

PGE supports the action of residence in defence of the Turów Mine and Power Plant

Signatures are being collected among the inhabitants of the counties of Zgorzelec, Bolesławiecki and Lubański, who oppose the efforts of the Czech to liquidate the Turów Mine and Power Plant. The PGE Group supports these activities by emphasizing that the Turoszów energy complex is one of the key elements of the Polish energy system, operates on the basis of a license granted in accordance with the law, as well as meets all environmental standards and provides jobs for thousands of inhabitants of the region.

“Dear Madam President, we, the inhabitants of the Bolesławiec, Lubań and Zgorzelec areas, are following with great concern the escalating attacks from our Czech neighbours for some time, supported mainly by various ecological organizations from Czechia, which are to close the mining and extraction complex Turów energy plant” – this is how the petition of the residents to the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen begins. Inhabitants of the region express their concern about the actions of the Czech side, which questions the legitimacy of the operation of the Mine and thus Turów Power Station, which employs about 5 000 inhabitants of the region. Moreover, they note that another 10 000 people work in the companies operating for the complex.

*The claims of the Czech side, seeking to withdraw the license and to terminate the operation of the Turów complex within 10 years, are unfounded. Much larger brown coal mines operate in close proximity in Czechia and Germany – says **Wojciech Dąbrowski, president of the board of PGE Polska Grupa Energetyczna**. – We comply with EU environmental directives, adapt our power plants and mines to increasingly stringent standards, operate on the basis of a legally granted license, and all our activities are lawful. I have repeatedly emphasized that a rapid departure from coal is not possible for technical, economic and, above all, social reasons.*

*The expectation that we are the only ones in Europe to close down lignite mines within 10 years, while other countries - richer than Poland - have much more time for this, is unjustified and unfair – says **Anna Zalewska, Member of the European Parliament, member of the Environment Protection Commission Natural, Public Health and Food Safety**.*

The employees and their families, trade unionists and local government officials were involved in the defence of the mines and power plants belonging to the PGE Group. Signatures are also collected in parishes and by scouts.

*Signatures are collected above divisions, because everyone is aware that closing the Turów complex would be a social disaster. If we had to close the entire complex now, over 15 000 people professionally connected with the mine and power plant in Turów would be dismissed, in total the number amounts to around 60 000 people with their families. We cannot allow this and we will raise this topic both on the government side and on the European forum. Changing the national energy mix must be done with respect for both the environment and people and their jobs – says **Anna Zalewska, Member of the European Parliament**.*

The petition of the residents of the counties related to the operation of the Turów complex is a response to a complaint signed by residents of the Liberec Region regarding the closure of the Turów mine lodged in the European Parliament. In the petition of the Polish side, the social aspect was emphasized, and it also highlighted the much larger brown coal mines operating in Czechia and Germany. The residents want to submit it to Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission.

In March, the Turów Mine received an extension of the mining license for six consecutive years, and in parallel is trying to extend the license until 2044, i.e. until all coal deposits are exhausted. After 2044, in accordance with the green policy of the European Union, the areas of the Turoszów energy complex will undergo a reclamation process. As part of the license renewed in 2020, the Turów Mine conducts its mining activities in the mining area reduced by more than half compared to the area specified in the old license from 1994.

The extension of the operation of the Turów Mine guarantees further operation of the Turów Power Plant, and thus reliable power supply to over 3 million households.

Additional information

Public consultation

As part of the concession process, a detailed environmental report has been developed, which contains

analyses of the expected impact and, above all, determining the necessary measures to minimize the potential impact of the business. Responses to several thousand comments and motions were submitted, and participants in the proceedings, as well as persons interested in it, obtained the necessary information on all matters raising doubts.

In accordance with the requirements of national and EU law, representatives of administrative bodies, the public, as well as neighbouring countries, i.e. Czechia and the Federal Republic of Germany, participated in the environmental impact assessment procedure. As part of this procedure, objections were raised.

Guided by the principle of good practices, PGE GiEK organized additional, not covered by law, meetings with the residents from Czechia in autumn 2019, in Chotyne and Uhelna, during which they discussed the measures that would be taken to eliminate the potential impact of the Turosszów strip mine on the border areas. What is more, in addition to the standard procedure required by law, in the first half of 2019 meetings were also held with the inhabitants of Opolno-Zdrój.

Water conservation

As part of applying for the extension of the license until 2044, PGE GiEK is obliged to obtain the so-called decisions on environmental conditions. The application for issuing an environmental decision (preceding the issuing of the concession) was submitted by PGE GiEK in 2015, and the procedure of assessing the environmental impact of continuing the exploitation of the Turów deposit lasted almost 5 years. The decision was issued on January 21, 2020 by the Regional Director for Environmental Protection in Wrocław, following an environmental impact assessment procedure. The decision imposes specific obligations on the Turów Mine, including the implementation of a number of investments limiting its environmental impact. They are so-called measures to minimize the impact.

The impact of the environmental impact assessment procedure and cross-border arrangements was also the impact of the Turów Mine on water resources at the Czech border. The groundwater level has been monitored for many years by Polish-Czech and Polish-German teams of specialists. The measurement network includes 550 sites for measuring the groundwater table, of which over 150 belongs to the Polish-Czech and Polish-German measuring network. Expert research results confirm that the mine does not cause dehydration in drinking water intakes. In order to protect the only drinking water intake in Uhelna that could be affected by the Turów Mine, actions were taken to develop and implement an underground screen that will be built at a depth of about 60-110 m and which will secure the potential flow of water from the Uhelna area towards the strip mine. Screen effectiveness will be monitored on an ongoing basis by a detailed Polish-Czech monitoring system.