

Just Transition Fund: Moment of truth for European Parliament's climate ambition



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Sandbag has joined **64 civil society organisations** from across Europe, calling on Members of the European Parliament to protect the integrity of the Just Transition Fund. This fund is intended to help EU Member States finance their transition to climate neutrality by 2050, ensuring that workers in emissions-intensive industries are adequately supported to find new employment and training opportunities. Both the European Council and the Commission have confirmed that the **Just Transition Fund should not support fossil fuels**. However, the European Parliament risks taking a real step backwards by including fossil gas under the Just Transition Fund.

The REGI committee of the European Parliament, responsible for Regional Development, voted in July in favour of an amendment to the Commission's proposal for the Just Transition Fund. This amendment would allow Just Transition funding to be spent on fossil gas projects, serving as a "bridge fuel" for coal-dependent regions. The amendment also suggests that gas can contribute to greenhouse gas reductions and the achievement of the EU's climate goals. The whole of the European Parliament will now vote on the Just Transition Fund at the plenary session. If their fellow MEPs accept the REGI committee's amendment, the Parliament will find itself in the unusual position of being less progressive on climate than the European Council. If the Parliament accepts this pro-gas amendment, it will weaken the proposal for the fund and **risk thwarting the Just Transition** which it aims to provide.

Fossil gas cannot be considered a bridge or transition fuel. The EU has a goal to reach climate neutrality by 2050, and gas is simply too emissions-intensive to be compatible with that goal. Emitting both carbon dioxide and highly potent methane, gas is a fossil fuel like any other and needs to be phased out of Europe's energy mix. The REGI committee's amendment wants to keep gas open as an option for coal-dependent regions. These regions are facing a major economic change and thousands of workers will see their employment prospects change dramatically. If these regions turn to gas as a "transition fuel", they will face the exact same problems within the next 15-20 years when gas is phased out. Indeed, the gas phase-out would have to happen at a much faster pace than the coal phase-out has to date, bringing even more uncertainty to workers in the gas industry. **The just transition needs to embody the best interest of workers and the best solutions for climate action.** The treatment of gas as a transition fuel does neither. Instead, renewable energy investments bring up to three times as many jobs as equivalent investments in fossil fuels, and new renewables infrastructure is a cheaper source of electricity than new gas power plants. The Just Transition Fund must be reserved for investments which actually contribute to a just transition.

This is why over 60 civil society organisations at all levels of EU society are now calling on MEPs to reject the inclusion of gas in the Just Transition Fund. To do otherwise would be completely contrary to the badge of climate ambition which the Parliament wears with such pride. **Before we can wind down the fossil fuel industry, we need to stop expanding it.**

Read the civil society letter to MEPs [here](#).