

## Belgium

In the 19th century, the Walloon coal mines of southern Belgium fuelled the country’s industrial expansion. By 1917, coal mining had started in the north-east, around Limburg. National coal production peaked at 30 million tonnes in 1952 and was maintained at this level until the late 1950s. Output gradually declined as the Walloon and Limburg mines closed: Eisden mine in 1987 and Belgium’s last colliery at Heusden-Zolder in 1992. Remaining hard coal resources are estimated to be 4 100 million tonnes.

Coal imports totalled 4.1 million tonnes in 2018, coming mostly from Russia, Australia and the USA (more coal is imported into Antwerp for onward delivery to customers in other countries). Coal provides about 6% of Belgium’s primary energy supply and is used mainly by the steel industry, notably by ARCELORMITTAL at Ghent. With the decommissioning of Ruien coal-fired power plant in 2013 and the conversion of other coal plants to fire biomass, coal consumption for power generation is no longer significant.

Gross electricity generation in 2018 totalled 75.0 TWh of which 28.6 TWh (38.1%) came from nuclear power stations, 23.8 TWh (31.7%) from gas-fired plants, 11.5 TWh (15.3%) from wind and solar, and 6.8 TWh (9.1%) from biomass and waste. Coal (3.1%), hydro (1.7%, mainly pumped hydro) and oil (0.2%) largely accounted for the remainder. Electricity imports have risen fivefold since 1990 to 21.6 TWh in 2018 due to capacity closures and lower power prices in France, Germany and the Netherlands. Belgium’s largest power utility, ELECTRABEL – a subsidiary of ENGIE – has investments in coal-fired power plants in the Netherlands.