

Warsaw, April 2025

## **We must not repeat the mistakes of the 1990s. Poland must fight for resources for a fair transformation of coal regions**

Honourable Prime Minister,

**Poland needs earmarked funds for a fair transition in the Multiannual Financial Framework for 2028-2034** in at least the same amount as in the current EU budget, i.e. around PLN 17 billion. The extension of this support will be decided during the budget negotiations, in which the Polish government has a strong position, and the presidency of the Council of the European Union may be a lever for success. **Without obtaining these funds, the Polish government risks condemning millions of Poles to social collapse. We therefore recommend that the Council of Ministers take active steps to obtain a pool of funds dedicated exclusively to regions in transition.**

Over the last ten years, coal's share of electricity generation has been falling rapidly: from 82 per cent in 2015 to 57 per cent last year. According to the draft update of the National Energy and Climate Plan, in 2030, this rate is to be only 22 per cent. This means a continuation of the current trend and the need to maintain spending on the just transition of coal regions - without them, we are threatened by the Wałbrzych scenario of the 1990s. **By reducing coal mining and burning, the Polish government is responding correctly to global economic trends. These also take into account care for local communities, and the Fair Transformation Fund is a guarantor not only of their future, but also of social stability and the democratic rule of law.**

The FST is an instrument of the EU's cohesion policy and is aimed at levelling the development opportunities of regions that are most vulnerable to the effects of the planned reduction in the extraction and combustion of the country's coal resources. **The Silesian Voivodeship alone has received more than PLN 9 billion from the Fund, which is used to finance, among other things, investment in small and medium-sized enterprises, youth and adult education, the provision of new jobs and the development of post-mining areas. Funds also go to Bełchatów, Wałbrzych, Eastern Wielkopolska and Western Małopolska.**

Communications from the European Commission indicate that the proposed EU budget plans to establish a single fund, which will make it impossible to continue the Fair Transformation Fund in its current form. The proposed priorities of the new budget structure unfortunately do not include measures for the just transition of coal regions in general. In this situation, **it is crucial to involve and take action by Poland and other countries in the region, for which the lack of support for moving away from coal poses a gigantic economic and social threat.**

**The Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union may be a lever towards achieving this goal.** The Council of Ministers should seize this unique opportunity to put the call for the extension of the financial instrument supporting fair transformation on the agenda of intergovernmental talks. On the agenda of the Polish Presidency is the adoption of Council Conclusions on Cohesion Policy - one of which should be a call for the extension of funding for equitable transformation under a dedicated mechanism.

Such involvement may now be the most effective way of shaping the MFF 2028-2034 in a way that is responsible towards citizens. **Poland is currently the largest beneficiary of FST funds and these funds should also be used in the years to come, mainly because we started the transformation from a different level than Western Europe and it will take us longer to move away from coal.**

The billions of zlotys for a fair transition complement other European policies: strong and resilient Polish coal regions developing new specialisations and promoting entrepreneurship are part of the strengthening of competitiveness policy. Moreover, these measures are essential for the effective implementation of the "Policy for the economic promotion of Poland" adopted by the Council of Ministers in February this year. "Poland's economic promotion policy", adopted by the Council of Ministers in February this year.

Public opinion in Poland is increasingly aware of the necessity of the transformational path taken by the government. The same applies to knowledge of a just transition - a process that the coal regions must be enabled to undertake. Neglecting the inhabitants of these regions will mean not only wasting an opportunity to improve their lot, but also worsening the effectiveness of the measures taken by the government.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

To meet the challenges described above, the Union of Associations Polish Green Network, together with the signatories of the letter, recommend taking the following actions:

1. **developing and clarifying the proposal for a Fair Transformation Fund from the above-mentioned Position of the Government of the Republic of Poland on Cohesion Policy**, clearly indicating the need to continue the financial instrument dedicated to coal regions,
2. work towards **the inclusion of the above point in the Council conclusions on cohesion policy**,
3. **bringing the above position into the mainstream budget negotiations**,
4. **identifying allies** for the above position among other Member States and involving them in the Union's work,
5. **the use of the Polish government's negotiating power in the EU legislative process** and soft power along the lines of Professor Jerzy Buzek's involvement in the EU's international arena for the establishment of a Fair Transformation Fund during previous budget negotiations.

In view of the above, we kindly request the Honourable Prime Minister to respond to our letter. **We would like to note that the period of the Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union is approaching the halfway and we see an urgent need for immediate action on the part of the Polish Government.** At the same time, the Polish Green Network expresses its readiness to cooperate: as an expert organization, we are ready to provide substantive support in the preparation of the necessary actions.

Yours sincerely

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President of the Union of Associations Polish Green  
Network

Persons and organisations supporting the position expressed in the letter:

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Kwiatkowski, Frank Bold Foundation

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Dr Mateusz Piotrowski, Patient Europe Association

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