# Alec D’Angelo

Critique

# **Europe Is in the Middle of a Messy Nuclear Slowdown**

<https://www.wired.com/story/europe-nuclear-power-plants/>

Wired Magazine does a great job telling stories involving science, technology, and data in a way that is compelling and accessible to readers. By using narrative techniques, data can be contextualized in a way that immerses readers into an otherwise unapproachable topic. Maintaining this balance is difficult as some stories read narratively but with very little data and factual information, while other stories wield heaps of data but lack the narrative flow to keep readers engaged.

This story opens with a great lead, tying New Year’s Eve celebrations with Germany’s divestment from nuclear power, narratively signalling this transition and backing it up with data on Germany’s use of nuclear power. The piece goes on to use data regarding nuclear use among the various EU countries to demonstrate the different approaches of each member country. The engaging narrative style employed in the lede unfortunately fades as the article progresses and it begins to read more like a story from Politico, highlighting the political dimensions of energy policy and the various pledges made by countries regarding climate change. The policy angle does a good job contextualizing the issue with other data about carbon emissions, the use of fossil fuel, and the nature of aging nuclear power plants, but at times meanders and fails to keep readers engaged. Time as a form of data was not something I considered prior, but this story does a good job using the various time tables around construction of energy infrastructure, climate pledges and policy goals to further contextualize the story and back up their claims. I thought it was interesting how this story applied an American Perspective to EU policy and data in order to give insight for American policymakers who might soon make similar decisions. Still, this story would be immensely improved by the inclusion of a visual aid.

A map would help this story greatly since it hops around between various countries and becomes confusing at times. This would allow the reader to look at each EU country and see the differences laid out in the data as well as visually quantify the nuclear power plants being looked at. A timetable would also be a significant improvement, as the story jumps around between various dates causing similar confusion. A visual showing the time tables and progress made by each country would make this information more accessible to readers. This story suffers a great deal from its lack of visuals. The story contains lots of information, but without visuals this information feels tossed at the readers. The narrative style employed in the beginning makes scant reappearances, and much of the story becomes grafs containing dates and numbers told with very little style.

This story meanders towards its end with a terrible kicker. While it summarizes the findings somewhat and pitches it forward, “The path to zero emissions, it turns out, does not necessarily run in a straight line,” reads super corny and fairly ambiguous. In the beginning the reporter mentions potential lessons gleaned for American Policy makers which might be a stronger way to end the story. I found the notion of an American Perspective on EU data appealing and think it could’ve been expanded upon in greater detail..