



Deliver the social agreement: for a Just Transition for the Polish coalfield now!

As Polish ministers and the European Commission are set to meet in the coming days, the ITUC, IndustriALL Global Union, ETUC and industriAll European Trade Union call on decision-makers to ensure the full implementation of the Social Plan in the Polish hard coal mining sector, signed in May 2021, between the Polish government, representatives of local government, the hard coal mining companies and Polish trade unions.

Almost 3 years after the signature the Polish government has failed to notify the European Commission to date about the state aid that the plan implies. This leaves 83 000 workers and their communities in limbo about their transition strategy.

The Social Plan, signed in May 2021, sets out how the phase out of hard coal mining by 2049 will be achieved through a gradual transfer of workers (from closing mines to those still operating). It is a landmark agreement in the Polish context and was conceived to ensure that there are no collective redundancies caused by the closure of mines. Poland has the largest workforce in the hard coal sector in Europe with currently 83 000 workers employed and hundreds of thousands of indirect jobs linked to the coal mining industry in these regions.

Whereas most EU Member States committed to a phase out of coal by 2030, the scale of the transition in Poland is incomparable with major challenges of managing the transition to a decarbonised energy system while keeping coal workers and their communities intact. Anticipating and managing the change of the workers and coalfield communities is key. Our Polish affiliated trade unions therefore signed the Social Plan which marks a historic shift for the country's energy sector and workforce.

In the current context of rising socio-economic tensions, it is paramount to create certainty that both the Polish government and the European Commission, remain dedicated to establishing a socially responsible phase out process together with the trade unions.

The ITUC, IndustriALL Global Union, ETUC and industriAll Europe therefore call upon:

- the Polish government to swiftly notify the European Commission about the state aid planned to support the transition of miners in the Polish hard coal mining sector;
- the European Commission to swiftly assess any state aid notification linked to Social Plan in the hard coal mining sector, bearing fully in mind the specific challenges for Polish mining communities and workforce and the historic nature of the Social Plan in the hard coal mining sector
- the Polish government to ensure transparent social dialogue on the implementation of the social plan in the hard coal mining sector, guaranteeing the trade unions access to all documentation related to the social agreement and informal exchanges with the European Commission as foreseen in the social agreement (paragraph 5), with the objective to prevent forced redundancies and put in place job-to-job transition plans as well as social protection measures.

The ITUC, IndustriALL Global Union, ETUC and industriAll Europe insist that the European Commission and Polish government engage with the trade unions in good faith and with the objective to implement the Social Plan to deliver a Just Transition for the Polish mining workforce and their communities while phasing out coal.

We stand in solidarity with our Polish affiliates.