree target, the more likely it is that we pass tipping points. Even small changes in certain climate systems can trigger irreversible positive feedback mechanisms. If for example the permafrost in the Arctic thaws methane will be released which generates additional warming of the atmosphere – creating a whole new source of emissions which is not under our control and is not covered by the UN climate negotiations.

A study by the New Climate Institute has shown how the 1.5 degree target can be reached without risky, unproven technologies like CCS which store “negative emissions” in the ground. By 2035 all CO₂ emissions from power plants, factories and cars, plus also agriculture and deforestation, would have to be reduced to zero, in developed countries this would have to happen earlier. For Germany it would mean ending use of lignite and bituminous coal by 2025. From this we draw the conclusion that any additional tonne of coal which is burnt is a tonne too many.

Systemic change, not green tinkering

The *Ende Gelände* activists are radical critics of the system as well as environmental activists. They have realized that the social and ecological crises can't be solved with superficial solutions to individual problems, but rather the crises are interlinked and we need to expose the root causes. The use of lignite is just a symptom of a system which is sick: coal extraction represents a relationship between society and nature in which people's greed for resources leads them to ignore the consequences. Protesting against lignite is an important avenue for voicing criticism of the capitalist economic system.

As such the solutions to the climate crisis must look beyond the logic of profit and growth. This is completely missing from the normal scenarios for decarbonisation of the German economy produced by institutions such as the German Ministry for the Environment or Environment Agency, WWF or Greenpeace. Despite their differences these actors have one thing in common: their concept of “Energiewende” is based on substitution (replacing fossil fuels with renewables) and efficiency (more output for less input). There is next to nothing about energy sufficiency i.e. absolute energy savings by reducing demand and production.

This concept of “Energiewende” means that the economy can continue to follow the same logic as before. Energy will increasingly come from wind turbines or solar panels and the production processes are more energy efficient, but the point remains that companies have to grow to

A real debate about the “Energiewende” wouldn’t just focus on technological innovation but would also deal with the burning issues related to how we can organize a society which doesn’t need to use so much energy. Yes, tackling climate change isn’t just about electricity generation, it also involves agriculture, urban planning, trade policy.

It is paradoxical to watch the USA and EU claim to be leaders on climate while at the same time they are pushing forward free trade deals which will lead to rapid increases in emissions from global freight transport, which will let investors block directives on the environmental and further increase global inequality.

For more thoughts on this topic read the article “Blind spots of the German energy transition” by an Ende Gelände activist: <https://thenorwichradical.com/2016/04/13/the-blind-spots-of-the-german-energy-transition-2nd-round-for-ende-gelände/>

