



KANTON AARGAU

## STATE CHANCELLERY

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## PRESS RELEASE

### **Minimise the risk of an electricity and gas shortage with immediate measures and plan precautions and preparations in the event of an incident.**

#### **Government Council informs about the current status of the cantonal crisis management and contingency plans**

**The Government Council supports the federal government's efforts to minimise the risk of an impending electricity and gas shortage by taking swift action. Many municipalities, companies and institutions have also adopted the restrictions ordered for the cantonal administration; as part of the national Energy Saving Alliance, Aargau is launching a cantonal information and motivation campaign in mid-October 2022. At the same time, the task force on security of supply is continuing to press ahead with cantonal contingency planning in the event of an incident; this involves regular exchanges with affected stakeholder groups, in particular with municipalities and the economy. The Government Council is working to minimise immission impacts in the realisation of the reserve power plant in Birr.**

"Currently, Switzerland's gas and electricity supply is assured," emphasises Government Councillor Stephan Attiger, Head of the Department of Construction, Transport and Environment (CTE), "nevertheless, we must assume our responsibility and take precautions for the upcoming winter half-year in the event of an electricity and gas shortage." The canton of Aargau supports the federal government's strategy of minimising the risks of an electricity and gas shortage with measures that can be implemented quickly and are effective, while at the same time preparing for the eventuality with contingency planning, explains the energy director. The Government Council is guided by the four escalation levels outlined by the federal government for electricity and gas shortages.

The focus of the cantonal contingency planning to date has been on ensuring the ability to govern and the cantonal crisis management as well as the functioning of the system-critical administrative units. As soon as the federal government specifies its ideas and specifications regarding restrictions, quotas, prioritisation, bans or cyclical grid shutdowns, the canton of Aargau will tackle the corresponding implementation planning. The federal government has already submitted a corresponding draft ordinance for consultation for gas supply, but not yet for electricity supply.

**Despite improved situation on the energy markets, considerable supply risks remain**

Due to a lack of Russian gas supplies, high European gas prices have led to considerable savings for industry. Together with the high deliveries from Norway and overseas, these savings continue to increase storage levels in the EU and especially in countries close to the border. Basically, the situation on the energy markets has improved. The federal government's recommendation to switch dual-fuel plants from October 2022 will have another positive effect. Since this switchover will require a lot of heating oil and diesel, the Government Council continues to recommend that the population and the economy fill their oil and diesel tanks - this in order to avoid a logistical traffic jam. The federal government has also met the demands of the Government Council for early and uniform national measures at the appropriate level with the ordinances on the gas shortage situation, on which a consultation was recently carried out.

Switzerland's electricity supply is currently secure. However, supply risks remain considerable, especially in the area of natural gas electricity production in neighbouring countries. The availability of French nuclear power plants remains at a historic low, with the French nuclear power operator EDF holding out the prospect that all nuclear power plants should be back on the grid by mid-February 2023.

The availability of the French nuclear power plants, the natural gas situation and the weather will be the determining factors for Switzerland's electricity supply security in the coming winter of 2022/23.

The Federal Council has enacted the Ordinance on Hydropower Reserves. Furthermore, as suggested by the canton of Aargau, attempts are being made to use existing emergency generator systems. Nevertheless, in addition to general savings measures, further precautions will be needed to increase the security of supply or reduce the risk of a shortage. The use of reserve power plants, such as the one planned in Birr, and the activation of emergency generators require temporary adjustments to environmental legislation at the federal level. The use of such reserve capacities must be kept to a minimum.

Moreover, there is currently still no clear, nationally uniform definition of the system-critical institutions and companies that are to be exempted from quotas and - if technically possible - from grid disconnections.

### **Government Council welcomes Birr reserve power plant and advocates for improvements to protect the population**

The Government Council supports the installation of a mobile and temporary reserve power plant in Birr, which serves national supply security. However, the use of the oil- or gas-fired power plant must be kept to a minimum and other energy-saving measures appropriate to the stage must be exhausted as a matter of priority.

The plant in Birr must be built and operated in such a way that as few immissions (noise, air) as possible are generated and the protection of the population and the environment is guaranteed at all times. It is necessary to define minimum limit values to be complied with as well as technically and economically reasonable abatement paths. In addition, the canton has intervened with the federal government and the GE to review the choice of location on the site or to convincingly explain why a more suitable site is not possible.

### **Measures for the cantonal administration are implemented and adopted as standard by third parties**

On 14 September 2022, at the request of the Task Force on Security of Supply, the Government Council decided on various energy-saving measures for the employees of the cantonal administration and for the properties owned by the canton and rented by the canton for exclusive use. These include the reduction of room and water temperatures, the switching off of non-safety-relevant outdoor lighting as well as general, fundamental energy-saving measures such as switching off appliances and systems that are not absolutely necessary or the prohibition of electric heaters and comfort-oriented room air conditioning.

In the canton of Aargau, many municipalities, companies, organisations and institutions have already adopted the restrictions imposed by the Government Council on the cantonal administration or cantonal properties. or have even adopted more far-reaching measures.

In connection with the energy-saving measures that need to be implemented quickly, there is still a need for information and clarification on various issues; for example, with regard to Christmas markets, public and private Christmas lighting and street lighting. The canton, in consultation with the Association of Municipal Councils, will issue uniform recommendations on these and other topics.

### **Aargau sets standards as a member of the Energy Saving Alliance, launches campaign and maintains advisory services**

Aargau was the first canton to join the national Energy Saving Alliance; among other things, with the commitment to set standards in its own sphere of influence of administration or properties and to act as a role model.

A further commitment within the framework of the Energy Saving Alliance will take place in mid-October 2022 with the launch of a cantonal energy saving campaign to complement and support the national campaign. The common goal must remain to prevent the looming shortage.

The website [www.ag.ch/mangellage](http://www.ag.ch/mangellage) is constantly being expanded and supplemented with FAQs, for example. In particular, the information provided for the business community is being condensed. Tips on the topics of energy saving, efficiency and production can also be found there. In addition, energieberatungAARGAU is available for these topics with a hotline e-mail address ([energieberatung@ag.ch](mailto:energieberatung@ag.ch)) and by telephone: +41 62 835 45 40.

### **Task Force on Security of Supply expands cantonal crisis management**

The Task Force on Security of Supply has further developed the cantonal crisis management in recent weeks. It has prepared an interim report for the Government Council in which the departments and the State Chancellery define and prioritise the need for action in connection with a possible electricity and gas shortage. The aim is to ensure the ability to govern and the functioning of the system-critical parts of the administration at all escalation levels.

The Government Council's basic aim in cantonal crisis management is that necessary measures or restrictions should have as little impact as possible on the canton's residents in the private sphere as well as on public life and the economy.

### **Government Council takes up concerns of the business community**

Since the end of August 2022, the canton has been exchanging views with the business associations (AIHK and AGV) and the employee associations (ArbeitAargau) on the topic of supply security every fortnight in the "Economy" dialogue. The head of the Office of Economic Affairs and Labour (DNH) chairs this exchange body. In addition to the Office of Economic Affairs and Employment (AWA), the Canton's Energy Department (CTE) and Location Promotion Department (DNH) also participate. The aim is to take up the concerns of the economy and employee associations, to answer open questions as far as possible, to inform them at an early stage and to include them in consultations. This was already implemented in this way during the consultation on the draft ordinances on the gas shortage.

A motion by the SP, Greens and FDP of 6 September 2022 calls for measures to counteract the effects of rising energy prices and inflation on the economy. The Federal Council is also evaluating measures such as the need for a state relief programme in cases of hardship. The Government Council will represent the concerns of the Aargau economy regarding the need for support at the national level and, in the event of an incident, will examine any additional need for cantonal action.

*Further information for media professionals:*

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