

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002854/24
to the Commission
Kosma Złotowski (ECR)
(11 December 2024)**

Subject: Polish Government's social agreement with mining unions

The Polish Government concluded a social contract with the mining unions in 2021, which concerned abandoning the use of coal in energy production under the terms of a just transition. After the change of government in 2023, a decision was taken to uphold the agreement.

The regulation allowing state aid to be directed to the mining industry expired. However, for social and economic reasons, it is not possible for Poland to bring the exploitation of coal to a sudden halt, as it remains the primary source of energy in the energy mix. At the same time, without the Commission's approval, the government cannot transfer money to aid the mining sector, which calls into question the agreements reached with the trade unions.

The Polish application regarding this agreement is still pending, but it is reported that the Commission's decision will be unfavourable. The report 'Retirement and support packages for older workers in the EU coal sector', published on the Commission website, contends that the agreement is unfeasible, as it puts too much strain on public finances and will discourage workers from seeking retraining. According to the report, the implementation of the agreement would require changes to EU environmental and state aid rules, which is impossible in the context of pursuing the Green Deal objectives.

1. Is the Commission's position the same as the content and conclusions of the aforementioned report, which was published on the Commission website?
2. When can negotiations be expected to be concluded, and when will the Commission make a decision on the Polish mining industry?
3. Will the Polish Government be able to appeal against the Commission's decision if it is detrimental to the Polish mining industry?

Submitted: 11.12.2024

**Answer given by Executive Vice-President Ribera on behalf of the European Commission
(31 January 2025)**

The Commission is aware of the economic and social challenges that coal regions, including in Poland, face in view of the transition towards climate neutrality.

The Just Transition Mechanism accompanied with the Just Transition Fund ⁽¹⁾ or the Coal regions in transition Initiative ⁽²⁾, among other initiatives, aim to ensure that the transition leaves no one behind and to support the economic diversification and reconversion of the territories concerned by the transition.

The mentioned report has been written by external authors as part of the Commission's Coal regions in transition Initiative ⁽³⁾. As a general rule, such reports, if written by consultants, cannot be considered as representing the views of the Commission or its official position.

As regards public support for the Polish mining industry, the Commission is in close and constructive contact with the Polish authorities. The Commission is neither in a position to comment further on the content of such discussion, nor can it predict the timing or outcome.

Pursuant to Article 263 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the Court of Justice has jurisdiction to review the legality of acts of the Commission.

⁽¹⁾ Regulation (EU) 2021/1056 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 establishing the Just Transition Fund (OJ L 231, 30.6.2021, p. 1).

⁽²⁾ For more information see: https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/clean-energy-transition/eu-coal-regions-transition_en

⁽³⁾ The Secretariat for Technical Assistance to Regions in Transition, which is made up of a consortium of external actors, listed here: https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/carbon-management-and-fossil-fuels/eu-coal-regions-transition_en#the-secretariat