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Answer given by Executive Vice-President Ribera
on behalf of the European Commission
(13.1.2026)

In 2016, the Commission approved a measure for the closure of lignite-fired power plants in case SA.42536. Plants in the scope of this measure were mothballed for four years, before they were planned to shut down permanently. Payments under this measure were scheduled annually to compensate for forgone profits due to the mothballing.

In 2022, following the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, Germany decided to transfer some of these mothballed plants to a temporary reserve with the view to temporarily allow those plants to return to the market, to be on stand-by and ready to be activated to the extent needed in the event of natural gas shortages. The Commission approved this latter measure in case SA.103662 pursuant to Article 107(3)(b) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to remedy a serious disturbance in the German economy. This measure was limited until 31 March 2024 and the Commission assessed specifically in that decision that there is no overlap in compensation with the measure for the closure of lignite-fired power plants, given that the eligible costs are different.

Furthermore, the Commission approved several German measures concerning the early closure of lignite power plants. These plants were or will be closed permanently at the agreed date.