

# Baltic States to Cut Energy Ties With Russia This Weekend in Power Grid Switch

By [AFP](#)

February 05, 2025



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Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia will disconnect from the Russian power grid on Saturday, severing Soviet-era energy ties with their neighbor to the east.

A countdown clock in Lithuania's capital, Vilnius, is marking the hours until the Baltic states join the Western European power grid.

"We are now removing Russia's ability to use the electricity system as a tool of geopolitical blackmail," Lithuania's Energy Minister Zygimantas Vytautas told AFP.

Officials have planned celebrations across the three countries, though some consumers worry about supply disruptions. Latvia will physically cut a power line to Russia on Saturday, and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen is set to join Baltic leaders for a

ceremony in Vilnius on Sunday.

"This is the last step in our fight for energy independence. We can finally take matters into our own hands," Vaiciunas said.

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The Baltic states, once part of the Soviet Union, are now members of the European Union and NATO, positioned along Russia's western border.

They have worked for years to integrate with the European grid but faced technological and financial hurdles. Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine made the transition more urgent, heightening fears of being targeted.

While the Baltic states stopped purchasing Russian gas and electricity after the invasion, their grids remained connected to Russia and Belarus, with Moscow controlling the electricity flow. This left them dependent on Russia for power stability, which is crucial for industries and infrastructure.

After Saturday, the three countries will regulate their own supply.

"So far, Russia has been able to use energy as a weapon, creating the risk of unplanned electricity disruptions driven by political decisions," Vaicunas said.

After disconnecting from the Russian grid at 0700 GMT on Saturday, the Baltic states will operate in an "isolated mode" for about 24 hours to test their frequency stability.

"We need to carry out some tests to ensure Europe that we are a stable energy system," said Rokas Masiulis, head of Lithuania's state-run grid operator, Litgrid.

Engineers will switch power stations on and off, monitor frequency fluctuations, and assess their ability to control them, Masiulis said.

The three states will then integrate into the European grid via Poland.

"In simple terms, the only change will be that our frequency will start fluctuating in sync with Europe," Masiulis said.

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Lithuania has warned of potential risks during the transition, including cyberattacks, disinformation campaigns, and possible physical threats to critical infrastructure.

"Various short-term risks are possible, such as kinetic operations against critical infrastructure, cyber-attacks and disinformation campaigns," the country's state security department told AFP in a statement.

Poland's power grid operator, PSE, said it will use helicopters and drones to monitor the

connection with Lithuania.

The Baltic region has seen a series of undersea telecom and power cable disruptions in recent months. Some analysts and politicians have accused Russia of conducting hybrid warfare, allegations Moscow denies.

A total of 1.6 billion euros (\$1.7 billion) has been invested in the synchronization project across the Baltic states and Poland.

Vaiciunas said consumers should not experience disruptions during the transition. Still, concerns over power cuts have driven up generator sales in Estonia.

"January sales numbers show a clear rise in interest towards generators," Margo Pruunlep, sales and marketing director at home improvement store Ehituse ABC, told AFP.

Priit Vaio, director of corporate sales and e-commerce at Bauhof, said that generator sales rose several dozen times in January compared to the same period last year.

Following the Baltic states' grid shift, Russia's Kaliningrad exclave will lose its connection to mainland Russia's power system.

Kaliningrad has spent years building up its own power generation capacity, and the Kremlin has downplayed concerns.

"We have taken all measures to ensure the uninterrupted reliable operation of our unified energy system," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said last week.

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