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PRESS RELEASE



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## A MAJOR SHIFT IN EUROPEAN GREEN POLICY – THE INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE SUMMIT TOGETAIR 2022

The Russian attack on Ukraine has undermined the foundations of previous thinking about the directions of energy transition in Europe. The European Union was faced with an urgent need to re-evaluate existing assumptions about the pace of change, the technologies used and - above all - the role of gas as a transition fuel in the process. Adapting pro-climate transformation plans to the new geopolitical and economic situation will be the leading theme of numerous panels of the TOGETAIR 2022 Climate Summit.

*- The current geopolitical situation made it evident that the European energy transition neglected the aspect of energy security, recognizing the sense and necessity of relying on natural gas as a so-called transitional fuel. The brutal aggression of Russia, the main supplier of this raw material to the EU, should change this attitude. The EU should rely much more on its own resources – renewable sources and nuclear energy, which also guarantees a significant degree of energy sovereignty. – comments Jakub Wiech, Deputy Editor in Chief of Energetyka24.*

Three days, thirty debates, dozens of Polish and foreign experts – this is what this year's TOGETAIR Climate Summit 2022 (20-21-22 April) looks like. Energy security of Poland and Europe in the perspective of climate policy has a special role in our agenda. Among other things, experts will be looking for answers to questions about the possible Europe response. It remains to be seen whether it will be increasing technology and investment pressure, accelerating the transition to 100% renewables, or perhaps bringing back technologies previously questioned, such as nuclear.

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## TOGETAIR 2022 THEMATIC AGENDA <https://togetair.eu/agenda>

### WHAT IN PLACE OF GAS?

The foundation of the current “gas” direction was the long-standing German-Russian cooperation, symbolized by the Nord-Stream1 and Nord-Stream2 projects, ensuring direct deliveries of Russian fuel to Germany, bypassing Central Europe, including Ukraine and Poland. In response to Russia’s aggression against Ukraine, Europe’s largest economy intends to dramatically accelerate the transition, reaching 80% renewable energy by 2030 and 100% by 2035. This is a very ambitious and very expensive plan.

The EU and especially German reaction to the Russian attack on Ukraine has changed the rules of the game in European energy markets. The events of recent weeks have made it clear that Europe needs to diversify its sources and raw materials. This undermines the existing paradigm of the green transition: the key role of gas as the successor to coal (and, in the German version, to nuclear as well) in the transition period before we are 100% renewable.

*- Technological advances in renewable energy sources are impressively rapid. The efficiency of individual solutions increases, their cost decreases, their availability increases. We have learnt to make maximum use of favourable natural conditions, which is exemplified by highly efficient off-shore wind farms in Europe or large-scale solar power plants. – explains Agata Śmieja, President of the Clean Air Foundation and initiator of the TOGETAIR Climate Summit. - However, to be able to realistically replace 100% of conventional energy, we need flexible, capacious, and widely available energy storage to stabilize the grid and provide security – that is, access to energy in sufficient quantities at an acceptable price. We need time, new and stable energy to enable our energy transition.*

### WHAT IN PLACE OF COAL?

The challenges ahead of Poland are particularly serious. The degree of dependence of the domestic energy sector on coal, in particular hard coal, is the highest in Europe. Despite massive investment efforts in recent decades, the conventional source system still relies primarily on 200 MW class coal-fired units dating back to the 1970s, which will be phased out in a few years. The loss of capacity market support in 2025, as well as rising CO2 costs, will result in the permanent unprofitability of these plants. **The Polish energy system is therefore facing the need to close the gap in a short period of time.**

An additional problem, difficult not only for climatic but also geopolitical reasons, is the **ongoing import of Russian coal to Poland**. Despite the declarations, closing Polish borders to the Russian coal may severely hit the domestic heating sector and owners of domestic boiler houses. The production structure of Polish mines, which have been subsidized for decades, does not guarantee that demand in these market segments will be met.

The still valid National Energy Policy assumes rapid development of domestic renewable sources by 2040: mainly off-shore wind farms and dispersed micro photovoltaic sources, which are already operating on the roofs of hundreds of thousands of Polish houses. The role of large-scale stabilizers is to be taken over by new nuclear power plants (the first is planned for 2033) and smaller sources based on gas, which in the current

geopolitical situation is becoming an expensive raw material with volatile prices.

## CLIMATE NEUTRALITY IN A SECURE EUROPE

*- There is an ongoing discussion in the European Union about the necessary changes and adjustments on the road to climate neutrality. Decarbonization should proceed simultaneously with diversification of raw materials. – says Artur Beck, producer and organizer of the TOGETAIR Climate Summit, President of the Foundation of Positive Ideas. - In Poland, we took steps to become independent from Russian gas many years ago. The LNG port in Świnoujście and the Baltic Pipe project which is being finalized open us up to the possibility of diversifying the directions of LNG supplies that we use. Poland is striving for energy derusification and has been advocating it in the EU for a long time. In this perspective, our ideas about energy transition fit with current trends and do not necessarily require radical changes.*

Nuclear power is coming back into favour as a completely zero-emission, stable source of energy. The nuclear-based French power industry is much less susceptible to geopolitical turmoil. The Scandinavian experience, on the other hand, shows how to effectively use favourable natural conditions and develop renewable sources. With high hopes, European policymakers are looking toward hydrogen, which could theoretically replace oil and gas, especially in transportation. It also has a potentially important role in energy storage.

## TOGETAIR 2022 – THE VOICE OF THE THREE SEAS INITIATIVE

The Climate Summit will traditionally be held on 20-21-22 April, so as to honour 22 April, the International Earth Day. The event, realized in hybrid formula and broadcast from TV studio, will be available for free and without registration on the main pages of the most important Polish Internet portals. Considering the previous editions, the audience is expected to reach a total of about 30 million viewers.

In 2022 the event will have an international dimension, strengthening cooperation between Poland – the countries of the Three Seas Initiative and the European Union.

The organizers of the international Climate Summit have invited representatives of ministries, local governments at the rank of marshals, representatives of state-owned companies as well as international corporations and smaller businesses. They will also host a number of institutions: universities and research institutions, as well as non-governmental organizations and the media, which will conduct thematic debates.

*- It is worth taking a broader look at the continent, exchanging experience and refining optimal solutions. This is what TOGETAIR aims to achieve – foster local and international partnerships which will not only serve the purpose of climate protection, but will also strengthen the development of EU countries. – concludes Artur Beck.*

### Learn more:

[TOGETAIR Programme Board](#)

[Thematic Agenda TOGETAIR 2022](#)



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**Press Room**

**TOGETAIR Climate Summit**

**Polish Multimedia Climate Report**

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