

Corporate sponsors of COP24

The corporations bankrolling UN climate conference
in Katowice, Poland

Name of company:

Tauron (Tauron Polska Energia S.A.)

Country:

Poland

Industry:

Power generation

Description of company:

[Poland's second biggest electricity generator and supplier, mainly from coal and gas.](#)

Profit in 2017:

[€327m \(PLN 1.4 billion\)](#)

Does State have large ownership stake?

[Yes.](#)



Specific climate-wrecking activities:

Tauron only narrowly missed out on being among the ten most polluting coal companies in Europe. [It is still responsible for 260 premature deaths, 70,000 working days lost, and health costs as high as €700m in 2016.](#) Not only does it produce electricity from coal and gas, [it also mines 29 percent of the hard coal in Poland](#), a staggering figure given that more than [80 percent of the country's electricity is from coal.](#)

Specific climate-wrecking lobbying:

Tauron teamed up with two of Poland's other coal giants, PGE and Enea, to [lobby Brussels](#) over emissions restrictions proposed by the European Commission that would affect the public subsidies its coal plants were receiving. Luckily for Tauron, but certainly not the climate or anyone living near their facilities, its coal plants [continue to be eligible for subsidies.](#)

Greenwashing activities:

[Tauron launched a network of electric car-sharing vehicles](#) and green charging stations with ING Bank Śląski in Katowice in November, aimed at guests of the COP as well as locals. However, it has failed to mention that the electric cars will be powered primarily from coal-generated electricity. Not so green after all, but definitely good for Tauron.



Name of company:

JSW (Jastrzębska Spółka Węglowa)

Country:

Poland (with operations in the U.S. and Australia)

Industry:

Coking coal

Description of company:

[One of the largest tar producers in the European Union](#), it is one of the leading [coal companies in Poland](#).

Profit in 2017:

€593m ([PLN 2.5 billion](#))

Does State have large ownership stake?

[Yes.](#)

Specific climate-wrecking activities:

JSW is one of Poland's leading coal companies, with plans to further expand their operations. The company is working to grow its business both in [Poland](#) and [overseas](#) -- and the subsidiary business efforts of capturing natural gas and generating hydrogen -- [for decades to come](#).

Greenwashing activities:

JSW is lauding the fact that by [using, rather than venting](#), excess methane discovered while mining for coal it is reducing greenhouse gas emissions. But actually tackling climate change would mean leaving coal and methane underground. JSW [is also providing](#) a hydrogen-powered bus to shuttle around COP participants and delegates -- hydrogen that [the company is working to develop as a saleable byproduct of its coke oven gas](#). So the hydrogen comes from fossil fuels -- not so green after all.

Name of company:

PGE (Polska Grupa Energetyczna S.A.)

Country:

Poland

Industry:

Electricity generation

Description of company:

[Largest energy sector company in Poland](#)

Profit in 2017:

€620 million ([2.6 billion PLN](#))

Does State have large ownership stake?

[Yes.](#)

**Specific climate-wrecking activities:**

PGE extracted [50 million tons of lignite last year](#) from its mines -- and generated 16.7 gigawatts of electricity, including at the Bełchatów power station. Bełchatów is the world's largest power station run on lignite (the dirtier, softer coal that produces more CO₂).

[According to the climate thinktank, Sandbag](#), PGE is the third-deadliest coal company in Europe, with modelled health impacts finding PGE responsible for 1,180 premature deaths, 370,000 work days lost; and up to €3.4 billion in added health costs in 2016 alone.

Specific climate-wrecking lobbying:

PGE's owners, the Polish government, ensure its interests are represented at the EU level. Government officials have [consistently lobbied](#) for extensions of loopholes in EU air pollution standards, as well as getting exceptions in order to keep receiving free permits for its power industry under the EU Emission Trading Scheme (ETS). PGE has also [teamed up](#) with other Polish coal players to make sure its polluting plants can keep receiving state subsidies, but it can always count on extra help at the European level from its [membership](#) of trade associations: Eurocoal and Eurelectric, two of Brussels' most notorious anti-climate action lobbies.

Greenwashing activities:

In the run-up to COP24, PGE has been taking part in public debates in Brussels claiming it supports the talks on de-carbonisation, and is changing direction. But despite the rhetoric, it recently deferred plans to diversify into offshore wind until mid- to late-2020s, [according to the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis](#). This will happen only after a massive investment programme has cemented the company's future in coal. Last year PGE spent €18.9 million (PLN 81 million) on renewable energy (wind, solar, hydro), but more than 60 times that amount on fossil fuel investments. Is green really the new black?

Name of company:

PZU (Powszechny Zakład Ubezpieczeń / Universal Insurance Company)

Country:

Poland

Industry:

Insurance

Description of company:

[One of the largest insurance companies in Central and Eastern Europe](#), and [leading insurer of the Polish coal sector](#).

Profit in 2017:

€746m ([PLN 3.2 billion](#))

Does State have large ownership stake?

[Yes](#).

**Specific climate-wrecking activities:**

PZU [underwrites mines](#) responsible for production of more than 85 percent of the country's hard coal and 70 percent of lignite, including four mines owned by fellow sponsor JSW. It also insures coal-fired power plants that generate around 30 percent of the power available in Poland's national power system. Its funds also hold shares in numerous coal companies, including fellow sponsor PGE and companies servicing the supply chain.

There is currently an [ongoing campaign](#) in Poland to stop PZU from insuring the construction of the Ostrołęka C coal-fired power plant. If constructed, it is [predicted](#) to cause 2,000 premature deaths over its 40 year lifespan, as well as 100,000 asthma attacks in children. The total costs of the health impacts are predicted to be as much as €680 million from disease caused by air pollution.

[PZU has been put under pressure by the Polish government](#) to support another coal-fired power plant -- a one-gigawatt plant in Ostrołęka in northeast Poland -- but the questionable economics and opposition from environmental groups have sparked a wave of protests among PZU policyholders who are against their premiums being used to finance more coal.

Greenwashing activities:

PZU is a big fan of using corporate social responsibility to clean up its image, particularly the sponsorship of sports and cultural events, such as the Warsaw Marathon and the city's national museum and national theatre. At COP24, they are using the company's sponsorship to hold an event with the Polish government inside the negotiating halls which will ["promote corporate social responsibility in the context of climate change."](#)

Name of company:

PKO Bank (Powszechna Kasa Oszczędności Bank Polski S.A.)

Country:

Poland (with additional operations in Germany, the Czech Republic and Ukraine).

Industry:

Banking

Description of company:

[PKO Bank is the largest Polish bank and one of the biggest fossil fuel financiers.](#)

Profit in 2017:

€724 million euros ([PLN 3.1 billion](#))

Does State have large ownership stake?

[Yes.](#)



Bank Polski

Specific climate-wrecking activities:

PKO Bank is heavily engaged in fossil fuel-financing -- including stated-owned oil and gas majors. Last September, PKO signed a loan with other European banks for almost one billion euros ([4.1 billion PLN](#)) for PGE (Polska Grupa Energetyczna), Poland's biggest utility and one of Europe's top polluters. [The loan is expected to support PGE](#), which is already 91 percent dependent on coal for its total energy generation, in its €446 million (PLN 1.9 billion) upgrade of its existing coal plant assets to comply with new EU pollution standards, as well as its €3.5 billion (PLN 15 billion) investment in three other new coal units.

PKO Bank is not only financing PGE, but also every coal company in Poland and the oil and gas state-owned majors.

Greenwashing activities:

PKO Bank brags about its corporate social responsibility, including on environmental protection. With a remarkably narrow view of the environmental and social impacts of its core business, PKO Bank [explains that](#) "the nature of the business activity means that the Bank's and Group's direct impact on the natural environment is marginal," and that "the Bank has undertaken numerous initiatives aimed at limiting its environmental footprint," such as optimizing printouts and reducing the use of paper, or collecting waste paper, batteries and toners. The company even claims in its [2017 annual report](#) that "...in 2017, none of the Group's entities conducted a project that could significantly affect the environment." Financing dirty coal investments has a huge impact on the environment as well as people's health.

Name of company:

PGNiG (Polskie Górnictwo Naftowe i Gazownictwo S.A.)

Country:

Poland, but with offices in Brussels, Moscow, Kiev, and Brest (Belarus).

Industry:

Natural gas and oil

Description of company:

[PGNiG is Poland's leading gas corporation, operating across the whole supply chain through its subsidiaries.](#)

Profit in 2017:

€683 million ([PLN 2.92 billion](#))

Does State have large ownership stake?

[Yes.](#)

**Specific climate-wrecking activities:**

In 2017, PGNiG produced a total of 4.5 billion cubic meters (bcm) of natural gas, aka fossil gas, and distributed more than [twice that](#) (11.6 bcm). According to the [latest science](#), gas can have as big of a carbon footprint as coal when the whole life cycle is taken into account; this is due to the leakage of methane into the atmosphere during extraction (particularly from fracking) and transportation. Methane is a greenhouse gas more than 100 times worse for the climate than CO₂ over a ten-year period.

PGNiG wants to ramp up its fossil gas extraction, including from fracking. According to its [strategic plan](#), from 2017 - 2026 it is aiming to increase hydrocarbon production by 41 percent. It is also [leading research activities](#) into how to extract methane from coal beds using fracking.

The gas giant has also plans to step up its liquefied natural gas (LNG) business by importing liquefied fracked U.S. gas. In November, PGNiG signed a [24-year deal with U.S. company Cheniere](#) to import LNG into Poland -- with an expected delivery of 39 bcm by 2042.

Greenwashing activities:

[PGNiG](#) is renowned for using astroturf campaigns -- front groups created by the industry to look like grassroots organisations -- to give shale gas the appearance of public support. It has funded, together with COP24 co-sponsor LOTOS, the "Citizens Coalition for Responsible Energy," which unashamedly promoted shale gas in the name of Europe's residents.

PGNiG is now targeting its gas greenwashing at Polish youth at COP24. It has organized a video game and a science competition (complete with a prize pool of 200,000 PLN or roughly €50,000) for schools and teachers, cultivating goodwill and shaping the next generation's views of fossil gas and the [company](#). It has also come up with a school curriculum and [comics](#) alongside the Ministry of National Education, further blurring the lines between corporate propaganda and [education](#). They are providing gas-fueled buses for COP24.

Name of company:

Grupa LOTOS S.A.

Country:

Poland

Industry:

Oil

Description of company:

[LOTOS is involved in the extraction and processing of crude oil.](#)

Profit in 2017:

€400m ([PLN 1.7 billion.](#))

Does State have large ownership stake?

[Yes.](#)

**Specific climate-wrecking activities:**

Produced [1.1 million toe](#) (tons of oil equivalent) last year, with three quarters coming from oil and gas fields in Norway, which comprise lots close to the environmentally risky [Arctic Circle](#). [LOTOS also operates the "Młynary" concession in Poland in cooperation with PGNiG. Total greenhouse gas emissions were almost 1.9 million tonnes of CO₂,](#) the equivalent of an average passenger car [driving almost five billion miles](#).

Specific climate-wrecking lobbying:

[LOTOS](#) has lobbied at the EU level through astroturf organisations -- front groups created by industry to look like grassroots organisations -- such as the so-called "Citizens Coalition for Responsible Energy." LOTOS is also a member of the World Petroleum Council, the "premier" organization representing the global petroleum industry and a founder of Central Europe Energy Partners (CEEP), an EU focused lobby group comprised of coal, oil and gas companies.

CEEP [advocates](#) the scrapping of climate policies and the promotion of coal, arguing that "environmental policy should not be further tightened" and instead policies should be "supporting competitiveness." It believes in the "use of the cheapest and the most available indigenous energy sources." In other words: coal. CEEP argues that because newer coal plants are more efficient than older ones, promoting new coal is promoting emissions savings -- so why not replace climate legislation with the promotion of new, 40 percent efficient, coal-fired power plants!?

Greenwashing activities:

[LOTOS recently built twelve electric vehicle charging stations](#) along the route from Warsaw to the Tri-City region (Gdańsk, Gdynia and Sopot). It plans to create 38 more. It states in its [corporate social responsibility report that](#) "we conduct our business in accordance with ethical standards, respecting the natural environment and society's needs, trying to ensure that the business proceeds in a sustainable manner and in compliance with the principles of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). We are guided by our core values, which are purity, openness, innovation and responsibility." This is at odds with its core business, which is drilling oil, particularly in environmentally risky areas like the Arctic Circle.

Name of company:

PKN Orlen (Polski Koncern Naftowy Orlen)

Country:

Poland, but with operations across Europe.

Industry:

[Oil](#)

Description of company:

[PKN Orlen is a large oil conglomerate in Poland and the largest petrol retailer in the country.](#)

Profit in 2017:

€1.68 billion ([7.17 billion PLN](#))

Does State have large ownership stake?

[Yes.](#)

**Specific climate-wrecking activities:**

In 2017, PKN Orlen processed 33.2 million tons of crude and sold [42.4 million tons of oil](#). It owns 2,783 gas stations in Poland, as well as supplying aviation fuel to eleven of the country's airports -- including Katowice (for those flying home, have a look out of your window before take-off). In total, it produced 14.4 million metric tons of CO₂ emissions, up 11 percent from [2016](#). It also produced 213 thousand metric tons of waste, almost half of which was [hazardous](#). In its [2017 - 2022 strategic plan](#), Orlen notes it is working to expand oil production in Poland and Canada. It is also considering [building a nuclear power plant](#), after fellow COP sponsor PGE decided not to lead the project. [PKN Orlen is attempting to acquire LOTOS in 2019](#), which will only increase its climate-wrecking impact.

Greenwashing activities:

PKN Orlen notes it has to routinely remove trees and shrubs in industrial areas of new projects. So as a good steward, it planted [a whopping 568 trees and 158 shrubs in 2017 on company land and in the town of Plock](#). It also runs a series of environmental projects like a children's photo contest and ["I Care for the Environment"](#) meetings. [It is also a member of the Responsible Care Programme](#), a chemical industry greenwashing group organized by the American Chemistry Council. PKN Orlen also recently spent 100 million PLN to become an official partner of a British Formula 1 racing team -- with the goal of increasing [regional marketing](#).