

Polish Ministry of State Assets statement with regard to EC regulation

on methane emissions reduction in the energy sector

**with regard to the 17th Session of the UNECE Group of Experts
on Coal Mine Methane**

held on March 21st, 2022 in Geneva

With regard to the methane regulation there was a WP ENER meeting today in Brussels.

I was asked by Polish Ministry of State Assets to stress during this meeting that the European Commission should pay particular attention to the fact that when drawing up this document, no proper account was taken of the impact on the situation which will be created in the energy market in Poland and Europe after the possible closure of 16 methane mines in 2027. This will eventually happen mostly due to implementation of Article 22(1, 2) of Chapter 4 of the Regulation) and of the fact that this will also have a huge impact on the bankruptcy of companies associated with coal, not to mention the rise in the price of coal on world markets as a result of the gap created in the local market.

This will also have impact on electricity prices in Poland (which are already among the highest in Europe). We will not be able to replace our coal-fired power stations within short period of time and we will have to buy the coal abroad. It must be remembered that over 70% of our energy still comes from coal.

In order to achieve the climate targets laid down in the aforementioned regulation and in the Global Methane Pledge, the Commission's assistance is needed in the form of effective incentives, and not by creating obstacles. The mere announcement of a policy to close Polish coal mines has already caused irreparable damage to the investments of coal companies aimed at the effective capture and use of methane from mines, and thus at slowing down and limiting methane emissions mitigation actions from the mines. The companies are unable to obtain commercial loans for such investments. As a result of the same actions of an ambitious climate policy, several research, development and pilot projects in Poland, which were aimed at capturing and

using methane from mines, have been terminated, simply because they were associated with coal.

In the current geo-political situation, the energy security of individual countries is particularly important. This was actually to be, among other things, the objective of this regulation: *"The general objective of the Regulation is, in the context of the functioning of the internal market for energy and while ensuring security of supply in the Union, to preserve and improve the environment by reducing methane emissions from fossil energy produced or consumed in the Union."* While for a large number of EU countries this means uninterrupted supplies of natural gas, which, as the current situation shows, they cannot give up, for Poland such a guarantee is still provided by its own coal.

Reductions in methane emissions from mines as part of the Global Methane Pledge are achievable, but in a sustainable manner and with the help of the Union - in line with the coal industry restructuring programme adopted by Poland and notified to the European Commission, which assumes a gradual phasing out of coal mining in Poland by 2049.

Adoption of the draft regulation may deepen the social and energy crisis, as a result of the need to close most hard coal mines prematurely in order to reduce methane emissions.

As Covid restrictions in travelling were stopped, Poland will be happy to invite representatives of EU MP's and representatives of selected EC departments in charge of this regulation including DG ENERGY, UNEP IMEO not mentioning NGO's representative to visit JSW SA plants and Polish ICE CMM to learn about Polish real activities to meet Global Methane Pledge ambitious plans.

On behalf of the Polish Ministry of State Assets,

**Vice Chair of UNECE Group of Experts
on Coal Mine Methane**

Jacek Skiba
Ph.D.Eng,MBA
Central Mining Institute, Katowice (Poland):
Department of Mining Aerology
e-mail: jskiba@qiq.eu
www.qiq.eu