



Draft

Title: **For a European Future without Coal - Stop the Turów coal mine in the Polish-German-Czech cross border region!**

Tabled by: Bündnis 90/Die Grünen

Draft text

1 *Resolution tabled by Partia Zieloni, Strana Zelených, Bündnis 90/ Die Grünen*

2 We are in the middle of a climate crisis. Greens all over Europe are fighting
3 alongside civil society and millions of European citizens for a fast transition
4 towards climate neutrality in line with the Paris Agreement. Green policy is
5 built on rapidly expanding sustainable renewables, improving energy efficiency
6 and reducing energy demand while phasing out the most harmful fuels such as
7 coal. In regions that live off coal, such as the border region between Poland,
8 Czechia and Germany, these necessary transitions are causing profound
9 disruptions in the local labour market and creating a huge challenge for people
10 and the region as a whole. Therefore, we Greens believe that ambitious climate
11 goals must be based on a just transition: a Green and resilient recovery that
12 will help to kick-start the economy and get people back to work.

13 Near the tri-border point between Czechia, Poland and Germany and close to the
14 Polish city of Bogatynia, the Turów open-cast lignite mine and its power plant
15 are working unaffected by the need for a just transition to climate neutrality
16 –with severe negative impacts on water, air and soil in the surrounding
17 environment. While Poland is the largest hard coal and second largest lignite
18 producer in the EU, the catastrophic environmental consequences of a coal mine
19 like Turów do not stop at its borders. Lowering groundwater levels of more than
20 20 metres are threatening thousands of people in the Liberec Region in Czechia
21 with the loss of clean drinking water. Moreover, new studies estimate that, near

22 the German-Polish border, land subsidence will increase to a total of 1.2 metres
23 by 2044. In the centre of the German city of Zittau, it is estimated that land
24 subsidence will increase to a total of 36 to 72 cm.

25 The original licence for the mine, dated 1994, expired on 30 April 2020.
26 However, Michał Kurtyka, Poland's Minister of Climate, extended the licence for
27 another six years without public consultations, which means citizens were unable
28 to exercise their right to object. Thus, the continuation of mining in the Turów
29 open-cast lignite mine violates EU law.

30 For all these reasons, people throughout the cross-border region continue
31 to protest and several thousand have submitted a petition to the European
32 Parliament against the extension and expansion of the open-cast mine. Without
33 doubt, replacing the Turów lignite mine with a mix of renewable energy sources
34 located in Lower Silesia is beneficial to both the environment and people in the
35 region. The benefits will be even greater if such a transition is planned
36 between the three regions being impacted.

37 The European Greens support the protesters, environmental activists in the
38 region and local Greens in their goal to actively promote and shape the
39 structural change of the coal phase-out in line with the European Green Deal's
40 objective of climate neutrality by 2050 at the latest. But in harsh opposition
41 to this European objective, the open-cast lignite mine in Turów continues to
42 operate.

43 We therefore demand:

- 44 • If the European Commission's ongoing mediation between Czechia and Poland
45 fails, the Commission must take legal action against Poland in the form of
46 an infringement procedure which will force the Polish government to comply
47 with the obligatory consultation mechanisms. The Commission should issue a
48 reasoned opinion thereby enabling Czechia to take the case to the EU Court
49 of Justice.
- 50 • The border region of Poland, Germany and Czechia should aim to become a
51 cross-border coal-exit region with the support of the sustainable use of
52 funding, such as the European Just Transition Fund, implementing cross-
53 border community projects on renewable energy and structural change.

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- For a sustainable future, citizen participation is of the highest importance. In cross-border regions, we can see how Europe is growing together from below. The promotion of cross-border civil society cooperation, of encounters among people, should therefore be a priority for regional and national governments and must be further developed.
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- The mining must stop immediately – until all the legal issues have been clarified.
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- We need a European end to coal. Therefore, governmental decisions to phase out coal should not be undermined by outdated investment protection deals, such as the Energy Charter Treaty which allows investors in fossil fuel to sue governments for compensation when they take action that harms their profits. If no substantial reform of the treaty is in sight in the ongoing negotiations, the EU must leave it.
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- 2) <https://www.waterorcoal.org/>
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- 3) <https://zittau.de/de/turow-studie>
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- 4) https://zittau.de/sites/default/files/atoms/files/final_krupp_gutachten_turow.pdf
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- 6) <https://www.annacavazzini.eu/surprise-new-licence-for-the-turow-coal-mine-violates-eu-law-say-anna-cavazzini-and-daniel-gerber/>
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- 7) <https://www.annacavazzini.eu/pressestatement-zur-protestaktion-gegen-die-verlaengerung-und-den-ausbau-des-braunkohletagebaus-turow/>
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