



Q & A

What is the LCP BREF?

The European Union's Industrial Emissions Directive aims to reduce the environmental impact of large industry by ensuring the use of best available techniques for environmental performance. These techniques are detailed in sector-specific technical documents called BREFs. The 'Large Combustion Plant' (LCP) BREF outlines the best available techniques for big power stations with a rated thermal input equal to or greater than 50 MW. It sets emission ranges for various pollutants associated with the use of Best Available Techniques (BAT) for combustion of various types of fuel.

The limits set in the LCP BREF will be legally binding and Member States will be required to set emission limits based on what is described in the document.

Who wrote the LCP BREF?

It was drafted following a data and evidence gathering process involving stakeholders from the European Commission, Member States, environmental NGOs and industry itself. The LCP BREF is based on emissions data from back in 2010 that has been checked by Member States and the final document represents an attempt to find consensus between all parties based upon evidence of what is "technically and economically" achievable.

What type of pollution will be reduced by the LCP BREF?

The LCP BREF contains revised levels for emissions of NO_x, SO₂ and PM into the air as well as, for the first time, mercury. If strictly implemented across the EU, the resulting emissions reductions could save more than 20,000 lives every year from coal pollution alone. The LCP BREF also updates the water pollution discharge levels for hazardous pollutants like cadmium and mercury.

How does coal pollution affect our health?

Burning coal produces large quantities of various harmful substances. Nitrous oxides (NO_x), sulphur dioxide (SO₂) and tiny particulate matter (PM) are pumped into the air. Coal pollution negatively affects human health in a number of ways, including contributing to the development of serious conditions such as chronic bronchitis, asthma, heart disease and strokes. The World Health Organisation described air pollution as "the world's largest single environmental health risk" and estimates it is responsible for one in eight of all deaths worldwide. Heavy metals -such as very hazardous cadmium and mercury are also discharged directly into waters, accumulating in the food supply chain.

Why launch [a petition](#) now?

The LCP BREF is an extremely important document with huge potential to force the largest EU industrial polluters to clean up or shut down. The process that designs new environmental standards for industry was supposed to be depoliticised, led by experts and based on facts. Sadly, the entire process has been subject to immense pressure from industry lobbyists and even now as the final document is agreed - years behind schedule - polluting industry and even [some Member States](#) are openly attempting a last-gasp effort to stop the document ever being adopted.

Wouldn't it be better to close coal plants than install costly pollution-reducing technology?

In almost all cases - yes! Alongside causing poisonous air pollution, coal is also a major cause of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions, one of the leading contributors to global warming. Closing coal power plants should be a priority for any government serious about their Paris Climate Agreement commitments, and closing those that are having a dangerous impact on our health and are unable to comply with the revised LCP BREF is a common sense priority.

How will the LCP BREF affect my country?

The extent to which the LCP BREF will reduce pollution in any given country depends on how strictly the document is implemented by national governments and its permit writers. If the most ambitious levels are followed there is significant potential to reduce harmful pollution everywhere. As part of the [Lifting Europe's Dark Cloud Report](#), we produced [country-specific information](#) about the impact of the LCP BREF on air-related coal pollution across Europe.

Where can I find the revised LCP BREF, what is the current status?

The current LCP BREF review process started at the end of October 2011 and should have been completed by August 2014. Due to various delays being pushed by both industry and Member States seeking to resist tougher standards, it has taken until now to schedule to vote: now set for 28 April 2017. The European Commission have published [the most recent draft](#) of this highly technical document on their website. The BAT-Conclusions (binding) part adopted is available [here](#).

What do the NGOs think about the proposed BREF limits of the revised LCP BREF?

The European Environmental Bureau (EEB) took part in the stakeholder meetings that fed into the Commission's final draft for the revised LCP BREF. During this process the EEB demanded stricter BREF levels based on the evidence brought to the table. The current levels (upper BREF limits) for existing coal/lignite plants reflect levels negotiated by polluting industry, **not** what is achievable by using the best current techniques. For more information see detailed [EEB](#) and [Greenpeace](#) demands.