

## **German court nukes tax on power firms**

Power companies in Germany stand to gain billions in refunds from the government after the country's top court declared Wednesday that a nuclear fuel tax was illegal. The news boosted shares of major operators E.ON and RWE, which must phase out atomic power by 2022 under a decision Chancellor Angela Merkel made after Japan's 2011 Fukushima disaster.

Germany's Constitutional Court ruled that the nuclear fuel tax imposed from 2011-16 was unconstitutional and scrapped it retrospectively. The tax, which levied 145 euros per gramme of new radioactive fuel, had netted the German government nearly 6.3 billion euros (\$7 billion), according to finance ministry data. E.ON said the tax had cost it over 2.8 billion euros, a sum it wants refunded plus 450 million euros interest. RWE said it had paid 1.7 billion euros, and EnBW said its had paid 1.4 billion euros.

On the Frankfurt Stock Exchange, RWE shares rose 6.34 percent to 19.70 euros, and EON 5.12 percent to 8.46 euros, by 1340 GMT. The tax on new uranium and plutonium fuel rods was first levied after the Merkel government had allowed the utilities to extend the service spans of their reactors. However, the tax remained in place despite Merkel's 2011 decision to shutter Germany's nuclear reactor fleet, sparking legal complaints by the power companies.

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