

# Brexit Will Boost Nuclear Energy In UK And Eventually In EU



I focus on energy through an atomic lens. Tech, politics, competition.

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The UK voters have spoken; they want to leave the EU by a margin of 52% to 48%. The split should provide a boost for the UK's nuclear energy program. It should also improve its energy resiliency and improve the effectiveness of its effort to reduce CO2 emissions.

As an island nation, the UK doesn't have a large population of climate skeptics, though there are many that question the notion that unreliaables like wind and solar can replace fossil fuels.

The UK will be able to keep its [new carbon tax and ditch the ineffective EU Emissions Trading Scheme \(ETS\)](#), which has been a relative loss for UK companies who have purchased more credits than they have sold. It will be freed from EU required "renewable energy" standards and able to establish a more comprehensive "clean energy" standard that is more aggressive while allowing a greater range of potential solutions that include nuclear energy as a major contributor to the targets.

It will eliminate the leverage that the EU provides to antinuclear members like [Austria](#) to challenge its "contract for difference" deals as illegal state aid.

The exit should also provide a boon to UK construction workers, electricians and manufacturing employees because it will reduce the ability of contractors to fill their work forces with temporary workers from lower wage countries. That should also help avoid some of the construction difficulties that have plagued EPR projects in both Finland and France.

That's not a racist comment; it's strictly a comment about the project management challenge associated with language barriers. Training a work force to adhere to the incredibly complex procedural and documentation requirements associated with nuclear construction is a very challenging task. I can only imagine how difficult it would be to accomplish that task when dealing with more than a single language.

Fortunately for the UK, their engineers, managers and workers speak English. There is a huge worldwide pool of English-speaking workers. It might be especially useful for all concerned if a substantial portion of the nuclear construction work force was initially sourced from Australia so that they can develop the skills they will need at home after it has been ["considered as a future low-carbon energy source to contribute to national emissions reduction targets."](#)

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As the UK shows the way to succeed with nuclear energy by applying strong project management, exceptional training programs, consistent standards and a firm, multi-party political support system, the cost of nuclear energy will fall. As has been shown in almost every type of manufacturing and construction effort known to man, learning by doing, reusing tooling, reusing designs and applying the same processes to multiple projects will push costs ever lower.

As nuclear costs fall, other European countries will have less ability to interfere. Instead of using EU rulemaking processes to bureaucratically tip the scales in favor of less capable power systems, they might have to pay attention and emulate. That would be good for Europe, good for the climate, bad for Russia and Iran and good for human prosperity.

My personal opinion is that the UK would be best off if it cancelled the EPR projects at Hinkley and Sizewell and focused on increasing the unit runs of smaller, simpler designs like the [ATMEA](#), AP1000, APR1400 or perhaps the Hualong One. That might be too hard a decision for EDF to make; it has invested enormous sums of money in its robust, enormous but difficult-to-build EPR.

Later today, I will update this post with some comments from nuclear experts in the UK. I've sent out several requests, but will need to allow time for my contacts to respond.