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Subject: RE: Turów mine - prolongation of operation period and contradiction with EU and Polish Law D(13617)

Dear colleagues,

Thank you for your e-mail concerning the extension of the license that was granted by the Polish government to the operating company of the Turów opencast lignite mine. According to the information that you disclosed in your e-mail, also included in multiple written questions submitted by Members and as reported in the press, the extension of the license is alleged to be in multiple breach of several acts of EU environment legislation. More concretely, the alleged violations would concern the Water Framework Directive (WFD) including the transboundary impact of the extension to surface and underground waters and the Noise Directives. I am aware that questions have been raised also regarding the impact on the soil and on air quality, as well as on the repercussions of the project for the health of the populations residing in this sensitive tri-state area and the apparent shortcomings in the information and consultation of the citizens about the project, both within and beyond Polish borders.

Keeping in mind that any legislation is only as good as its implementation and enforcement, which turns laws into real benefits for the citizens, I would like to recall that, according to the Treaties, it is the Commission that is competent to verify the proper transposition and implementation of EU law by the Member States. According to information that has reached my office, the Commission has already launched an administrative procedure (better known as EU Pilot) for this matter, in an effort to receive

information from Polish authorities regarding the exact circumstances of the extension and of the project itself. In some cases and depending on the response of the national authorities, such a procedure may lead to the initiation of formal judicial proceedings. Furthermore, the Commission launched in 2015 an infringement procedure against Poland for the incorrect application of the WFD, which is still pending.

That being said, the European Parliament will also exercise its function on this case: I am informed that the petition that was submitted in the end of last year about this project and was widely supported by citizens, will be examined in priority by the Committee on Petitions (PETI) in its next meeting, where petitioners and the Commission will be heard, and Members can express their views and take decisions about the possible further treatment of the matter by the Parliament. Options for treating a petition are, among others, addressing a letter to the Polish authorities or asking for an opinion by the Commission. PETI meetings, like all parliamentary Committee meetings, are public and webstreamed, and aim inter alia at raising public awareness and exerting political pressure where and when needed.

Finally, I would like to reassure you that the European Parliament and I personally remain attached to the objective of a sustainable Europe and in particular to the target of a climate-neutral Europe by 2050 and will monitor the situation closely with the hope to achieve an optimal result for the citizens concerned.

Yours sincerely,

David Maria SASSOLI