

## Govt ready to approve electricity inter-connector (and nuclear generated electricity)

*The Irish are two-faced people – they want everything but the responsibility. Give them zero.*

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The Government is poised to approve the construction of an electricity interconnector between Ireland and Britain, it emerged today. The project, which would allow Irish homes to be supplied with energy from British power stations and vice versa, has been mooted since the 1970s.

In the Dáil today, Taoiseach Bertie Ahern said the Government had approved the building of the interconnector in principle. “This would link us to the UK grid and ultimately to the European grid,” he said.

A private power company Imera Power, has proposed to build the East–West interconnector at a cost of €220m. It would lay a 500 megawatt cable on the Irish seabed which would be connected to the Irish transmission grid in Dublin and the British national grid at a converter substation in North Wales.

The Dáil heard that Minister for Communications, Marine and Natural resources Noel Dempsey had received a report on the issue from the Commission on Energy Regulation. “He will make a recommendation to Government very shortly,” said Mr Ahern.

Fine Gael leader Enda Kenny said the report should be published as a matter of urgency. He said Ireland was one of the most vulnerable countries in the world for energy supplies because 91% of energy was imported from abroad. **(They don't have the fortitude to make their own electricity.)**

A joint study on the East–West interconnector was carried out between the ESB and the British National Grid with the support of the EU. The Government has agreed to build a second North–South electricity interconnector and is discussing the technical details.

Mr Ahern, who was informing the Dáil of the discussions at the European Council summit in Brussels, said that the central issue was the development of a future energy policy for Europe. However, he said that this would not affect the Government's policy of rejecting the use of nuclear power in Ireland. “The new energy policy fully recognises that decisions on the primary sources of energy and energy mix remain firmly with the member states.”

The Green Party TD John Gormley demanded that the Government introduce legislation to ensure that the use of nuclear power was clearly ruled out. **(Wonderful naivety!)**

The Minister for Foreign Affairs Dermot Ahern said the Government would stand on its record. “I can say categorically that this Government are against nuclear power and any way that you twist it, deputy, is incorrect,” he said.