

Over-Reliance On Renewables Behind Catastrophic Blackouts in Spain

Excess solar resulted in too little “inertia,” making the whole system vulnerable

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People board commuter buses outside the Atocha train station in Madrid after its closure as a massive power outage hits Spain on April 28, 2025. Power went out across all of Spain and Portugal today, cutting cellphone and internet networks, halting trains and trapping people in elevators, officials said. (Photo by Thomas COEX / AFP) (Photo by THOMAS COEX/AFP via Getty Images)

Six days ago, the media celebrated a significant milestone: Spain’s national grid operated entirely on renewable energy for the first time during a weekday.

At 12:35 pm today local time, the lights went out across Spain and Portugal, and parts of France. Although power was quickly restored in France, it could take a week to fully restore power in Spain and Portugal.

In an instant, the electric hum of modern life — trains, hospitals, airports, phones, traffic lights, cash registers — fell silent. Tens of millions of people instantly plunged into chaos, confusion, and darkness. People got stuck in elevators. Subways stopped between stations. Gas stations couldn’t pump fuel. Grocery stores couldn’t process payments. Air traffic controllers scrambled as systems failed and planes were diverted. In hospitals, backup generators sputtered on, but in many cases could not meet full demand. Cell towers collapsed under surges and outages.



People queue to try to withdraw cash money at an ATM as credit card payment is unavailable due to a massive power outage in Spain, in Madrid on April 28, 2025. Power went out across all of Spain and Portugal today, cutting cellphone and internet networks, halting trains and trapping people in elevators, officials said. (Photo by Thomas COEX / AFP) (Photo by THOMAS COEX/AFP via Getty Images)

It was one of the largest peacetime blackouts Europe has ever seen. And it was not random. It was not an unforeseeable event. It was the exact failure that many of us have been, repeatedly, warning lawmakers about for years — warnings that Europe’s political leaders systematically chose to ignore.

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