



COUNTRY	REGION	POPULATION	LAST REPORTED EMISSIONS	MITIGATION TARGET
POLAND	SILESIAN VOIVODESHIP	4,620,624 HAB. (2012)	13.2 MTCO ₂ DUE TO ELECTRICITY PRODUCTION (2019)	CO ₂ EMISSIONS DUE TO ELECTRICITY PRODUCTION: -61.2 % BY 2030

In Silesia, a much needed “just transition” to moving on from coal

In 2015, 80% of Poland’s electricity and 86% of its heat came from coal, most of it from domestic production. Silesia is a strategic region for the coal industry, with [around half](#) (17) of Poland’s ~30 remaining mines. The region had [the worst air pollution](#) in 2019, on average three times the levels recommended by the WHO. Three years after the [Silesian Declaration on Solidarity and Just Transition](#), signed by many countries at the COP24 in Katowice, the region has a Territorial Just Transition Plan, to be funded by the EU.

Although coal mining in Poland has largely declined over the past 30 years, the coal sector still accounts for 4.2% of employment in Silesia. It is the sector with the highest rate of union membership: 72% of workers are members of a union, compared to an average of 11% across all sectors.

Thus, in addition to the need to significantly reduce coal activities in the region, which emit greenhouse gases and are dangerous to human health, there is a challenge of retraining workers who are attached to the identity of their region and dependent on this industry.

National climate and energy plans focused on the “just transition”

One year after the COP24 was held in Katowice, the capital city of Silesia, in 2019, the national government adopted its [National Energy and Climate Plan 2021-2030](#), where it set a target of a 23% increase in energy efficiency by 2030 and plans to use EU funds to train workers affected by mine closures to work in other sectors. In 2021, the “just transition” is [one of the three main pillars](#) of its Energy Policy to 2040.

Poland is set to be [the first beneficiary](#) of the Just Transition Fund, set up by the EU to help regions heavily dependent on fossil fuels to socially support their energy transition: 20% of the fund’s EUR 19 billion is reserved for the country, ahead of Germany (13%) and Romania (11%). Three

Polish regions have been identified by the Commission to receive these funds: Silesia, Eastern Wielkopolska and Wałbrzych. Three others are under negotiation between the Polish government and the Commission.

A national Just Transition plan has been prepared by the Polish Ministry of Climate and Environment. In parallel, the governments of these six regions [have established](#) a Territorial Just Transition Plan (TJTP), in partnership with the European Commission, the national government, local governments, organisations representing the private sector, research, trade unions and civil society.

A Territorial Just Transition Plan ready for implementation

The [Silesian TJTP](#) foresees the closure of three mines before 2030 (Ruda, Boleslaw Smialy and Sosnica), which will reduce coal extraction from 30 Mt in 2021 to 23 Mt in 2030. According to the plan, these closures will result in the loss of more than 5,000 direct jobs and about 15,000 indirect jobs. Thanks to European funds, Silesia plans to create around 30,000 jobs by supporting the development and creation of companies. The main transition burden [is shifted](#) to after 2030, as the remaining eleven mines, on which over 100,000 jobs depend, will be closed between 2030 and 2049. Normally, the allocation of just transition funds by the EU is conditional on a plan to close the mines (or sharply reduce their production)

before 2030, but the EU has tolerated this 30-year staggering of closures because of the importance of the Silesia region for the supply of coal to all of Europe.

The TJTP also plans to reduce coal-fired electricity production by 80% by 2030 (from 14,403 GWh in 2019 to 3,079 GWh in 2030) through the closure of four coal-fired power plants (two in 2028, two in 2030), thereby reducing CO₂ emissions from electricity production by 62.1%. It also plans to install renewable energy capable of producing 189,827 MWh per year. [A report](#) by the Bankwatch Network and the Polish Green Network analysing the TJTPs in Poland finds that on the whole the plans provide adequate measures for retraining of workers affected by the closures of emitting activities, as well as helping companies to employ. However, in the case of Silesia, they regret that the age structure of workers is not mentioned in the plan, although it would help to refine the estimates of job losses and needs.

In 2021, in addition to numerous diplomatic tensions between Poland and the European Commission, a coal mine concession granted in June by the Polish Minister for Climate and Environment in Myslowice (southern Silesia) seems to threaten the credibility of the TJTP and the allocation of EU funds, as evidenced by [an exchange](#) between a Polish Member of the European Parliament (S&D group) and the European Commissioner in charge of Cohesion Policy, Elisa Ferreira.